

Avian flu reminder for bird keepers

Bird keepers are reminded of the restrictions that remain in place to minimise the risk of avian flu.

An Avian Influenza Prevention Zone came into force across the country in November, making it a legal requirement for all bird keepers across the UK (whether they have pet birds, commercial flocks or just a few birds in a backyard flock) to keep their birds indoors and follow strict measures.

It is the largest ever outbreak of bird flu in the UK, with identified across the country, including the neighbouring counties of Warwickshire and Leicestershire.

While the risk to people is very low, the disease is highly contagious among birds and often proves fatal.

Wild birds migrating to the UK from mainland Europe during the winter months help spread the disease, so West Northamptonshire Council is reminding all bird keepers to follow the biosecurity measures needed to keep their birds safe and help stop the spread.

Poultry keepers must:

- House or net all poultry and captive birds to keep them separate from wild birds
- Clean and disinfect clothing, footwear, equipment, and vehicles before and after contact with poultry and captive birds – if practical, use disposable protective clothing
- Reduce the movement of people, vehicles, or equipment to and from areas where poultry and captive birds are kept, to minimise contamination from manure, slurry and other products, and use effective vermin control
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect housing on a continuous basis
- Keep fresh disinfectant at the right concentration at all farm and poultry housing entry and exit points
- Minimise direct and indirect contact between poultry and captive birds and wild birds, including making sure all feed and water is not accessible to wild birds.

If you find dead wild waterfowl (swans, geese or ducks) or other dead wild birds, such as gulls or birds of prey, you should report them to the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77. Do not touch or pick up any dead or visibly sick birds that you find.

More information can be [found on the Government website](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu) [www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu]

Kind regards

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West Northamptonshire Council