



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Contingency plan for Exotic Notifiable and Emerging Diseases of Aquatic Animals in England and Wales

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 About this plan

The UK has a high aquatic animal health status compared to many regions of the world and is free of the most serious aquatic animal diseases. This status supports healthy wild and farmed aquatic animal populations and facilitates global aquaculture trade. Aquatic animal disease outbreaks threaten the natural environment, aquaculture trade and profitability, and important recreational activities such as angling. Preparedness in the event of a disease outbreak is one of the essential elements in protecting aquatic animal health.

This document is a joint framework contingency plan to respond effectively to an exotic notifiable or emerging disease outbreak in aquatic animals in England and Wales

The challenges of responding to disease outbreaks are best met by working in partnership across government, with industry stakeholders and with aquatic animal keepers. This plan explains the role that all parties involved have in preparing for, responding to and recovering from outbreaks of exotic notifiable or emerging diseases in aquatic animals in England and Wales. This plan should be read by those involved in the response and those who will be affected by an outbreak of an exotic notifiable or emerging disease.

Separate but parallel contingency plans apply in Scotland and Northern Ireland to reflect the different domestic, legal and administrative structures that operate in these Devolved Administrations (DAs).

## 1.2 Diseases covered

This contingency plan covers exotic notifiable and emerging diseases of aquatic animals (subject to risk assessment of the threat).

**Notifiable diseases** (also referred to as listed diseases) are defined in the [Aquatic Animal Health \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2009 \(AAHR\)](#). By law, they must be reported to the [Fish Health Inspectorate](#) (FHI). The full list of [diseases controlled and made notifiable under the AAHR](#) can be found on GOV.UK.

**Emerging diseases** are newly recognised diseases, the cause and threat level of which may or may not yet be established, or known diseases which have changed in pathogenicity, or spread to a new geographic area or species. Not all emerging diseases pose a serious threat. If an emerging disease is suspected, a risk assessment will be used to determine where immediate action is required.

### 1.3 Defra and the Welsh Government's objectives

Defra and the Welsh Government (WG) aim to maintain the high aquatic animal health status in England and Wales, and contribute to better protection against animal diseases, with strong response and recovery capabilities, as outlined in Defra's [Aquatic Animal Health Strategy](#) and the Welsh Government's [Natural Resources Policy](#). If an exotic notifiable or emerging disease is confirmed in England or Wales, Defra and the WG will act swiftly and decisively to:

- control the disease and minimise onward spread
- eradicate the disease and regain disease free status
- protect public health and safety
- safeguard the health and safety of those involved directly in controlling the outbreak
- minimise the burden on the taxpayer and public as well as the economic impact of the outbreak on industry
- minimise the risk to the wider environment, the ecosystem services dependent on it and wider fisheries and other stakeholders
- minimise the number of aquatic animals that have to be humanely destroyed, either for disease control purposes or to safeguard animal welfare

### 1.4 Legal framework

The contingency plan shall be implemented in the event of an outbreak of either:

- an emerging disease
- an exotic notifiable disease listed in Annex 1A to [Commission Regulation \(EC\) No 1251/2008](#) as amended by the [Animals, Aquatic Animal Health, Invasive Alien Species, Plant Propagating Material and Seeds \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#), or Schedule 1 of the [Aquatic Animal Health \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2009](#)

The [Aquatic Animal Health \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2009](#) is the domestic legislation that provides the legal powers for control of disease outbreaks.

This document provides a framework contingency plan to respond effectively to a major notifiable or emerging disease outbreak in England and Wales.

### 1.5 Maintaining preparedness

Defra and the Welsh Government, working with Cefas and other operational partners, regularly undertake contingency exercises to refine and demonstrate emergency preparedness to deal effectively with outbreaks of disease in aquatic animals. Each exercise is assessed, and an evaluation report produced. These reports are used to

highlight and promote best practice, identify lessons learned and, in combination with new legislation and scientific advances, to review and update contingency plans as appropriate.

## 1.6 International controls and trade implications

In the event of a disease outbreak, or incident and depending on the disease, the UK may lose its international disease-free status for this disease. This may result in some countries no longer accepting aquatic animals or their products from the UK. It may not be possible to issue Export Health Certificates (EHCs) for certain animal products until conditions to allow trade to continue are agreed with the importing countries.

Depending on the disease and any movement restrictions in place, animal products from affected areas might be allowed to be traded within the domestic market (subject to requirements defined by the Competent Authority).

Government and stakeholders will need to work closely, from the start of an outbreak and possibly during the suspicion stage, on communicating with trading partners to minimise the impact on trade. Trade restrictions can remain in place for a long time, even after the disease has been tackled and disease-free status has been re-established.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The following section outlines the roles and responsibilities of key players involved in responding to an aquatic animal disease outbreak. An overview of the management structure during an outbreak can be seen in **Annex 1**.

Defra has an overarching role in coordinating the response to an outbreak in England and Wales. Where an outbreak occurs in England, disease control decisions will be taken by the UK Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO UK) on the basis of expert advice from the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas). Where an outbreak occurs in Wales, disease control decisions will be taken by the CVO Wales, in liaison with the CVO UK on finance implications, and on the basis of expert advice from Cefas. Cefas, including the FHI, will deliver the operational response following agreement with the CVO UK and the CVO Wales with support from the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales (NRW), if required.

### 2.1 Chief Veterinary Officers (CVO)

In addition to the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) UK, each of the Devolved Administrations (DAs) (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) has a CVO. The CVO UK has responsibility for disease management and control for diseases of aquatic animals in England; the CVO Wales and CVO UK share responsibility for disease management and control in Wales. Decisions on control of diseases of aquatic animals in Wales will be taken by the CVO Wales, working closely with the CVO UK, and on the basis of expert advice from Cefas.

The CVOs' main objectives are to:

- protect animal and human health
- protect against the incursion and spread of exotic animal diseases and maintain a state of preparedness to deal with any outbreak
- control endemic disease
- promote high standards for animal health and welfare

In the context of this joint contingency plan, the CVO UK is the UK/Defra chief spokesperson on aquatic animal health and welfare issues. As such the CVO UK will:

- make the decision to activate the contingency plan (for incidents in England)
- lead the Defra response to outbreaks of notifiable or emerging aquatic animal diseases in England
- provide veterinary and policy advice and assurance on the programmes necessary to control, and, where appropriate, eradicate disease
- be responsible for notifying the European Commission and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) of an outbreak of disease within any part of the UK (if necessary)
- make final policy decisions on significant control measures not laid down in legislation, such as implementation of national standstills for fish movements
- work closely with the CVO Wales on control measures for outbreaks in Wales, based on the advice provided by Cefas and taking account of the position of ministers, as appropriate

In the context of this joint contingency plan, the CVO Wales is the Welsh Government's chief spokesperson on aquatic animal health and welfare issues.

As such the CVO Wales will:

- jointly with the CVO UK, make the decision to activate the contingency plan for incidents in Wales
- lead the WG response to outbreaks of notifiable and emerging aquatic animal diseases in Wales
- provide veterinary and policy advice and assurance on the programmes necessary to control, and, where appropriate, eradicate disease in Wales
- work closely with the CVO UK and make decisions on significant control measures not laid down in legislation, such as implementation of national standstills for fish movements in Wales, based on the advice provided by Cefas and taking account of the position of ministers, as appropriate

Scotland and Northern Ireland have separate contingency plans for managing outbreaks of aquatic animal disease within Scotland or Northern Ireland. However, their CVOs participate in contingency planning exercises in England and Wales and remain briefed on

outbreaks of disease in England and Wales, to enable an effective response in the event of a cross border incident affecting Scotland or Northern Ireland.

## **2.2 Defra**

### **Defra Aquatic Animal Health Policy team (DAAHP)**

The Defra Aquatic Animal Health Policy team (DAAHP), which is part of Defra's Animal and Plant Health and Welfare (APHW) Directorate, is responsible for the development of policy for the control, containment and eradication of notifiable and emerging aquatic animal diseases in England.

The team, headed up by the relevant deputy director of APHW, will maintain, oversee and implement this contingency plan in the event of an exotic notifiable or emerging disease incident. Specific responsibilities include:

- making the final policy decisions on control measures not laid down in legislation for outbreaks in England, based on expert advice
- liaison with Defra lawyers and other departments as appropriate
- liaison with policy lead counterparts in DAs
- ensuring ministers, Press Office, DAs, other parts of Defra, Environment Agency and other relevant organisations (including those representing industry) are kept fully informed, seeking their views as necessary
- contributing to and signing off regular updates of press briefing and Q&A
- securing and confirming additional financial and other resources necessary for the implementation of the contingency plan

Advice and input from other Defra functions will be sought as required. This will vary depending on the scale and seriousness of the outbreak but is likely to include legal advice to ensure that the disease control operation complies with domestic and international obligations, liaison between Defra Finance and Cefas Finance, and policy advice on issues such as animal welfare or the disposal of affected stock.

### **Defra Trade Teams**

The Defra trade teams (Defra Imports and EU Trade and Defra Market Access) are likely to be involved in communications with relevant EU and non-EU trading partners.

The Defra Imports and EU trade team is responsible for policies relating to trade with the EU. During an outbreak, the team is involved in controlling the export of commodities to the EU that are capable of spreading disease. The team works closely with the UK Office for SPS Trade Assurance.

The Defra Market Access team works to maintain the safe trade in UK exports of Products of Animal Origin (POAO), live animals and germinal products to non-EU countries during

disease outbreaks. The team does so through regular communication with non-EU trading partners, providing updates and addressing trade-related queries as they arise.

## **Defra Communications**

The Defra Press Office and Defra Strategic Communications team support the Cefas Communications team during a disease outbreak. The level of support depends on the scale and significance of the outbreak, in some major cases it may be necessary for Defra Communications to take the lead.

## **2.3 Welsh Government (WG)**

The Aquatic Animal Health (England and Wales) Regulations 2009 define Welsh ministers as the competent authority in Wales.

The Welsh Government's Marine and Fisheries Division and the WG Animal Disease Policy team (ADP) are part of the Welsh Government's Climate Change and Rural Affairs Group and have joint responsibility for the development of policy for the control, containment and eradication of aquatic animal diseases in Wales.

These teams, led by the Deputy Director of Marine and Fisheries, will maintain, oversee and implement this contingency plan in the event of an exotic notifiable or emerging disease incident in Wales. Specific responsibilities include:

- working closely with the DAAHP team, through the England and Wales Outbreak Control Strategy Group (OCSG), to make final policy decisions for Wales on control measures not laid down in legislation, based on expert advice
- ensuring the Welsh ministers, Press Office, Natural Resource Wales (NRW) and other relevant organisations (including those representing industry) are kept fully informed, seeking their views as necessary
- contributing to and signing off press briefings and Q&As for disease outbreaks in Wales
- securing additional financial and other resources necessary for the implementation of the contingency plan
- liaison with Welsh Government legal teams and other policy teams as appropriate
- liaison with policy lead counterparts in other DAs
- issuing up to date information on the emergency on [GOV.WALES](http://GOV.WALES) and relevant government departments and agencies
- working closely with the DAAHP team to ensure joined up approach of external communications

Advice and input from other WG functions will be sought as required. This will vary depending on the scale and seriousness of the outbreak but is likely to include advice on legislation to ensure that the disease control operation complies with domestic and



international obligations, liaison with Defra, Welsh Government and Cefas Finance teams, as well as policy advice on issues such as animal welfare or the disposal of affected stock.

## **2.4 Cefas**

Cefas leads the operational aspects of preparing for, containing and controlling outbreaks of notifiable disease and incidents of emerging diseases in England and Wales. Cefas maintains an Operations Manual, which is used by staff involved in the response to an outbreak. The manual reflects the policies and response strategies set out in this plan; it is reviewed annually and updated to reflect new legislation and scientific advances.

### **National Disease Control Centre (NDCC)**

Once the contingency plan is activated, Cefas is responsible for establishing a National Disease Control Centre (NDCC) at its Weymouth Laboratory. The UK CVO (or nominated deputy) chairs the NDCC, working closely with Defra directors and the Cefas NDCC Director, taking account of risk and evidence and issues such as impact on stakeholders, public acceptability, and practicality of delivery.

The purpose of the NDCC is to co-ordinate the operations (field and laboratory) necessary to implement the contingency plan. For cases in England, strategic direction is provided by the UK CVO (or nominated deputy). For cases in Wales, strategic direction is provided by the WG Head of Fisheries, in consultation with the UK CVO (or nominated deputy).

The NDCC Director is responsible for ensuring that Cefas is prepared to respond to a disease outbreak in an effective and efficient manner. Specific responsibilities include:

- following activation of the response component of the contingency plan by the CVO UK (for cases in England) or CVO Wales jointly with the CVO UK (for cases in Wales), calling the first meeting of the NDCC
- the schedule of meetings (battle rhythm) and co-ordination of NDCC and Cefas operational functions
- strategic organisation of the NDCC, ensuring there are business continuity plans in place to enable NDCC staff to access essential systems, documents, equipment and buildings whenever required
- taking into account resource needs and planning for the redeployment of non-FHI Cefas staff and diagnostic services to assist with the emergency keeping Defra, the WG and the FHI fully informed of major developments at all times
- ensuring the provision of scientific advice to Defra, the WG and the FHI, for example risk assessment of disease spread, containment and eradication
- ensuring the NDCC has an effective communications centre with adequate telephone help lines, and fax, email and database facilities. The centre must have the capability to deal with enquiries on the full range of technical matters associated

with the outbreak and be able respond quickly to information requests from central government, for example contributions to GOV.UK

- establishing a Cefas Communications team to provide briefing to the media and respond to press enquiries, keep Cefas GOV.UK pages up to date, and otherwise act as the government's spokesperson on the technical and scientific aspects of the disease outbreak
- ensuring all NDCC meetings are accurately recorded and minutes produced within 24 hours and circulated to DAAHP and the Head of the FHI
- ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that there are sufficient resources available to collect and analyse the number of samples likely to be required in any probable disease scenario

## **Cefas Communications**

The Cefas Communications team takes the overall communications lead during outbreaks of aquatic animal disease in England and Wales in respect of press and media. Support may be provided by the Defra Communications team. The Defra Communications team may take the lead on a large-scale outbreak or if there is substantial media interest.

## **2.5 Fish Health Inspectorate (FHI)**

The FHI, acting on behalf of Defra and the WG, has statutory responsibility for the control of notifiable and emerging disease in aquatic animals. The Head of the FHI and their team are responsible for:

- investigating suspected outbreaks of notifiable and emerging disease in aquatic animals
- taking samples and submitting them for laboratory analysis according to standard protocols, and informing the NDCC Director, DAAHP and the WG of the results and proposed action
- applying and enforcing disease control measures
- initiating immediate contact tracing to help minimise spread of an outbreak
- supervising clearance, cleansing and disinfection programmes
- when necessary, liaising with the Environment Agency, NRW or other Defra agencies to secure the use of facilities and staff (in consultation with NDCC Director)
- keeping DAAHP, the WG and NDCC Director informed of progress and problems (including resource and manpower problems) encountered, seeking advice when necessary
- ensuring that communications recording new developments are sent simultaneously to the DAAHP, the WG (where relevant) and the NDCC Director
- provision of a daily report and briefing as required

## 2.6 APHA

APHA is the primary delivery agent for identifying and controlling disease outbreaks in terrestrial animals in England, Scotland and Wales. Cefas is part of the APHA Disease Emergency Response Committee (DERC) and is working with APHA to share best practice and increase engagement between the two agencies to develop capability for disease emergency response and contingency planning.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency's Centre for International Trade – Carlisle (APHA CITC) issues Export Health Certificates (EHCs) for exports of live animals and products of animal origin to all countries. During a disease outbreak the APHA team will pause the issuing of relevant certificates.

## 2.7 Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

Under the Environment Act, the Environment Agency has a statutory duty to maintain, improve and develop fisheries. Natural Resources Wales has the same function in Wales. Both agencies will support the FHI as necessary to implement the contingency plan and help contain and eradicate disease, while giving guidance to focus on clear environmental outcomes.

In accordance with section 3.2 of, the 'Guiding Principles on joint working between the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales – tier 2 Guidance to the Memorandum of Understanding', the Environment Agency and NRW have committed to work together to ensure that the UK and Welsh Governments receive consistent and joined-up advice during major cross border incidents.

In consideration of section 4.1.1 of these 'Guiding Principles', it has been established that the Environment Agency will lead on cases confined to England, and those on the border catchment of the River Severn. NRW will lead on cases confined to Wales, and on the border catchments of the rivers Wye and Dee.

Specific responsibilities include:

- immediately reporting any suspicion of notifiable disease to the FHI and liaising on emerging disease threats
- participating in Defra contingency planning exercises
- reinforcing movement controls through application of its own live fish movement regulations and fishery authorisations
- providing information to the head of FHI, DAAHP and the WG on owners or occupiers of non-farmed waters and users (including angling and other recreational activities)
- assisting the Head of FHI and NDCC Director in the delineation of Confirmed Designation areas and surveillance zones

- assisting with publicising control measures and movement restrictions
- providing technical advice on environmental risks or impacts of the disease
- providing advice on waste disposal, for example, for carcasses and associated wastes, and on how to minimise the environmental impacts of any cleansing or disinfection activities

The Environment Agency and NRW may also assist with the collection of samples for diagnostic testing and the safe removal of dead and dying fish from non-farm waters subject to available resource.

## **2.8 UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Public Health Wales (PHW)**

The [UKHSA's](#) role is to provide clear and unambiguous advice on the human health implications of an aquatic animal disease outbreak in England.

The [PHW's](#) role is to provide clear and unambiguous advice on the human health implications of an aquatic animal disease outbreak in Wales.

## **2.9 Food Standards Agency (FSA)**

The [FSA](#) is responsible for providing advice to the public concerning implications for the food chain arising from an outbreak of notifiable disease of animals.

The role of the FSA is to protect public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food, including risks caused by the way in which it is produced or supplied, and otherwise to protect the wider interests of consumers in relation to food. The FSA is responsible for responding to all food and feed incidents including implications for the food chain arising from an outbreak of notifiable disease. In the initial stages all incidents will be regarded as a potential risk to public health until there is evidence to the contrary.

## **2.10 Expert Group**

The Expert Group provides the CVO UK, the CVO Wales and respective policy makers with expert scientific and epidemiological opinion to inform decisions on disease control and prevention measures. The role of this group will be to advise and make recommendations on the likely impacts, spread and control of the disease on both farms and in the wild. The Expert Group is located in Weymouth and is activated and chaired by the Cefas Scientific Advice Lead. Members include the Cefas Head of Epidemiology, the Head of FHI, appropriate diagnostic and scientific staff as well as relevant disease experts.

## **2.11 England and Wales Outbreak Control Strategy Group (OCSG)**

The England and Wales Outbreak Control Strategy Group (OCSG) is set up during an outbreak, it is the forum where disease control strategy decisions at the England/Wales level are made.

Members of the OCSG include the relevant CVOs and DCVOs, Defra policy teams, WG policy teams, Defra Legal, WG Legal, and the Expert Group. It is chaired by the relevant CVO (or deputy CVO). Membership may expand for significant policy decisions and could then include Defra's Permanent Secretary, and other Directors General and Directors.

The OCSG's main responsibilities are:

- to review the disease control strategy, identify risks/issues, consider whether it is being delivered as intended and achieving the intended outcomes
- to develop, determine and interpret policy within the legislative and wider strategic framework
- to communicate at the strategic level with the Expert Group and share this information more widely
- to advise ministers and other strategic decision makers
- to ensure the communications strategy is implemented

## **2.12 Aquatic Animal Health Policy Group (AAHPG)**

The Aquatic Animal Health Policy Group (AAHPG) is the key strategic forum for UK wide aquatic animal disease issues. It reaches, where possible, official-level agreement on UK and GB control strategies and, where appropriate, informs officials' recommendations to their respective ministers, and/or presents recommendations to the Animal Disease Policy Group (ADPG).

Members include Defra policy, WG policy, SG policy, Northern Ireland (DAERA) policy, Cefas FHI, SG FHI, DAERA FHI and Vets AFBI. Depending on the subject, membership may expand to include scientific advisers, experts on trade, lawyers, FSA and representatives from other government departments and agencies. DAAHP provides the secretariat.

The main purpose of the AAHPG is to provide a forum where the four UK administrations can discuss matters of relevance to aquatic animal health. During an exotic notifiable or emerging disease outbreak, the key functions of AAHPG are to:

- provide a forum to update all four UK administrations on changes in disease situation
- review and discuss disease control strategy when input from all four UK administrations is required

Depending on the relevance and magnitude of the subjects discussed, the AAHPG may escalate matters to the ADPG (Animal Disease Policy Group), which is attended by CVOs, DCVOs and other senior officials from the four UK nations.

### **2.13 Animal Disease Policy Group (ADPG)**

The Animal Disease Policy Group (ADPG) provides disease control policy advice and strategic recommendations at the UK level. Discussion at ADPG forms the basis for advice to Defra ministers and other strategic decision makers. The ADPG also has an important role in ensuring that policies are consistent (although they may be different) across the four administrations within the UK.

During an exotic notifiable or emerging disease outbreak, the key function of ADPG is to review, discuss and agree disease control policy and strategic recommendations. ADPG is used when matters are escalated from AAHPG. This is decided on a case-by-case basis, but matters escalated to ADPG are likely to include decisions that have long term impacts, such as accepting that the disease may not be eradicated from the UK and changing the disease control strategy accordingly.

ADPG is chaired by Defra's director for animal and plant health and welfare, or a nominated deputy, and Defra's Exotic Disease Policy Response Team (EDPRT) provides the secretariat. The membership of the ADPG includes representatives from Defra policy teams, communications group, Defra legal advisers (animal health and welfare team), UK CVO, National Experts Group (NEG), CVOs or DCVOs and policy officials from devolved governments, Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS), APHA, UKHSA and FSA. Its membership may expand for significant policy decisions and could then include Defra's permanent secretary, other director generals, and directors.

### **2.14 Industry stakeholders**

A group of key industry stakeholders may be established to work with senior officials in developing strategic disease control policies. Industry stakeholders may also be invited to attend NDCC bird-table meetings and various other meetings arranged. Stakeholders will also have a role in disseminating information to aquatic animal keepers.

### **2.15 Other UK administrations**

Representatives from the other UK administrations (Scotland and Northern Ireland Executive) and their delivery bodies may be based in the NDCC during large-scale outbreaks in the UK. For smaller outbreaks or those where disease is limited to England or Wales only, they may participate at NDCC bird-tables via teleconference.

## 3. Suspicion and confirmation of disease

### 3.1 Alert status

Response to the threat of an outbreak of an exotic notifiable or emerging aquatic animal disease in England or Wales is covered by a two-stage alert process:

- **amber alert:** Indicates a strong suspicion that the disease is present based on the clinical picture following an FHI investigation, or reliable reported intelligence of the presence of an exotic notifiable or significant emerging disease, at a location in England and Wales, and in some cases Scotland. Samples may have been submitted for laboratory analysis. Government laboratories may identify an exotic notifiable disease as part of routine surveillance which could also trigger an immediate move to an amber alert.
- **red alert:** Indicates that an exotic notifiable or significant emerging disease has been confirmed, or the CVO UK has declared a state of emergency

Cefas and the FHI are responsible for informing the relevant CVOs, DAAHP and the WG Aquaculture and Freshwater Fisheries Policy team when a change of status takes place (for example, there is evidence to support a red alert).

### 3.2 Initial suspicion – reporting to FHI

By law (The Aquatic Animal Health (England and Wales) Regulations 2009), if a 'relevant person' knows or suspects either:

- a notifiable disease is present in aquatic animals
- increased mortality has occurred or is occurring in aquaculture animals

they must report it to the FHI immediately on Tel: 01305 206700. The report is assessed by the FHI Duty Inspector, if there are sufficient grounds to suspect an exotic notifiable or emerging disease or it cannot be ruled out based on the clinical picture, the report is immediately referred to the Head of the FHI who will assess the situation to inform subsequent actions. A Fish Health Inspector will be dispatched to inspect the site and collect samples.

### 3.3 On suspicion (amber alert)

If the FHI suspects an exotic notifiable or significant emerging disease, an Initial Designation Notice (IDN) (temporary notice) is issued to the site operator to prevent further spread of disease while samples are collected and tests are carried out.

The Head of the FHI will immediately circulate a Notifiable Disease Investigation – Aquatic Animals notification (NDIA) to DAAHP, WG, CVO UK, CVO Wales, the NDCC Director,

Cefas Epidemiology and Laboratory leads, Defra Market Access, Defra Imports and EU Trade, the UK WOAHP Focal Point for Animal Disease Notification, Cefas Communications, and Defra Communications.

The FHI will ensure that appropriate notification is also sent:

- **for marine diseases** – to the Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority (IFCA)
- **for freshwater diseases** – to the Environment Agency and National Resources Wales (NRW), irrespective of whether the disease has been found in England or Wales

DAAHP or WG will in turn notify the DAs (if appropriate), the APHA Contingency Planning Division (CPD) (for information), the Defra Press Office, ministers' Private Office, FSA, PHW and UKHSA.

A **CVO case conference**, or series of, may be convened to discuss emerging issues.

The relevant CVO will inform the other CVOs from the DAs and make preparations to host the CVO case conference. The four CVOs from the UK, and key policy and aquatic animal health experts from each administration usually attend. If required, communications, trade and legal teams from the relevant administrations may also be present. The CVO case conference follows a standard agenda (**Annex 2**). The objective is for Cefas to update policy colleagues and alert senior personnel of the likelihood of an emergency situation. It may determine whether the situation warrants triggering of the amber teleconference. The CVO case conference is organised by DAAHP, who also supply the secretariat.

An **amber teleconference** is held where suspicion of the presence of the disease is strong, (for example, because of emerging laboratory results or a deteriorating clinical picture), and its presence cannot be ruled out on clinical grounds. Its purpose is to inform all concerned of the situation, to assess the risk and to agree on next steps based on the emerging situation. The amber teleconference is organised by DAAHP, who also provide the secretariat. It is chaired by the CVO for the territory in which disease is suspected and follows a standard agenda (**Annex 3**). Participants include the other UK administration's CVOs and senior officials from Defra, the Welsh Government (WG), Scottish Government (SG), Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), Cefas and the Cefas FHI, and other government departments including Defra Communications, Defra Market Access and Defra Imports and EU Trade.

During the teleconference the relevant CVO may negate disease, decide there is sufficient evidence to confirm disease or specify what further evidence, such as test results, will be needed. If the CVO decides that there is an unacceptable risk in waiting for laboratory test results (for example, based on clear clinical signs or a confirmed link to an infected source), they may take the decision to move to red alert and activate the response component of this contingency plan without waiting for the results of laboratory investigations. For incidents in England, the CVO UK will make the decision to activate the



contingency plan. For incidents in Wales, the Welsh CVO will make the decision jointly with the CVO UK.

### **3.4 Confirmation of disease (red alert)**

Upon confirmation of disease, the following actions are undertaken:

1. The FHI will send an updated NDIA notification to DAAHP, WG, CVO UK, CVO Wales, the NDCC Director, Cefas Epidemiology and Laboratory leads, Defra Market Access, Defra Imports and EU Trade, the UK WOAHA Focal Point for Animal Disease Notification, Cefas Communications, and Defra Communications. The FHI will also send the NDIA notification to DA delivery bodies (regardless of cross border implications) and notify IFCA (for marine diseases) or Environment Agency and NRW (for freshwater diseases)
2. The FHI will notify the affected animal keeper. The FHI will issue a Confirmed Designation Notice (CDN) (a legal order restricting movements of aquatic animals into, out of and within the affected area)
3. The FHI will issue an e-mail notification to alert authorised and registered Aquaculture Production Businesses (APBs) in England and Wales of an outbreak of the disease, as relevant to their industry sector. The alert provides details of the disease, the outbreak location and links to the information page on GOV.UK
4. DAAHP will notify the APHA Contingency Planning Division (CPD) for information. DAAHP will also notify ministers, the Defra Press Office, FSA, PHW and UKHSA.
5. Defra Market Access team will notify the APHA Centre for International Trade – Carlisle (CITC) so that relevant EHCs can be restricted/put on hold
6. If required, the CVO UK will notify the European Commission and WOAHA of the disease outbreak
7. The NDCC will be established at the Weymouth laboratory with Cefas leading the operational response. The level of activity will be proportionate to the outbreak or disease incident. The NDCC brings together policy functions provided by Defra and the WG, with operations functions provided by Cefas and other operational partners. Its main responsibility is to coordinate and direct the delivery of the disease control operation in partnership with stakeholders
8. The England and Wales Outbreak Control Strategy Group (OCSG) will be convened by DAAHP, and chaired by the relevant deputy director of APHW, Defra. The group will manage the disease response at a strategic level, escalating decisions to AAHPG, ADPG, the CVO and ministers as appropriate

### **3.5 Communications**

During a disease outbreak, it is important that there are effective, timely and accurate communications with the affected premises, stakeholders, farmers and animal keepers, the public and the media. Appropriate communications tools will be used to assist in reducing the spread and impact of the disease.

Information is gathered on the disease outbreak by Cefas to coordinate Defra and central government information, identify issues of key interest, and to provide accurate and timely updates on the outbreak for ministers, the media, senior officials, helplines and all staff dealing directly with the public.

Defra will communicate with national industry representatives (trade associations) to inform them of the disease situation in England. The WG will communicate with national industry representatives (trade associations) to inform them of the disease situation in Wales. An industry core group may be convened by Defra or the WG at an appropriate time to provide industry stakeholders with a forum for discussing and influencing policy developments to contain and eradicate the outbreak (see **section 3.6** for more details).

In consultation with Defra and the WG, Cefas has lead responsibility for managing communications with fish and shellfish farmers and other aquaculture production businesses, operational partners and stakeholders at a local level.

Animal keepers can also refer to GOV.UK for the latest situation and advice. The GOV.UK page will be maintained and updated by Cefas Communications throughout the disease outbreak. Depending on the size of the outbreak, a helpline may also be available to provide clear, factual information on the latest situation and operational response, any public health and food safety advice, and the latest advice for keepers.

### **Further cases**

Any further cases after the first confirmed outbreak will be communicated in NDCC bird-tables (see **section 4.1**). Ministers will be regularly updated on further cases by DAAHP.

## **3.6 Industry stakeholder engagement**

The management of a disease outbreak requires effective communications between government and industry stakeholders.

A group of key industry stakeholders may be established to work with senior officials in developing strategic disease control policies. Stakeholders representing organisations at a national level will be expected to act as primary channels of communication to their own organisation while simultaneously raising the concerns of their members. The relevant deputy director of APHW will chair the meetings and DAAHP will provide the secretariat. The chair, in consultation with WG and the group members, will decide on the frequency of meetings. Depending on the disease, DAAHP and the WG will need to consider representation from stakeholders applicable to the specific nature of the outbreak such as:

- British Trout Association (BTA)
- Angling Trust (AT)
- Angling Cymru
- Welsh Salmon and Trout Angling Association (WSTAA)
- Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB)

- Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association (OATA)
- SEAFISH
- British Aquaponics Association (BAQUA)
- Stillwater Trout Fisheries Association (STFA)
- Fish Veterinary Society (FVS)
- Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water
- Afonydd Cymru (Rivers Trusts Wales)
- Groups representing recreational interests, such as canoeists and boating groups.
- Environmental and conservation groups and movements such as The Rivers Trust
- Fish processors
- Hydro-electric companies
- Exporters and importers
- Local governments, tourist bodies and community groups
- Welsh Fisherman's Association (WFA-CPC)

In the event of a cross-border outbreak, consultation will need to take place with other DAs on whom of their stakeholders to invite, and how to manage communications and consultation.

Depending on the size, location, scale, and nature of the outbreak, one or more industry representatives may be embedded in the NDCC. This will ensure the effective cascade of information and facilitate access to real-time information from industry from an early stage - critical to inform the development of policy options.

Meetings with local stakeholder groups in the affected area may be arranged by the NDCC, especially where local assistance will be required to carry out effective containment or eradication strategies. These groups will help inform local decision making as appropriate and assist with communicating developments to all relevant parties.

### **3.7 Containment and changes to movement controls**

To contain the disease, the FHI applies controls to movements of aquatic animals in a defined geographical area encompassing the infected site(s) and an appropriately sized containment area comprising a protection zone and a containment zone, which is defined on a case-by-case basis using risk assessment and applying guidance in legislation. Containment areas are extensive, for example, encompassing entire river catchments and multiple sites. The controls are applied through a statutory CDN issued under the Aquatic Animal Health (England and Wales) Regulations 2009, and may include controls on vehicles, equipment, site activities (such as waste disposal) and additional biosecurity measures (like using on-site disinfection facilities).

Movement controls, as permitted or restricted, are issued under the CDN which is published on GOV.UK. GOV.UK is kept up to date with any subsequent amendments made to the CDN, including adjustments to the area designated or to the extent and application of the movement controls. Affected sites are directly notified by the FHI.

Individual sites must apply in advance to the FHI to seek permission for movements and activities not permitted under the CDN. All such requests will be risk assessed and considered on a case-by-case basis, and consent will only be granted if there is no risk of further disease spread, relevant mitigating actions can be implemented, and the eradication programme is not compromised.

### 3.8 Enforcement

The FHI at Cefas enforce all disease control legislation under the Aquatic Animal Health (England and Wales) Regulations 2009. This includes the placing and lifting of movement restrictions and compliance with additional measures such as on-site biosecurity.

### 3.9 Negative laboratory results

If all laboratory test results received after the activation of the contingency plan are negative, and there are no other grounds on which to suspect the presence of disease, the IDN or CDN is lifted immediately.

The NDCC Director will, in consultation with the Head of FHI, advise DAAHP and the WG whether to de-activate the plan and revoke any disease controls which may have been issued.

DAAHP will notify all relevant parties and reverse all the action taken in England as necessary. The WG will notify all relevant parties and reverse all the action taken in Wales as necessary. The FHI will advise local stakeholders and farm operators and will lift statutory disease controls as required.

## 4. Outbreak management

The management of any outbreak will follow an agreed structure, referred to as '**The Battle Rhythm**'. This is attached in **Annex 4** and includes an:

- opening 'bird-table' meeting at the start of the day
- closing 'bird-table' meeting at the end of the day
- ad-hoc OCGS and Expert Group meetings

This is an indicative structure, which may be revised dependent on the size and scale of outbreak.

### 4.1 Bird-table

Bird-table meetings are chaired by the NDCC Director. These meetings are intended to be brief; their function is to:

- provide a structure for the management of the outbreak by meeting regularly
- facilitate the effective management of the outbreak
- provide brief situation reports
- encourage a coordinated and cooperative response
- identify key emerging issues and allocate responsibility for resolution

Participants will be from all the areas involved in the management of the disease control operation, for example, all NDCC team managers, policy representatives, operational partners and invited stakeholders.

The issues reported on will include an update on current disease status and control measures, situation reports from NDCC team managers, updates from stakeholders and operational partners, a review of outstanding actions from previous meetings, the battle rhythm and housekeeping issues. Guidance on protocol for these meetings can be found in **Annex 5**.

## 5. Operations and logistics

### 5.1 Resources and contracts

Cefas Weymouth has stores of equipment and consumables to enable the agency to carry out its routine duties within defined time limits. The normal stocking levels at the Weymouth site would provide for the initial requirements of an outbreak of aquatic animal disease. Upon activation of the contingency plan the NDCC will consider the appropriate allocation of resources to combat the disease outbreak. The major constraint on the capability to deal effectively with a large-scale disease outbreak is likely to be diagnostic laboratory capacity. Cefas contingency plans include the facility to transfer staff engaged in Defra funded research projects to support the diagnostic requirements.

There is inter-agency cooperation for the response to disease emergencies. As far as field capabilities are concerned, the Environment Agency will support the FHI in obtaining appropriate samples from the wild, and in monitoring compliance with any statutory controls that may be required within available resources. NRW will perform the same function in Wales.

If necessary, during a large-scale serious outbreak of disease the relevant deputy director of APHW will seek Defra Emergency Executive Team authority to require the release of further staff from Defra and its agencies to work on emergency duties.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is in place between the Welsh Government and NRW, and the Environment Agency for the provision of mutual assistance in field-based activities in the event of a major disease outbreak. A MOU is also in place between Cefas and Marine Scotland Science (MSS) for the provision of mutual assistance in both diagnostic and field-based activities in the event of a major disease outbreak.

## **5.2 Depopulation (culling)**

For exotic diseases of aquatic animals, the control policy is to rapidly destroy affected animals wherever it is practically possible to do so. This usually requires the complete depopulation (or culling) of entire infected premises, including aquatic animals that are clinically unaffected. The stock cull is carried out under the direction and supervision of the FHI to ensure removal of all infected, potentially infected and vector species from the site.

Where there is no risk of further disease spread, aquaculture animals produced for human consumption, and showing no clinical signs of disease, may in some cases be harvested. However, this is as permitted by and under the direction of the FHI.

The welfare of the animals is carefully considered when selecting the most suitable depopulation method and international WOAAH standards are followed. The method used will also depend on the size and quantity of the animals, and the availability of suitable equipment. All culling will be carried out in the most humane way possible, whilst ensuring that disease controls and human health and safety are not compromised.

## **5.3 Disposal policy and arrangements**

All culled animals must be disposed of in a bio-secure manner in compliance with the Animal By-Product Regulations, using a designated facility that can handle aquatic animals classified as Category 2 Animal By-Product. This will be agreed between the FHI and site operator as part of the site clearance and disinfection plan.

## **5.4 Valuation and compensation**

Currently, there are no government compensation schemes available in England and Wales to fish farmers or fishery managers for any costs incurred due to a notifiable disease outbreak. However, it is worth noting that the government does not charge the industry for the provision of a very comprehensive inspection and surveillance programme for a number of diseases, thus protecting industry's ability to maintain their high aquatic animal health status and ability to trade.

## **5.5 Cleansing, disinfection and fallowing**

After depopulation and secure disposal of the animals, infected sites are cleansed and disinfected to eradicate the disease and prevent re-emergence on restocking. This includes removal of water and silt, and disinfection of transport and any other equipment or materials that may be contaminated, including personal protective equipment (PPE). Materials and equipment which cannot practically be disinfected are disposed of in a bio-secure manner.

The whole process is delivered under the supervision of the FHI, following a plan drawn up and agreed between the FHI and the site operator which also takes into account health and safety and equipment requirements. The Environment Agency are consulted on precautions to minimise environmental impacts and for the drainage of water and removal of silt, and their assistance may be required.

There is no provision through government to cover the cost of cleansing and disinfection; this is borne by the person or business responsible for the affected premises.

After disinfection, a fallowing period is usually required before the site can begin restocking. Fallowing is carried out under the direction and supervision of the FHI, who will advise on the length of the fallowing period. This varies according to the disease and progress with the disinfection of other sites within the containment area if a period of synchronised fallowing is required.

## **5.6 Vaccination**

Under current policy, the use of vaccines is not permitted for the control of notifiable disease in aquatic animals and there are no authorised vaccines available.

## **6. Restoration of disease freedom and recovery**

The response to a disease outbreak does not end when disease has been stamped out. Stamping out disease quickly and restoring disease freedom is vital. The sooner disease is stamped out and disease freedom restored, the sooner normal trade can commence.

However, this can be a lengthy process with third countries. It is essential for both government and stakeholders to work on minimising the impact of disease on trade from the start of an outbreak. The UK government and stakeholders also need to work together to minimise the impact on the rural and wider domestic economy.

The CDN is lifted when the FHI is satisfied that the disease is no longer present according to requirements given in legislation. This requires a period of targeted disease surveillance and retesting through a control and eradication programme, and it can take several years to regain disease freedom and lift statutory disease controls.

### **6.1 Restocking**

Restocking shall only take place when all premises officially declared infected within a containment area have been emptied, cleansed and fallowed under the direction and supervision of the FHI. Premises can only restock with animals that are officially recognised as free from the disease in question and as having equal or higher health status for all other notifiable diseases relevant to the UK, this requires authorisation from the FHI.

## **6.2 Scaling down – debriefing and lessons identified**

As part of the recovery phase, it will be necessary to scale back on resources once certain parts of the outbreak or incident management response are completed. The CVO UK, the relevant deputy director of APHW, the Head of FHI and the NDCC Director will decide when it is appropriate to de-escalate and reduce the battle rhythm. When operations are at a sufficiently low level, they will agree the timing of the closure of outbreak structures.

## **6.3 Debriefing and lessons identified**

At the conclusion of a disease outbreak, it is good practice to conduct debriefings with those involved to capture experiences. The aim is to identify and evaluate where improvements to disease response capability, processes and organisational structures for managing an outbreak of an exotic notifiable or emerging disease can be made. The feedback from relevant personnel departments, operational partners and stakeholders should be recorded. The report will provide the framework for improvements of the response to and management of disease outbreaks and the review of contingency plans and operational instructions.

# **7. Restoration of normal operations and recovery**

## **7.1 Restoration of trade**

For EU trade, when a disease is detected, restrictions are put in place in line with the obligations in the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Chapter of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). Once the disease control zones around an infected premise have been lifted, enhanced surveillance will be carried out to prove that disease is no longer present in that area. Trade can resume once this surveillance has been completed with favourable results, and any additional safeguard measures imposed on the UK by the EU during the outbreak have been lifted. The TCA's SPS Chapter has a commitment to expedite the recognition of the disease status when the status has been recovered after an outbreak.

Export to other third countries can remain adversely affected even after the disease outbreak has been tackled and disease freedom has been declared. Securing the resumption of exports can be protracted and challenging, often involving detailed technical and political negotiations, inward inspection visits, and discussions to agree revised certification rules. Exporters should not therefore assume that declaration of disease-free status automatically means that third country import requirements will revert to those that existed before the disease outbreak. They should contact the FHI for information on the latest certification requirements for exports to third countries.



## Glossary

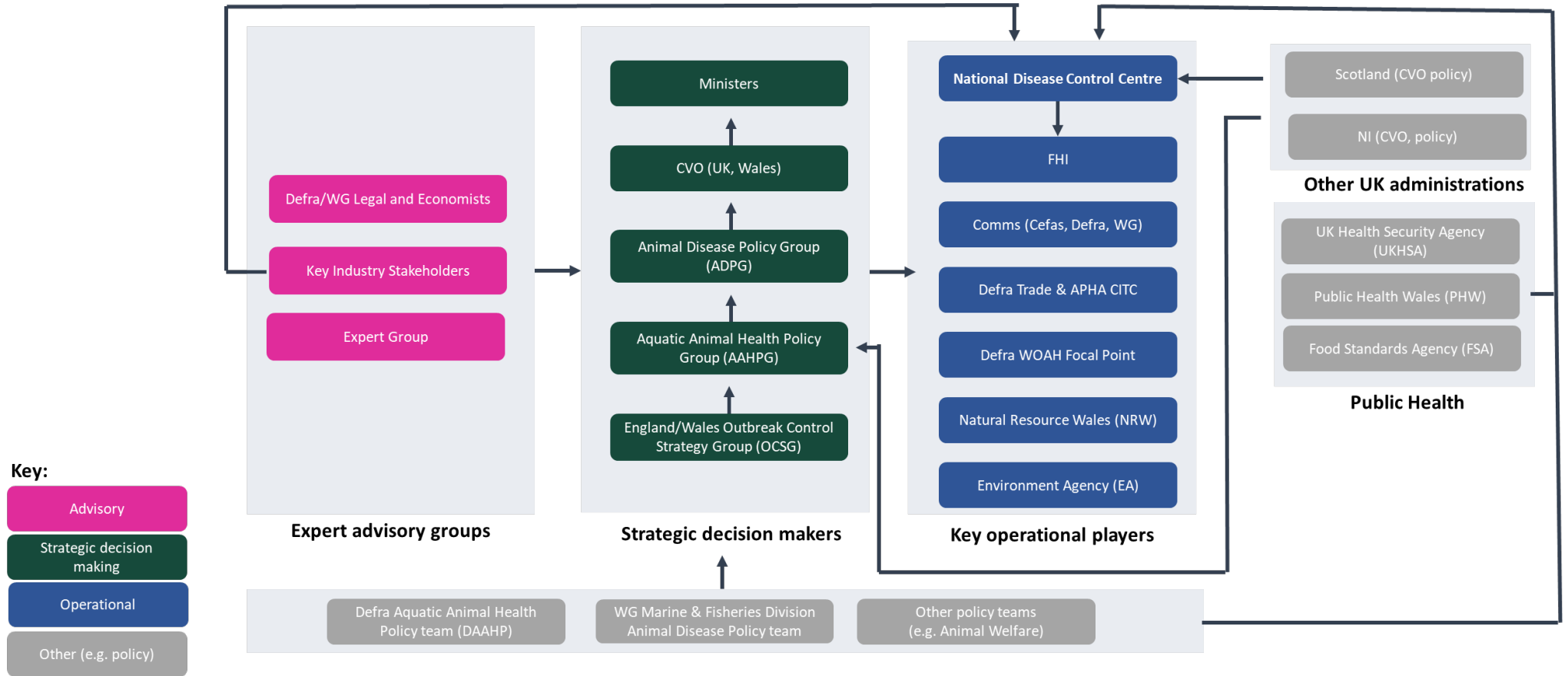
- AAHPG - Aquatic Animal Health Policy Group
- ADP - Animal Disease Policy team
- ADPG - Animal Disease Policy Group
- APB - Aquaculture Production Business
- APHA - Animal and Plant Health Agency
- APHW - Animal and Plant Health and Welfare
- AT - Angling Trust
- BAQUA - British Aquaponics Association
- BTA - British Trout Association
- Cefas - Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
- CDN - Confirmed Designation Notice
- CITC - Centre for International Trade – Carlisle
- CPD - Contingency Planning Division
- CVO - Chief Veterinary Officer
- DAAHP - Defra Aquatic Animal Health Policy team
- DAs - Devolved Administrations
- DCVO - Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer
- Defra - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- EC - European Commission
- EU - European Union
- FHI - Fish Health Inspectorate
- FOB - Forward Operating Base
- FSA - Food Standards Agency
- FVS - Fish Veterinary Society
- GIS - Geographic Information System
- IDN - Initial Designation Notice
- IFCA - Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority
- MOU - Memorandum of Understanding
- MSS - Marine Scotland Science
- NDCC - National Disease Control Centre
- NDIA - Notifiable Disease Investigation – Aquatic Animals
- NI - Northern Ireland
- NRW - Natural Resources Wales
- OATA - Ornamental Aquatic Trade Association
- OSGC
- PHW - Public Health Wales
- PPE - Personal Protective Equipment
- Relevant person – (a) the owner of, or any person attending, aquatic animals  
(b) any person accompanying aquaculture animals during transport

(c) any veterinarian, or other professional, involved in aquatic animal health services

(d) any other person with an occupational relationship to aquatic animals of susceptible species or to products of such animals.

- SAGB - Shellfish Association of Great Britain
- SG - Scottish Government
- SRO - Senior Reporting Officer
- STFA - Stillwater Trout Fisheries Association
- SPS - Sanitary and Phytosanitary
- TCA - UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement
- UKHSA – UK Health Security Agency
- WG - Welsh Government
- WFA-CPC - Welsh Fisherman's Association
- WOA - World Organisation for Animal Health
- WSTAA - Welsh Salmon and Trout Angling Association

# Annex 1: Outbreak management structure



## **Annex 1: Outbreak management structure (accessibility description)**

The key players in outbreak management have been grouped as follows:

Expert advisory groups:

- Defra and Welsh Government legal and economist teams
- key industry stakeholders
- the Expert Group

Strategic decision-making groups (greatest decision-making power first):

- Ministers
- CVO UK and CVO Wales
- Animal Disease Policy Group (ADPG)
- Aquatic Animal Health Policy Group (AAHPG)
- England and Wales Outbreak Control Strategy Group (OCSG)

Key operational players:

- National Disease Control Centre (NDCC)
- Fish Health Inspectorate (FHI)
- Communications teams (Cefas, Defra, Welsh Government)
- Defra Trade
- APHA Centre for International Trade – Carlisle (APHA CITC)
- Defra WOHF Focal Point
- APHA Contingency Planning Division (CPD)
- Natural Resource Wales (NRW)
- Environment Agency

Other UK Administrations:

- Scotland CVO
- Scotland Policy
- Northern Ireland CVO
- Northern Ireland Policy

Public Health:

- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)
- Public Health Wales (PHW)
- Food Standards Agency (FSA)

The expert advisory groups, policy teams, and representatives from other UK administrations all feed information into the strategic decision-making groups.

The strategic decision-making groups decide on the most appropriate disease control strategy and provide direction to the National Disease Control Centre (NDCC).

Public health and key industry stakeholders may also directly contribute information to the NDCC. The NDCC co-ordinates the operations necessary to implement the contingency plan. The contingency plan is delivered by a range of key operational players.

## Annex 2: CVO case conference agenda

Agenda item	Responsible
1. Introduction	CVO
2. Introductory overview of case <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of disease</li> <li>Actions to date</li> </ul>	Head of FHI
3. Epidemiological situation	Head of Epidemiology
4. Laboratory investigation (timeline, results, interpretation)	Head of FHI
5. Communications	FHI, Cefas Communications and Defra Communications
6. Aquatic Animal Health Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disease control strategy and policy options</li> </ul>	Head of DAAHP and FHI
7. Decision to initiate amber or red teleconference	CVO
8. Next steps	CVO, Head of FHI and Head of DAAHP

### CVO Case Conference attendees

- CVO UK
- CVO Wales
- CVO Scotland
- CVO Northern Ireland
- APHW Deputy Director
- DAAHP G6
- DAAHP
- Wales AAH policy
- Scotland AAH policy
- Northern Ireland AAH policy
- Head of FHI
- Head of Epidemiology (Cefas)
- NRL and WOAHP experts (Cefas)
- Diagnostics (Cefas)
- Cefas communications
- Defra communications (press office and strategic communications teams)
- Defra Market Access

- Defra Imports and EU Trade
- Defra legal
- UK WOHF Focal Point for Animal Disease Notification

## Annex 3: Standard amber or red teleconference agenda

Agenda point	Responsible
1. Introduction	CVO
2. Introductory overview of case <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of disease</li> <li>Actions to date</li> </ul>	Head of FHI
3. Laboratory investigation (timeline, results, interpretation)	Head of FHI and Head of NRL
4. National epidemiological assessment (including timeline and risk assessment)	Head of Epidemiology
5. Review of evidence to inform decision to confirm disease / move to red alert	CVO

If the disease is confirmed and/or the state of alert is moved to red, the following agenda items will also be discussed:

Agenda point	Responsible
<b>6. Aquatic Animal Disease Policy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Disease control strategy / policy options (for example, containment and control measures, movement restrictions)</b></li> </ul>	Head of DAAHP / FHI
<b>7. Public Health implications</b>	UKHSA and PHW
<b>8. Food safety issues and proposed action</b>	FSA
<b>9. International trade issues and proposed action:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Non-EU trade</b></li> <li><b>EU trade</b></li> </ul>	Market Access Imports and EU trade team
<b>10. Environment Agency issues</b>	Environment Agency
<b>11. Communications:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Site owner</b></li> <li><b>Industry stakeholder engagement</b></li> <li><b>Trading partners</b></li> <li><b>National (GOV.UK)</b></li> <li><b>Mass messages and social media</b></li> <li><b>Ministers</b></li> </ul>	FHI, DAAHP, Environment Agency, Defra Market Access, Cefas communications and Defra communications
<b>12. Arrangements for international notifications and reporting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>WOAH reporting</b></li> <li><b>European commission</b></li> </ul>	UK WOAHP Focal Point for Animal Disease Notification



<b>Agenda point</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
<b>11. Operational delivery (field / NDCC)</b> • <b>Resources</b>	NDCC Director
<b>12. Battle rhythm</b>	CVO
<b>13. Summary of action point and next steps</b>	CVO
<b>14. Any other business (AOB)</b>	CVO

### **Amber or Red teleconference attendees**

- CVO UK
- CVO Wales
- CVO Scotland
- CVO Northern Ireland
- APHW Deputy Director
- DAAHP G6
- DAAHP
- Wales AAH policy
- Scotland AAH policy
- Northern Ireland AAH policy
- Head of FHI
- Head of Epidemiology (Cefas)
- NRL and WOAHA experts (Cefas)
- Diagnostics (Cefas)
- Cefas Communications
- Defra Communications (press office, strategic Communications)
- Defra Market Access
- Defra Imports and EU Trade
- Defra legal
- Environment Agency
- Food Standards Agency
- UK Health Security Agency
- UK WOAHA Focal Point for Animal Disease Notification

The following ways of working should be adhered to:

- the CVO UK (or Deputy CVO) will chair the meeting, where the outbreak mainly affects England
- where outbreaks are mainly affecting Wales, the CVO Wales (or nominated deputy) will chair
- other UK Administrations (Scotland and Northern Ireland Executive) must inform relevant business areas and departments and agree attendance
- attendees will be asked to dial in or be present five minutes before the start time to allow a list of attendees to be taken and to ensure a prompt start
- contributions should be prefaced by name and business area or department
- the secretariat for the teleconference will be provided by DAAHP who will circulate a list of action points immediately after the conference and aim to issue minutes within 2 hours
- participants' phones must be muted when they are not speaking

## Annex 4: The battle rhythm

The battle rhythm is established to ensure all participants are aware of the activities and meetings during an outbreak, so they can better plan their involvement. The battle rhythm is **indicative**. The timings suggested are for an outbreak of significant size. Any deviation from the set battle rhythm must be agreed between the CVO UK, CVO Wales, the relevant deputy director of APWH and the NDCC Director. Where an outbreak is small, or events are slow moving, a more condensed battle rhythm will be appropriate. The main point is to ensure that a schedule is set and understood by all.

Time	Event	Responsible
<b>9am to 9.30am</b>	Bird-table Operational Level	NDCC
<b>3pm to 3.30pm</b>	Bird-table Operational Level	NDCC
<b>Ad-hoc</b>	England and Wales Outbreak Control Strategy Group Strategic Level	DAAHP
<b>Ad-hoc</b>	Expert Group Tactical Level	NDCC

## Annex 5: Example bird table agenda

Agenda item	Responsible
Update on current situation	Head of FHI
Epidemiology	Head of Epidemiology
Field operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site visits and sampling</li> <li>• Culling, disposal and disinfection</li> <li>• Field resources (equipment, personnel)</li> <li>• Animal welfare</li> </ul>	Head of FHI
NDCC operations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laboratory (sample processing)</li> <li>• Inspectorate (CDs and IDs, contact tracing, mapping)</li> </ul>	Diagnostic Co-ordinator, Head of FHI, Head of Epidemiology
Aquatic animal disease control policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aquatic animal health</li> <li>• International and trade issues</li> <li>• Legal</li> <li>• Welfare</li> <li>• Disposal</li> </ul>	DAAHP, Defra Market Access, Defra Imports and EU Trade, Defra Legal, Animal Welfare Policy, Animal By-products Policy
Welsh Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aquaculture policy</li> <li>• Freshwater fisheries policy</li> <li>• Legal</li> </ul>	WG
Procurement and contracts	Cefas Defra AH Portfolio Lead/ Project Manager
Finance	Defra Finance
Communications	FHI, Cefas Communications, Defra Communications and WG Communications
Other UK Administrations	Scotland, NI
Operational Partners	Environment Agency, NRW, FSA and UKHSA
Stakeholders	BTA, AT, OATA and SAGB
CVO comments	CVO
Minister (if present)	Minister
Housekeeping issues and next bird-table	NDCC Director

The following ways of working should be adhered to:

- the NDCC Director (or nominated deputy) will chair the meeting
- the secretariat for the teleconference will be provided by the NDCC
- DAs must inform relevant business areas or departments and agree attendance
- bird-tables are usually held standing up, with participants following a standing agenda
- the chair will set a fast-pace – contributions must be brief, well focused on immediate key issues, should be objective not speculative and be completed as expeditiously as possible.
- not all the contributions listed are needed at all times in an outbreak
- appropriate stakeholders will be invited to dial-in
- a lead spokesperson for each agenda item must be agreed offline before the teleconference starts
- first contributions should be prefaced by name and business area or department
- internal discussions or debate within a business area about lines, involvement and arrangements must take place offline, not in the meeting
- attendees will be asked to dial in or be present 5 minutes before the start time to allow a list of attendees to be taken and to ensure a prompt start
- a representative from each stakeholder organisation may contribute during the stakeholder item, comments should be concise and clear
- specific questions raised will be minuted and taken up immediately outside of the meeting by relevant parties as directed by the chair
- participants' phones must be muted where they are not speaking