



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Consultation on proposed registration requirements for all bird keepers in Great Britain

Consultation document

March 2023

This document is also available in Welsh.

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We work closely with our 33 agencies and arm's length bodies on our ambition to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener and our food more sustainable. Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for the next generation, and to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

poultry&captivebirdsregistrationconsultation@defra.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/defra

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Introduction

We are seeking your views on our plans to make it compulsory for **all poultry**¹ and **other captive bird**² keepers³ to register their bird(s) with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

It is currently mandatory for a person who is a keeper of 50 or more poultry at any single premises to register their birds on the Great Britain Poultry Register by providing specified information on the birds. The information on the register enables the government to communicate with poultry keepers quickly, to manage any potential disease outbreak and carry out outbreak-related activities effectively.

Purpose of this consultation

The purpose of this consultation is to seek views on the government's proposals to require all keepers of **poultry and other captive birds** to register their birds. There are three options under consideration including a do-nothing option.

The proposed changes will amend the current poultry registration requirements for keepers with 50 and more poultry and extend this to **all bird keepers**. The consultation proposals take forward the recommendation from [the 2018 Dame Glenys Stacey Review](#) that was conducted for England and lessons identified from the 2021/2022 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 (also known as bird flu) outbreak and previous HPAI outbreaks.

Whilst animal health policy is a devolved matter, the UK government, the Scottish government and the Welsh government have agreed to work together to ensure adequate information on all bird premises is captured across Great Britain. The specific amendments proposed in this consultation will have effect only in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales).

¹ "Poultry" means all birds that are reared or kept in captivity for the production of meat or eggs for consumption, the production of other commercial products, for restocking supplies of game or for the purposes of any breeding programme for the production of these categories of birds.

² "Other captive birds" in England and Wales means any bird kept in captivity which is not poultry and includes a pet bird and any bird kept for shows, races, exhibitions, competitions, breeding or for sale; or

In Scotland "other captive bird" means any bird, other than poultry, kept in captivity including any bird kept for shows, races, exhibitions and competitions (such as ornamental birds and racing pigeons).

³ "Keeper" means the person with day-to-day responsibility for poultry or other captive birds at any premises.

Geographical extent and definitions

Unless otherwise stated, references to 'government' are references to the UK government, the Scottish government and the Welsh government.

This document and descriptions of existing law therefore relate to England, Scotland, and Wales. References to relevant ministers are references to ministers from each government.

Audience

While some of the matters discussed here are relevant to people who own or keep any type of bird, anyone may reply. We would like to hear from any individual or organisation with an interest in this issue.

Responding to this consultation

This consultation will run for 12 weeks. The consultation opens on 07 March 2023 and closes on 31 May 2023. Responses should be received by 23:59 on 31 May 2023. Unfortunately, any responses received after this date will not be analysed. You can respond via our survey on Citizen Space.

If you are unable to use Citizen Space, please contact us at:
poultry&captivebirdsregistrationconsultation@defra.gov.uk

Defra is managing the consultation process on behalf of the UK Government, Scottish government and Welsh government. The Scottish and Welsh governments will have access to the consultation responses provided via the Citizen Space consultation hub.

Campaign responses

We recognise that respondents may choose to use some standard text to inform their response. Campaigns are when organisations (or individuals) coordinate responses across their membership or support base, often by suggesting a set of wording for respondents to use. Campaign responses are usually very similar or identical to each other. For this consultation, campaign responses may be analysed separately to other responses to ensure the breadth of views received can be summarised effectively and efficiently. All campaign responses will be taken into account in the final analysis of public views and campaigns help provide an indication of the strength of feeling on an issue. The preferred route for all respondents to provide their views (including where a response is based on a campaign) is via the Citizen Space platform.

Confidentiality and data protection information

A summary of the responses to this consultation will be published on the Government website at: www.gov.uk/defra. An annex to the consultation summary will list all organisations that responded but will not include personal names, addresses or other contact details.

Defra may publish the content of your response to this consultation to make it available to the public without your personal name and private contact details (for example home address, email address, etc).

If you click on 'Yes' in response to the question asking if you would like anything in your response to be kept confidential, you are asked to state clearly what information you would like to be kept as confidential and explain your reasons for confidentiality. The reason for this is that information in responses to this consultation may be subject to release to the public or other parties in accordance with the access to information law (these are primarily the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs), the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the (DPA)). We have obligations, mainly under the EIRs, FOIA and DPA, to disclose information to particular recipients or to the public in certain circumstances. In view of this, your explanation of your reasons for requesting confidentiality for all or part of your response would help us balance these obligations for disclosure against any obligation of confidentiality. If we receive a request for the information that you have provided in your response to this consultation, we will take full account of your reasons for requesting confidentiality of your response, but we cannot guarantee that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.

If you click on 'No' in response to the question asking if you would like anything in your response to be kept confidential, we will be able to release the content of your response to the public, but we won't make your personal name and private contact details publicly available.

There may be occasions when Defra will share the information you provide in response to the consultation, including any personal data with external analysts. This is for the purposes of consultation response analysis and provision of a report of the summary of responses only.

This consultation is being conducted in line with the Cabinet Office "[Consultation Principles](#)".

Please find our latest privacy notice uploaded as a related document alongside our consultation document.

If you have any comments or complaints about the consultation process, please address them to:

Consultation on registration requirements for all bird keepers

Consultation Coordinator, Defra

2nd Floor, Foss House, Kings Pool,

1-2 Peasholme Green, York, YO1 7PX

Or email: consultation.coordinator@defra.gov.uk

About You

1. Would you like your response to be kept confidential? (Select one option only)

- Yes
- No

If you answered Yes to this question, please give your reason

2. What is your name?

3. What is your email address?

This is optional, but if you enter your email address you will be able to return to edit your consultation response in Citizen Space at any time until you submit it. You will also receive an acknowledgement email when you submit a completed response.

4. Which best describes you? (please tick only one option):

- Sector trade body or membership organisation - In an official capacity of representing the trade body
- Research organisation - In an official capacity as a representative of a research institution
- Charity
- Business - In an official capacity representing the views of a business
- Individual - You are responding with your personal views, rather than as an official representative of a business / business association / other organisation
- Other (please specify below)

Please only answer question 5 if you are responding on behalf of an organisation or business.

5. Please provide the name of the organisation/business you represent.

6. Please indicate which location your response relates to, selecting from the following (select all that apply):

- England
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- Other (please specify below)

7. Do you or the sector you represent keep poultry or other captive birds? (tick all that are applicable)

- Poultry¹
- Other captive birds²
- I or we don't keep birds

8. Do you keep any of the following poultry or other captive bird species? (tick all that are applicable):

Poultry species:

- Chickens/hens
- Geese
- Ducks
- Turkeys
- Pigeons (bred or reared for meat)
- Quail
- Partridges
- Pheasants
- Guinea fowl
- Ratites (emus, ostriches, etc.)
- Other poultry species (please specify below)

Other captive bird species

- Columbiformes (racing pigeons, doves, tumblers and solitaires)
- Birds of prey
- Ornamental birds kept for display or exhibitions or in aviaries for example finches and canaries)
- Psittaciformes (parrots, parakeets, macaws, budgies)
- Other captive birds (please specify below)
- I or we don't keep birds

9. For which of the following purposes do you keep birds (poultry or other captive birds)? (tick as many as apply):

- For personal consumption of meat
- For personal consumption of eggs
- Breeding for egg laying
- Egg Laying
- Breeding for meat
- Rearing for meat
- Growing pullets up to point of lay
- Restocking of breeding game birds
- Breeding of game birds
- Releasing of gamebirds
- Racing
- As pets

- Shows or exhibitions
- As part of a zoological or conservation collection or for educational purposes
- Rescue or rehabilitation purposes
- Falconry or hunting
- Riding (ostriches)
- Other purposes (please specify)
- I or we don't keep birds

10. How many bird(s) do you (or your organisation) keep?

- 1– 9
- 10 – 49
- 50 – 100
- Over 100
- I or we don't keep birds

Background and proposal

All poultry keepers in Great Britain are currently encouraged to record the fact that they keep poultry by registering with the APHA, but only a keeper with 50 or more poultry at any single premises is required by law to do so. Currently, poultry keepers with less than 50 birds can voluntarily register their birds using the [registration form](#). The registration is captured within the Great Britain (GB) poultry register, a database maintained by APHA.

Article Regulation 7 of [the Avian Influenza \(Preventive measures\) \(England\) Regulation 2006](#) in England, regulation 7 of [the Avian Influenza \(Preventive Measures\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2006](#) in Wales, and Article 5 of [the Avian Influenza \(Preventive Measures\) \(Scotland\) Order 2007](#) in Scotland (hereafter, referred to as “the legislation”), sets out the requirements for identification of poultry premises in Great Britain. A keeper with 50 or more poultry is required to notify relevant Ministers of specified information relating to those poultry within 1 month of keeping poultry. The [current compulsory poultry registration form](#) sets out the information currently required from a keeper for the registration of their birds. The information required on the form includes:

- details of the person in charge of the day-to-day care of the poultry (the keeper)
- details of the person/company that rents or owns the site(s) where the poultry are kept
- location of where the poultry are kept; this includes name and address of each site where poultry is kept, county parish number, etc.
- information concerning the birds: this would include the species of poultry kept, the number of each species of poultry usually kept, purpose for keeping the birds
- the husbandry system or systems in use at the premises, etc.

The current registration requirements also mandate the keeper to notify relevant Ministers within 1 month of any changes in the following information:

- contact information (keeper's name and address);

- the species of poultry kept at the premises;
- an increase or decrease of 20% or more in the number of birds of poultry species, unless the changes is due to usual management fluctuations⁴

Where there are changes to the above information the keeper is required fill the [compulsory registration form](#) and resubmit a scanned signed copy to the APHA by email or post or call.

Any non-compliance with the legislation is a criminal offence under the section 73 of [the Animal Health Act 1981](#) (as amended) and can lead to enforcement action by the local authority. A person can either be sentenced to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or be fined, or both. This will remain the case for any proposed amendments to the legislation.

The mandatory registration process involves the keeper completing a form and submitting it by post or email (scanned copy) to the APHA. All information is manually transferred by APHA staff into the database. We are currently looking to streamline the registration process by introducing an online portal. This will allow new keepers to register their birds online or for existing keepers to access and update their record or deregister if they no longer keep birds.

Electronic access via the portal could also be used to fulfil existing statutory requirements of informing government whenever there is a 20% or more increase or decrease in the number of birds kept, or changes in their contact or bird location details, etc.

The online platform will be rolled out in phases. The first phase, likely to be rolled out by summer 2023, will enable online registration; subsequent phases will allow all bird keepers to review and update their information.

Keepers will benefit from these improvements to the online registration process regardless of the outcome of this consultation.

What do we use the information for?

The information on the poultry register is important in the prevention and control of notifiable avian disease outbreaks (such as Newcastle Disease and avian influenza). Avian influenza (also known as bird flu) is a highly contagious viral disease that affects both domestic and wild birds. The disease occurs worldwide but different subtypes are more prevalent in certain regions than others. Avian influenza viruses are classified as

⁴ Usual management fluctuations” means—

- (a) the emptying of poultry houses or hatcheries for immediate restocking; and
- (b) seasonal stocking.

either high or low pathogenicity viruses depending on the severity of the disease in poultry. Newcastle disease is a highly infectious and often severe viral disease that affects birds, including poultry. It is caused by virulent strains of avian paramyxovirus type 1. Outbreaks of these diseases can have significant costs to government, industry, and the taxpayer. If an outbreak occurs, government intervention is important to eradicate the disease. The information on the register is used to:

- communicate with keepers when there is a heightened risk of bird flu incursion and during bird flu and Newcastle disease outbreaks, on measures they need to take to protect the health of their birds, and to prevent disease spread.
- meet the disease control measures set out in domestic legislation⁵ and [the Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain](#), such as undertaking surveillance activities in any restricted zone following confirmation of disease outbreak.
- meet EU disease freedom requirements for trade purposes following an outbreak of disease in GB.

[The 2018 Dame Glenys Stacey Review](#) recommended the removal of the lower bird number limit for registration of poultry, due to the risk of exotic disease⁶ and the operational need to reach all poultry owners when an outbreak occurs. Without adequate and accurate information on the location on all bird premises, it is impossible for government to communicate with all bird keepers during outbreaks of disease or to effectively undertake outbreak related activities.

Having up to date information on the location of bird premises increases the effectiveness of activities carried out by government such as risk assessments, tracing investigations and sharing communications with keepers on how to protect their birds. Therefore, it is vital that accurate and up to date information on the location of bird premises is captured on the register.

Proposed policy

We are consulting on three options, as follows:

- **Baseline** - Do not change the current poultry registration requirements
- **Option 1 - (preferred option)** Extend the registration requirement to all bird keepers³, including mandatory annual update to the registration information.
- **Option 2** - Extend registration requirements to a keeper³ of 10 or more birds,

⁵ The Avian Influenza and Influenza of Avian Origin in Mammals (England) (No. 2) Order 2006, as amended in England, the Avian Influenza and Influenza of Avian Origin in Mammals (Wales) (No. 2) Order 2006, as amended in Wales and Avian Influenza and Influenza of Avian Origin in Mammals (Scotland) Order 2006, as amended in Scotland.

⁶ Bird flu and Newcastle disease in poultry and other captive birds are regarded as exotic diseases in the UK.

including mandatory annual update to the registration information

Do nothing and continue to apply the current mandatory registration requirements

Under this option, we will continue to mandate any person keeping 50 or more poultry at any single premises to register by completing the [current mandatory registration form](#) and submitting it to APHA.

The keeper will be required to notify relevant Ministers via the APHA within one month of:

- specified changes to some of the information on the GB poultry register (such as the numbers of poultry species kept and keeper's details).
- including an increase or decrease of 20% or more in the number of birds of poultry species, unless the change is due to usual management fluctuations.

Any keeper with less than 50 poultry or keepers of other captive birds will not be legally required to provide information on the register but will continue to be encouraged to voluntarily register their birds using the simplified version of the registration form.

Our current view is that this option risks failing to address issues identified as lessons from the 2021/2022 bird flu outbreak and previous bird flu outbreaks. It will also not address the recommendation from [the 2018 Dame Glenys Stacey Review](#) which advocated the removal of the lower bird number limit for registration of birds, due to the risk of exotic disease and the operational need to reach all poultry owners when an outbreak occurs.

Option 1: extend the registration requirements to all bird keepers including mandatory annual update to the registration information

Option 1 is our preferred option. This option would entail making the following changes to the current mandatory poultry registration requirements in GB by amending legislation to:

- Extend the current mandatory registration requirements to cover all bird keepers (poultry¹ and other captive birds²) and reducing the registration threshold from 50 birds to 1 bird. This proposal will exclude pet birds⁷ kept entirely within a domestic dwelling.
- Require all keepers to review and update their information on the register by a specified date and within an agreed time frame, annually.

⁷ For the purpose of this consultation only, a "pet bird" is a specimen of avian species other than: chickens, turkeys, guinea fowl, ducks, geese, quail, pigeons and doves, game birds, ostrich, rheas and emus, and swans, and kept exclusively within a domestic dwelling for non-commercial purposes.

We are considering a phased approach to implementing the proposed changes. The mandatory registration element would be implemented in late 2023 or early 2024 and the proposed annual mandatory update coming into force 12 months later.

Extending the current mandatory registration requirements to cover all bird keepers (poultry and other captive birds) by reducing the registration threshold from 50 birds to 1 bird.

The current legislative requirements apply to a keeper with 50 or more poultry at any single premises. Information on the location on all birds (regardless of species) is required to carry out exotic disease control measures effectively and ultimately help to reduce the likelihood and impact of notifiable avian disease outbreaks.

We are proposing extending the current registration requirements to include any keeper of poultry and other captive birds and reducing the requirement to register from 50 birds to 1 bird. This would mean any person who keeps 1 or more of any type of bird (including racing pigeons) will be required to register the bird(s) by providing specified information relating to those birds, the purpose for which they keep the bird(s) and their contact details. This proposal would not affect pet birds⁷ kept entirely within a domestic dwelling. For example, a parrot or a budgie kept in a cage entirely within a domestic dwelling and which never leaves the said dwelling except for veterinary attention or short-term (a few days or 2-3 weeks) periods where the owner is unable to look after the bird(s) themselves.

This proposal would bring into scope all keepers of racing pigeons, currently required to register their establishment with the relevant government authority in order to move their birds to Northern Ireland or EU for immediate release to race to GB.

Mandatory annual updates to the registration information

Mandatory annual updates to registration information for all keepers would improve the accuracy of data to assist in disease prevention and control, although it is noted that annual registration would not necessarily match the production cycle for all systems.

We are seeking your views on the proposal to make it mandatory for all keepers to review and update their information on the register by a specified date and within an agreed time frame.

This proposal would help to improve the accuracy of data held by APHA on the database and to assist government in disease prevention and control. The proposed changes would be in addition to the existing obligation for a keeper to inform APHA within a month of a number of specified changes to the information on the register as set out on page 10.

The proposed changes will not be implemented until new keepers can register their bird(s) via the online portal and those already registered are able to review and update their information via the online platform.

Option 2: Extend registration requirements to a keeper of 10 or more bird species, including mandatory annual update to the registration information

This option would entail making the following changes to the current poultry registration requirements:

- Extending the registration requirements to cover any keeper³ with 10 or more birds (both poultry¹ and other captive birds²) at any single premises. This proposal will exclude pet birds⁷ kept entirely within a domestic dwelling.
- Mandatory requirement for all keepers to review and update their information on the register by a specified date and within an agreed time frame, annually.

Similarly to option 1, a pet bird⁷ kept entirely within a domestic dwelling is considered out of scope of these proposed changes.

Although this option will capture more information on some keepers compared to the do-nothing option, we consider that it would not adequately improve the information held on the poultry register to any significant benefit. For example, it would not increase the effectiveness or efficiency of activities carried out by government prior to or during outbreaks of bird flu or Newcastle disease.

We consider that option 2 would not fully address the recommendation from [the 2018 Dame Glenys Stacey Review](#).

This option would also involve a phased approach to implementing the proposals, with the compulsory registration element implemented in late 2023 or early 2024 and the proposed annual mandatory update coming into force 12 months later.

Consultation specific questions

As set out on page 11 of this consultation document, we are consulting on 3 options:

- **Do not** change the current registration requirements.
- **Option 1 (preferred option)** would extend the current mandatory registration requirements to cover all bird keepers by reducing the registration threshold from 50 birds to 1 bird.
- **Option 2** would extend the registration requirements to a keeper of 10 or more birds, including mandatory annual update to the registration information.

11.

a. **Please state your preferred option and why** (select one option):

- Do nothing (no change to the current registration requirements)
- Option 1
- Option 2
- I or we don't have a preferred option

b. Please explain the reasons for your answer below

12.

a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to extend the poultry registration requirements to include all bird species? (select one option only).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

b. Please explain the reasons for your answer

13.

a. As set out in options 1 and 2 above, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to reduce the registration threshold of all bird species (except pet birds⁷ kept entirely in domestic dwelling)? (select one option per proposal).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Reduction of the registration threshold for all bird species from 50 to 1						
Reduction of the registration threshold for all bird species from 50 to 10						

b. Please explain the reasons for your answer

14. As set out in options 1 and 2 above, we are considering exempting pet birds⁷ kept within a domestic dwelling from the proposed changes to the mandatory registration requirements. This would mean that that a keeper of pet birds would be exempted from registering such birds.

a. Do you think pet birds⁷ that are housed exclusively within a domestic dwelling should be exempt from the proposal to extend the mandatory registration requirements to all bird species? (select one option only)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

b. Please explain the reasons for your answer

15.

a. How far do you agree or disagree with mandating all bird keepers to review and update their information annually on the register, by a specified date? (select one option only).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

b. Please explain the reasons for your answer

16.

a. Following on from question 15, when do you think the annual reminder should be sent to keepers? (select one option only).

- 1 June every year
- 1 July every year
- 1 December every year
- I or we don't have a preference
- Other

b. If other, please specify, giving reasons for your answer

17. The proposal to require keepers to update their registration information annually would require them to have access to their information via an online portal. A 12-month transition period before proposals brought forward come into force is proposed to accommodate this.

a. In your opinion, is the proposed transition period of 12 months for the new mandatory annual update requirements (select one option only).

- Reasonable?
- Too short?
- Too long?
- Don't know/no comment

b. Please explain the reasons for your answer

18. Do you have additional information or evidence on the potential impacts of the proposed amendment to the mandatory poultry registration requirements and extension to all bird species as set out in option 1?

19. Do you have additional information or evidence on the potential impacts of the proposed amendment to the mandatory poultry registration requirements and extension to keepers of 10 or more birds as set out in option 2?

20. Is there anything else you would like to tell us relating to the proposed amendments to the registration requirements?

Other general questions

21. (For keepers with more than 50 or more poultry only) On average, how long does it take you to fill in the [compulsory registration form](#) in order to register your birds?

- 1 - 14 minutes
- 15 - 29 minutes
- 30 minutes - 1 hour
- Over 1 hour
- Not applicable

22. (For all bird keepers) How often does each species of bird kept on your premises change by an increase or decrease of more than 20% in a year?

Possible future changes

There is ongoing work across government to improve the flock data collected for the National Control Programmes for Salmonella in poultry. While the poultry register collects a range of information, it does not collect flock data. Operators within National Control Programmes for Salmonella are required to submit flock information by legislation⁸. The information collected is not, however, sufficient to determine always with accuracy, whether targets for the prevalence of Salmonella are met in each GB administration. Targets are measured by

⁸ [The Control of Salmonella in Poultry Order 2007 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[The Control of Salmonella in Turkey Flocks Order 2009 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[The Control of Salmonella in Broiler Flocks Order 2009 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

reference to the total number of flocks in each sector (breeding chickens and turkeys, layers, broilers and fattening turkeys) in a calendar year.

We are looking to address this and will consult separately later with a more detailed proposal. We are exploring the scope to collect this information on the same platform as the poultry register. Only those within the National Control Programmes would need to provide flock information.