

# Temporary Operational Instruction

**Action note: 2024-11-13 - Chapter 6 of the  
Manual for Official Controls (MOC).**

**Title Notifiable Diseases – Review of Avian  
Influenza (AI) designations**

## Purpose

This action note is to inform operational staff of a new temporary operational instruction relating to the review/activation of Avian Influenza (AI) designations for the 2024/2025 outbreak.

## Background

Following a prolonged outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1 in commercial poultry since October 2021, the UK self-declared zonal freedom from HPAI

for Great Britain to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) on 29 March 2024.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) then confirmed that all avian influenza designations of poultry slaughterhouses in England were revoked, and all former designated poultry slaughterhouses were moved to the “pre-designation” AI list.

Defra also pointed out that the Welsh Government and Scottish Government were adopting the same approach. Therefore, AI designations issued during the previous outbreak need to be reviewed to activate those in case of a subsequent outbreak.

In the last few weeks, the Notifiable Disease (ND) portfolio, in liaison with Defra, has been working on an up-to-date version of Annex 28. Following the latest case of HPAI H5N5 confirmed on 5 November 2024, a new outbreak season has been opened, and all slaughterhouse pre-designations need to be activated for them to operate in a control zone or receive birds from the control zones. During the review process, FBO procedures will need to be re-assessed by the Official Veterinarian (OV), and the new Annex 28 completed.

## Procedure

This review of FBO procedures will consist of a plant-based exercise where the establishment’s OV will undertake an on-site assessment of the FBO standard operating procedures (SOPs) and structural facilities, referring to the signed-off Annex 25 from last year and the procedures developed by the FBO. Version 2 of Annex 28 must be used by the OV for this review/activation.

The main purpose of the review is to ensure that the operational procedures have not changed since the initial designation, and that the establishment can operate in a control zone and/or receive birds from a control zone without increasing the risk of disease spreading.

In addition to confirmation of non-compliance/compliance the OV can use the comments box to note any changes. When significant changes are noted in the procedures, i.e. level of separation of birds, changes in schedule arrival of birds, the FBO must be required to complete a new application form, Annex 25.

Once the review is carried out and the questionnaire is completed by the OV, Annex 28 will need to be sent to the [approvals@food.gov.uk](mailto:approvals@food.gov.uk) to process the re-designation. In case the review is not satisfactory, the OV should bring any issues to the attention of the FBO so that they can achieve compliance.

Approvals, will send the completed Annex 28 to the local Field Veterinary Lead (FVL)/ Field Veterinary Coordinator (FVC) for countersignature, which once satisfied that the controls are in place, will send it back to [Approvals@food.gov.uk](mailto:Approvals@food.gov.uk) for final processing.

The Designation will be sent to the FBO and copied to the relevant team once it has been granted by Defra/Welsh Government.

## **Front line staff are required to note the following action**

1. OVs to discuss with FBOs if they intend to receive poultry from control zones, during the 2024 “season”, and complete the designation process. OVs at establishments not designated during the last season or that have had significant changes in their procedures, shall let the FBO know that a new application, Annex 25, has to be completed.
2. OVs to review procedures send Annex 28 to [approvals@food.gov.uk](mailto:approvals@food.gov.uk).
3. Approval team to send Annex 28 to FVC/FVL for clearance, and cc ND portfolio for tracking.

4. FVC/FVLs should carry out a sense check of the form submitted by the OV, and once satisfied the controls in place are satisfactory, Annex 28 to be sent to the Approval team.
5. Approvals team to coordinate and keep track of the process and liaise with Defra and Welsh Government as required.
6. ND portfolio to provide support to all involved in the process and liaise with Defra and Welsh Government on any Avian Influenza designation related issue.

Note the contents of the action note, ensuring it is read by all front-line staff. Where necessary, print a copy for the plant file.

## Distribution

This action note will be:

- uploaded to the [Temporary Operational Instruction Folder held in the MOC area of SharePoint](#) (accessible only on an official FSA device)
- logged on the [Temporary Operational Instruction tracker](#) (accessible only on an official FSA device)
- published alongside the [MOC chapters on food.gov.uk](#)

The action note will remain live until either incorporated into the MOC or revoked.

# Annex

<b>Action note drafted by and date</b>	<b>Action note agreed by and date</b>	<b>Published and date</b>
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