Managing the human health implications of avian influenza in poultry and wild birds

Guidance for health protection teams

Version 4.0 – October 2018
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Acknowledgements

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1. Summary

This document updates the previous version (Guidance for Health Protection Units on dealing with human health implications of avian influenza (AI) in poultry and wild birds, version 3).

This update covers, as did the previous version, guidance for Public Health England (PHE) Health Protection Teams (HPTs) with regard to the human health implications when responding to suspected and confirmed avian influenza in avian species, and includes the strict and standard approaches for avian influenza incidents. This update includes additional information on the response required for avian influenza incidents identified in wild birds.

Whilst the Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) leads on the management of AI incidents and outbreaks in poultry and wild birds, HPTs are responsible for leading the local public health response to these incidents, working in close collaboration with, Defra and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). The public health response will be delivered jointly with the local authority (LA), local NHS and with support from PHE colleagues regionally and nationally.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to assist HPTs in planning for, and dealing with, the human health implications of a suspected or confirmed avian influenza incident, in either live or dead wild birds or domestic poultry. Based on standard health protection principles, this guidance aims to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted across PHE in responding to AI incidents.
3. Introduction

HPTs have a lead role in leading the local public health response to AI incidents involving large-scale commercial poultry establishments, smaller backyard premises or wildlife. Responding to these incidents requires close collaboration with Defra, APHA, LAs and the local NHS.

This guidance document has been developed to support HPTs in undertaking the risk assessment underpinning the management of avian influenza incidents. The guidance builds on standard principles of outbreak management and incorporates lessons learnt during previous AI incidents in the UK (Table 1). In 2017 there was an increase in the number of incidents reported in both wild birds and poultry. To reflect this, the update to the guidance includes additional information for HPTs on the management of incidents in wild birds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type of incident</th>
<th>Number of incidents</th>
<th>Subtypes involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>H7N3; H5N1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wild birds</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>H5N1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>H7N2; H7; H5N1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>H7N7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wild birds</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>H5N1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>H5N8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>H7N7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>H5N1; H5N8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>H5N8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wild birds</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>H5N8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Wild birds</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>H5N6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Avian Influenza H5 and H7 subtype events in the UK

The guidance references Defra’s latest contingency plan for exotic notifiable diseases of animals in England (2017)\(^1\) and its Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain (2012, revised in 2018).\(^2\)

HPTs should use the document in their ongoing dialogue with local APHA colleagues, LAs and the NHS and in developing their own local plans for responding to AI incidents.
4. Background

AI is a disease of animals caused by influenza A viruses. Influenza A viruses are classified according to the types of haemagglutinin (H1 to H18) and neuraminidase (N1 to N11) proteins on their surface. Influenza A viruses can also cause influenza in humans and other mammals. All known influenza A virus subtypes have been found in birds, except H17N10 and H18N11, which have only been identified in bats. Wild fowl act as natural, often asymptomatic carriers of influenza A viruses. Strains of influenza A virus may be transmitted from wild fowl to other birds, pigs, horses, seals, whales and humans.

AI viruses are categorised as being Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) or Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) depending on their virulence in poultry. These terms do not reflect the seriousness of disease caused in humans; not all HPAI viruses infect humans, and LPAI viruses can cause severe illness in humans. Avian influenza subtypes A(H7N9), and A(H5N1) have caused significant morbidity and mortality in humans outside Europe; there have been no human cases within Europe.

AI is considered notifiable to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) when:

- the subtype is either H5 or H7 (even if LPAI)
- any influenza A virus causing HPAI

Under the International Health Regulations (2015), all human cases of influenza infections caused by a new subtype would be assessed for notification to WHO due to the potential public health impact.

For references relating to currently circulating avian influenza subtypes that are causing concern for either human or animal health, please see Annex 1.
5. Agency roles and responsibilities

5.1 Animal health

Defra is the lead government department for the management of AI incidents and outbreaks in poultry and wild birds and is the policy lead for outbreaks in England. Key Defra officials will make decisions concerning the policies upon which the disease control operation will be based (for example, Chief Veterinary Officer). Officials are responsible for ensuring that strategic advice is translated into practical instructions to those carrying out the operational response.

In Great Britain, APHA is the delivery body and the lead for operational activities. A summary of the key APHA actions following notification of suspected AI can be found in Annex 2.

5.1.1 Defra/APHA organisational arrangements

Defra manages AI incidents centrally using a command, control and communication structure which is common for all notifications of exotic notifiable disease outbreaks. Three levels of command are established. Strategic functions are conducted by the National Disease Control Centre (NDCC). At the tactical level the outbreak director from the APHA will establish a Central Disease Control Centre (CDCC). The CDCC coordinates operational activities that may be carried out by the Forward Operations Base (FOB) or Customer Service Centres (CSS). The response delivered is flexible and there may be variations on the functions delivered. For example in the case of a small outbreak, it may not be necessary to establish all of the formal structures. A summary of the command structure and the roles and responsibilities of each level are detailed in Annex 3.

5.1.2 Communications

Defra and APHA are the lead bodies for communications during AI incidents. PHE provides health messaging and advice where necessary. Defra communications team will also liaise with other agencies, such as the Food Standards Agency to produce relevant messaging where appropriate. Briefings produced by Defra will be passed directly to regional teams for cascade locally. Relevant strategic information from the NDCC will be passed via PHE National Infection Service (NIS) to the HPT.

5.2 Human health

HPTs are responsible for leading the public health response, working in close collaboration with Defra and APHA. The public health response will be delivered jointly with the LA, local NHS and with support from PHE colleagues regionally and
nationally. Specialist support will be provided by PHE NIS Colindale, and the Emergency Response Department (ERD).

5.2.1 PHE organisational arrangements

Within PHE, AI incidents are led locally by the HPT, unless escalated to an enhanced national response as defined in the National Incident & Emergency Response Plan (2016).\(^5\) Where large numbers of birds are involved, where there are complex or ongoing incidents or where there is the potential for media interest the HPT should consider convening an Incident Management Team (IMT) (Annex 4 & 5); this includes when:

- disease is confirmed by Defra on the basis of clinical examination or laboratory confirmation
- culling is planned as a disease control measure

The role of the IMT is to co-ordinate measures for protecting the health of exposed people who have been in close contact with infected birds (and their close contacts), local residents and the wider public.

For incidents identified among wild birds, there will usually be fewer people exposed and therefore it may not be necessary to convene an incident management team, and the public health follow-up of exposed individuals should be conducted by the HPT.

5.2.2 Incident Management Team (IMT) membership

The IMT core members may include:

- CCDC or consultant in health protection (CHP)
- deputy director of health protection/HPT lead
- representative of local NHS to co-ordinate the NHS response (either from the local clinical commissioning group [CCG] and/or local NHS England [NHSE] team)
- representative of PHE NIS
- LA director of public health (DPH)
- appropriate Defra/APHA representative
- PHE field epidemiology services liaison
- HPT information and surveillance officer
- PHE emergency planning officer (EPO)
- PHE communications
- administrative support
Others professionals may be invited as appropriate (for example, NIS virology representative).

5.2.3 Roles and responsibilities of the IMT

The role of the IMT is to manage the public health impact of the incident ensuring that the potential consequences of AI on public health and the health of staff involved in disease control operations are minimised.

The role of the IMT will include:

- identifying and managing all those already exposed by:
  - agreeing exposure criteria
  - undertaking human health risk assessment
  - agreeing and coordinating human health intervention according to the relevant management algorithm
  - liaison with specialist colleagues at PHE NIS
  - co-ordinating provision of post exposure antiviral prophylaxis, in line with local NHS arrangements
  - providing and coordinating follow-up (clinical and laboratory) investigations and management with specialist support from NIS
  - agreeing and coordinating implementation using information from Defra/APHA about persons exposed to infected birds or associated materials

- advising on minimising further exposure and reducing the likelihood of infection
- agreeing and coordinating (in consultation with others such as the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), and Defra/APHA, health and safety professionals) the arrangements for protecting those who will potentially be exposed including implementing locally agreed arrangements for:
  - the prescription and administration of pre-exposure antivirals
  - delivery of antivirals
  - follow up of exposed people
  - agreeing and coordinating the local response

- communication - provision of information on human health-related matters as required to:
  - tactical and operational command levels of the Defra response
  - Defra/Department of Health (DH) communications teams
  - other divisions of PHE (including national teleconferences)
  - individuals potentially exposed
  - local partner organisations
  - GPs and other local health services
• media/general public (including a spokesperson)
• declaring the end of the human health aspects of the incident
• writing an incident report to include lessons identified and how these will be taken forward

The above actions are co-ordinated by the IMT. However, this does not imply that delivery of these actions will be undertaken by PHE itself.

5.3 Alerting of an AI incident

5.3.1 Notification of AI

**Poultry incidents**: By law anyone who keeps poultry has a responsibility to report any signs of suspicion of AI to APHA. These reports may come from the keeper themselves, a private veterinarian, an inspector from an LA who is attending for other purposes or from Food Standards Agency staff at a slaughterhouse suspecting disease. After a discussion with the reporting person an APHA veterinary officer may visit the site in order to conduct an investigation. Once a site is under investigation Defra impose restrictions on that site, such as restrictions on movement of poultry.

Defra also conducts surveillance of H5 and H7 AI in poultry through sampling at randomly selected premises. It is not unusual for a small number of samples to test positive for H5 or H7 antibodies. Positive results trigger further laboratory testing. Restrictions are placed on the site while these tests are conducted. The restrictions may be lifted if tests reveal that there is no active infection present in the flock.

**Wild bird incidents**: National surveillance for AI is also carried out among wild birds. The surveillance consists of patrols by wild bird reserve wardens/ non-governmental organisations and collections of found dead wild birds reported by members of the public or bird charities. Where dead birds are found the APHA is notified by the individual who made the discovery, via a national helpline. APHA will then make a decision as to whether collection and testing of the wild birds is indicated.

5.3.2 Alerting the local HPT

APHA should contact PHE to alert them of all cases of suspected avian influenza. APHA may contact:

• PHE ERD duty officer
• PHE NIS through the Colindale Duty Director, Duty Doctor or the specialist lead
• local HPT via the CCDC
As soon as the national PHE teams have obtained details from APHA, the local HPT will be notified. The HPT which covers the geographical area where the incident is occurring should co-ordinate the public health response to the incident. However, it is recognised that exposed individuals may live in other areas. The HPT co-ordinating the response would, therefore, need to alert other HPTs where follow-up is necessary.

5.3.3 Alerting within PHE

HPT staff should alert appropriate people as outlined in the PHE Emergency Preparedness Resilience and Response Concept of Operations (PHE CONOPS) depending on the level of the incident. This is likely to include:

- PHE Centre Director
- PHE Centre Deputy Director for Health Protection
- NIS specialist lead (or Colindale Duty Doctor Out of Hours)
- Regional Communications Manager
- ERD Duty Officer

5.3.4 Alerting the local NHS and LA

NHS partners will be responsible for prescribing and dispensing antiviral prophylaxis to exposed persons during AI incidents and for facilitating collection of specimens, by healthcare workers with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), from symptomatic exposed persons. Therefore, where AI is suspected or confirmed, the CCDC/CHP should alert local NHS partners and the duty pharmacist at local hospital(s) holding PHE oseltamivir stocks (in preparation for mobilisation of these supplies). The local DPH should also be alerted as per existing local arrangements. For situations where a premises is under investigation, the CCDC/CHP may consider alerting LA and NHS partners.

5.3.5 Alerting the local APHA office

HPT staff should alert local APHA staff if they become aware of any reports of a febrile respiratory illness in persons who have been in contact with sick, dying or dead birds in the UK within 10 days of onset of their illness.

APHA should also inform the HPT or IMT of any local staff responding to an AI incident with symptoms of febrile respiratory illness as soon as possible.
6. Public health response

6.1 Initial stages

The PHE response is based on a combination of the available laboratory results and a risk assessment of the nature of individual human exposures.

6.1.1 When to initiate public health actions

Public health action should be initiated by the HPT when:

- laboratory results confirm that disease or deaths in birds are due to AI, or
- culling is required by animal health on suspicion of disease in birds, or
- disease is suspected in a premises with a verified association to a laboratory confirmed AI incident (as advised by animal health)

Public health action generally should not be initiated for human exposures to unidentified disease in birds or in cases where sites are under investigation without confirmed AI, in the absence of specific supporting animal health advice.

6.1.2 Laboratory results

Confirmation of AI is made on isolation of an influenza virus from the APHA reference laboratory in Weybridge. Further laboratory testing, which guides the extent of the public health response, includes subtyping of the virus and pathogenicity.

In the initial stages of an incident, laboratory results may not be available, or may only provide partial information. As further results become available the public health response may change. The usual sequence of reports would be:

1) HPT are notified of an unidentified avian disease in birds, and AI is suspected
2) Laboratory confirmation of AI A
3) Confirmation that the subtype is (or is not) H5 or H7
4) Final confirmation of the subtype and pathogenicity

Results 2-3 are often available within 8 hours of receipt of specimens at the veterinary laboratory in Weybridge. It may take approximately 72 hours for confirmation of the full virus subtype. Pathogenicity results (HPAI or LPAI for birds) will generally be available between 2 and 12 days from receipt of samples.
6.1.3 Risk assessment

PHE NIS and APHA will risk assess the public health risk associated with any reported incident. Until positive laboratory results are available, this risk assessment is necessary to decide on the appropriate course of action.

On notification to an HPT of an incident, that HPT should conduct an initial risk assessment to identify all individuals who may have been exposed and assess the nature of the exposure. Individuals should be considered as potentially exposed if have handled a diseased or dead bird or a bird which subsequently died or became unwell. Individuals should also be considered as potentially exposed if they have handled the faeces, litter or eggs of a dead or diseased bird.

Details of the information required as part of the risk assessment are shown in Table 2.

In large incidents involving disease in poultry, APHA officials may assist with collection of this information during site visits based on local agreement. A health questionnaire is available in Annex 6 to assist in these situations.

Although APHA staff working in the field on incidents will need to be included in the risk assessment, APHA staff working in laboratories have their own safety arrangements and will generally not need to be included in the public health response. For non-APHA laboratories, there should be assurance that the staff were working with appropriate PPE. In laboratories, if aerosol is likely to be produced (as assessed by the laboratory), work should be conducted in a microbiological safety cabinet or within other suitable containment or protective measures. If the laboratory is uncertain as to whether appropriate precautions have been taken, then exposed individuals may need to be considered as having had unprotected exposure. Consideration should also be given as to how any specimens with confirmed AI infection may have been stored within non-APHA laboratories, if relevant.
Table 2: A guide to initial risk assessment for individuals exposed to avian influenza

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information to be collected during initial risk assessment</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Name and contact details                                  | • First name  
• Last name  
• Preferred contact  
  (mobile phone number preferable)  
  This will be needed for follow up of exposed individuals |
| Type of person                                            | • Bird collector  
• Nature reserve worker  
• Farm worker  
• Veterinary staff  
• Contractor  
• Member of the public  
• Other |
| Date of exposure last exposure/whether the exposure is ongoing | If exposure is no longer ongoing, the last date of exposure is needed to inform the period of follow-up. Some exposures may be ongoing in which case this should be recorded |
| Type of contact with bird/bird faeces                     | • Handled dead/diseased bird  
• Handled faeces/litter/eggs of dead/diseased bird  
• Handled a bird which became unwell within the subsequent 2 days  
• Transient contact with dead or diseased bird |
### Information to be collected during initial risk assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was the individual wearing complete PPE throughout the entire period of exposure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If PPE was not used for the complete period, when did this start?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Personal protective equipment (PPE) use during exposure

- Was the individual already taking antiviral prophylaxis prior to the exposure?
- Has the individual commenced antiviral prophylaxis since the exposure?
- If any antiviral chemoprophylaxis has been used, ascertain date which antivirals were started and which agents were used

#### Antiviral prophylaxis use

- Has exposed persons experienced any symptoms of influenza like illness?
- Has the exposed person experienced any conjunctivitis?

#### Clinical symptoms

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### 6.2 The strict and standard approaches

The strict and standard approaches to managing AI incidents were approved by the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP)\(^2\). The strict and standard approaches recognise that a different level of response may be required, depending on the virus subtype and risk assessment. The strict and standard approaches are not static, and the response may be upgraded or downgraded as further information becomes available or as the incident progresses. The decision as to whether to use a strict or standard approach is based on the same criteria for poultry incidents and wild bird incidents.

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\(^2\) Guidance on appropriate PPE is available at: [www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/influenza.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/influenza.htm)
6.2.1 Principles of the standard approach

The principles of the standard approach are:

- keeping the numbers of people exposed to the infected birds to a reasonable minimum
- not starting prophylaxis with neuraminidase inhibitors (or discontinuing use if already started as part of a strict approach) provided there have been:
  - no human deaths
  - no serious human illness
  - no sustained person-to-person transmission (as confirmed by laboratory tests) confirmed to be linked to that subtype
  - no large numbers of humans affected by common clinical syndrome suspected or confirmed to be linked to that subtype
- advising people who are likely to be exposed as responders on the correct appropriate use of PPE
- passive follow-up of persons exposed (provision of information and advised to contact HPT if feeling unwell)

6.2.2 Principles of the strict approach

The principles of the strict approach include:

- keeping the numbers of people exposed to an absolute minimum (balanced against practical needs to undertake necessary control measures)
- commencing prophylaxis with neuraminidase inhibitors for people already exposed (who have been in close contact with infected birds) as soon as possible
- advising people who are likely to be exposed as responders to commence prophylaxis in advance of commencement of duties
- advising on the appropriate need for PPE use
- active follow-up of persons exposed and/or their close or family contacts dependent on expert epidemiological and virological advice

6.2.3 Circumstances where a strict approach should be used

The strict approach should be used when any of the following criteria are met:

- When the haemagglutinin (H) subtype is known to be an H5, H7 or H9
- Any incident when human deaths are already apparent, or are previously associated with the subtype
- Any incident in which serious human illness is already apparent or strongly suspected, or is previously associated with the subtype
- When person-to-person transmission is confirmed by laboratory tests
- When widespread person-to-person transmission is suspected (but not necessarily confirmed)
- Any incident, in which the expert virological or epidemiological advice suggests that the identified virus has pandemic potential

Identification of a H2 or H10 virus may also qualify for a strict approach as these have caused severe infection in humans. Expert virological and epidemiological advice should be sought on an incident-by-incident basis for these subtypes from the NIS. The standard approach may be upgraded to a strict approach when:

- AI associated human deaths are discovered
- severe illness in humans has occurred in this incident, or is associated with this subtype
- any incident in which person-to-person transmission is confirmed by laboratory tests
- any incident in which widespread person-to-person transmission is suspected (but not necessarily confirmed) if expert virological or epidemiological advice suggests that the identified virus has pandemic potential

Figure 1 is a simplified decision tree for choosing the appropriate approach. It should be read with consideration for the points above.

6.2.4 Exposure to unidentified disease in birds

Members of the public who have handled birds with unidentified disease (or their faecal material) where there is no specific information to indicate avian influenza do not require public health follow-up, unless information or risk assessment from APHA suggest a different approach.

6.2.5 Subtype specific adaptations

Situations may occur when more information is available about the outcomes of human exposures to a specific avian influenza virus subtype. Where sufficient information is available, it may be possible for the strict approach to be adapted to account for this. This occurred previously for the AI A(H5N8) incidents in winter 2016 to 2017. If such a situation occurs, NIS will publish interim recommendations which will be specific to a particular virus subtype; this will be communicated within PHE. The availability of such information is kept under review. In the absence of any interim recommendations, the strict approach should be used as described above. It should also be noted that risk related to virus subtypes is dynamic, and interim recommendations may be withdrawn. Please consult the PHE website for the latest information.
Figure 1: Summary decision tree for choice of strict or standard approach (see Section 6.2 for full details)

Situation 1: Human exposure to Avian Influenza but subtype not yet confirmed.

Situation 2: Human Exposure to Avian Influenza confirmed as subtype H5 or H7 or H9

Situation 3: Human exposure to Avian influenza confirmed as sub-type H2 or H10

Are any of the following present in this incident (or previously associated with this subtype)?
- Death or serious illness in humans
- Laboratory confirmed human-to-human transmission
- Widespread person-to-person transmission of a relevant AI associated clinical illness e.g. conjunctivitis?

Standard Approach
- Reduce human exposure to reasonable minimum
- Anyone coming into contact with birds should use adequate PPE
- Advise exposed persons to report any relevant illness
- If symptomatic start treatment with oseltamivir

Strict Approach¹
- Reduce human exposure to absolute minimum
- Anyone coming into contact with birds should use adequate PPE
- Start oseltamivir prophylaxis of persons exposed
- Monitor persons exposed for signs and symptoms
- If symptomatic, start treatment with oseltamivir

Discuss with NIS, Colindale

¹ Check PHE website for any current sub-type specific variations from this algorithm: www.gov.uk/government/publications/avian-influenza-guidance-and-algorithms-for-managing-incidents-in-birds
6.3 Management of persons exposed during an incident

There may be up to three key categories of persons exposed during an avian influenza incident:

**Category A**
Persons who are exposed prior to the identification of an incident, who were not wearing appropriate PPE (and using antivirals, if applicable) at all times of exposure. For example, this could include:

- Farm workers, other exposed workers, owners of backyard flocks or other people resident at the premises who have had exposure to birds or infected materials
- Veterinary staff
- Members of the public who have had direct contact with infected wild birds

**Category B**
Persons exposed during the response to the incident, whilst wearing appropriate PPE (and using antivirals, if applicable). For example, this could include anyone involved in the culling, disposal and clean-up operations at the premises or rendering facilities. This may also include laboratory staff where suitable PPE have been worn and work was undertaken with appropriate laboratory precautions.

**Category C**
Non-occupational exposures: may include members of the public (or others) inadvertently handling sick or dead birds, or their faecal matter that is confirmed to be infected with AI. These individuals are unlikely to have been using appropriate PPE (and antivirals, if applicable) and would have been identified through passive reports to APHA or affected farms directly.

Individuals who have not handled dead or diseased birds or their faeces/litter or eggs are not considered to be at risk and therefore do not require follow-up.

Further details on the management of these groups can found in Annexes 7 and 8.

For both the strict and standard approach, the key public health actions will always include:

- co-ordination of health surveillance of individuals exposed during the incident (as described in section 6.3.2)
- investigation and management of any individuals within the above groups who develop potential symptoms of avian influenza infection (such as influenza-like illness or conjunctivitis); these individuals should be managed according to PHE guidance as possible human cases of avian influenza
- provision of regular updates to the PHE Centre Director, LA DPH and national team
• ensuring other responding agencies have addressed issues of PPE implementation

In addition, the strict approach will also require the provision of antiviral prophylaxis.

Details of all exposed individuals should be entered onto HPZone as Common Exposure Contacts. This allows the use of the PHE SMS Text Monitoring Service for further follow-up.

6.3.1 Antiviral chemoprophylaxis

The decision on use of chemoprophylaxis is dependent on whether a strict or standard approach is deemed appropriate, to be started up to 7 days after the last exposure. The minimum course is normally of 10 days’ duration for Oseltamivir.

Strict approach

In all AI incidents considered to require a strict approach, antiviral chemoprophylaxis is advised. This is likely to include all incidents where the subtype of avian influenza is H5, H7 or H9, unless there are subtype-specific guidelines already in place. Chemoprophylaxis of responders to incidents should be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the evidence of the virus’ ability to cause human infection and/or severe disease. If in doubt, discuss with the NIS Colindale.

The standard recommended dosage for chemoprophylaxis against avian influenza is 75mg of oseltamivir, once daily for each day that exposure occurs. This should be continued for 10 days after the last exposure to the incident. Dose adjustment may be required for those with co-morbidities such as renal impairment.

Prophylaxis should be started prior to individuals having contact with birds. If exposure has already occurred, prophylaxis should be started within seven days of the last exposure. The maximum recommended duration of prophylaxis is 42 days, and advice should be sought as early as possible if it is likely to be required for longer than this.

For further guidance on managing prolonged, ongoing exposures see Annex 8.

Additional guidance for individuals who are responding to an AI incident is provided in Annex 9. This includes a link to guidance on appropriate use of PPE. It is important to note that the number of people exposed during the response to an incident should be kept to a minimum.

It is essential that the full quantity of antiviral prophylaxis required by the exposed person are provided locally where the incident is occurring, before the exposed persons leave, if they are living elsewhere.
Note on A(H7N9): for A(H7N9) a treatment dose (75mg oseltamivir, twice daily) is recommended for prophylaxis, due to concerns over potential resistance to oseltamivir – see PHE Guidance.

If any individuals are unable to take oseltamivir, this should be discussed with NIS Colindale.

PHE provides specialist public health advice but does not undertake prescribing of antivirals in avian influenza incidents, which remains the responsibility of the NHS.

A factsheet for individuals provided with Oseltamivir and a template letter for GPs of individuals provided with Oseltamivir are provided in Annexes 10 and 11.

Standard approach (all categories):

Antiviral chemoprophylaxis not routinely advised as long as all conditions in section 6.2.1 are applicable and the conditions for the strict approach are not met.

Any refusal of antiviral chemoprophylaxis should be discussed by the HPT with PHE NIS.

6.3.2 Health surveillance of individuals exposed during the incident

If the strict approach is applied:

Category A
Active follow-up for every day up to 10 days from the last date when exposure occurred without complete PPE and antivirals, or for the duration of post exposure antivirals, whichever is longer.

This active follow-up consists of daily contact between the HPT and the individual to check the latter has not developed any symptoms compatible with human AI (including conjunctivitis).

If PPE and antivirals were started at a later date after an unprotected exposure, then the contact should be re-assigned to passive follow-up after the end of the active follow-up period. Passive follow-up should be continued for 10 days after the last exposure (passive follow-up is described below).

The individual should also receive standard information on potential symptoms and emergency contact instructions for the HPT (in case symptoms develop between daily contacts).
Category B

- if the individual has been exposed to the incident while wearing complete PPE and using antivirals during all exposures, then they should undergo passive follow-up until 10 days after the last exposure to the infected site; passive follow-up involves provision of information on human AI symptoms for the individuals to be aware of and emergency contact instructions for the HPT.

- any individual who has not worn complete PPE or used antivirals during all exposures will require active follow-up according to Category A from the date of the last exposure without full PPE or antivirals.

- in situations where an individual has unprotected exposure, followed by protected exposure with complete PPE and antivirals, then they should have 10 days of active follow-up from the date of last exposure without complete PPE and antivirals; the individual should then be given instructions for passive follow-up from this point for a period up to 10 days after the last exposure with complete PPE and antivirals.

Category C

To be considered for active follow-up for 10 days from the date of exposure.

If the standard approach is applied:

Categories A-C:

All persons exposed to the infected site should undergo passive follow-up for 10 days after the last exposure (as explained above).

The local HPT will remain the contact point for all persons under surveillance in relation to their incident. The response to development of symptoms or other issues which requires action, can then be communicated to the relevant HPT if the individual has left the local area.

PHE has an SMS text monitoring service which is available for follow-up of individuals exposed to AI. The service allows sending of an initial SMS test message to establish contact with an exposed person and a series of 10 daily messages requesting information about general health. Exposed individuals can respond by replying to the SMS text. Details on using this service are available on PHE.net


Surveillance of exposed individuals is important for rapid investigation of symptoms. For this reason, foreign travel of exposed individuals should be avoided during their follow-up period. Please discuss with PHE, NIS if this issue arises.
6.3.3 Management of symptomatic individuals

Prompt diagnosis and treatment is an important health service function for the clinical benefit of symptomatic individuals as they may require further clinical assessment following any laboratory confirmation of infection.

There should be local plans to respond swiftly to any reports of avian influenza-compatible symptoms in individuals under passive or active follow-up. These plans should include arrangements for prompt start of antiviral treatment, virological testing and infection prevention and control precautions for human avian influenza cases.

The HPT acts as a contact point to facilitate rapid contact with local relevant NHS services. Individuals under active and passive follow-up should be given the contact details (as above) for the local HPT, to assist with accessing appropriate clinical assessment and patient management.

The NIS Colindale Duty Doctor should be informed of any symptomatic individuals who are clinically assessed as suspected avian influenza cases and require virological testing. Further information on swabbing of symptomatic individuals is available in annex 12.

A summary of all public health actions related to an incident is provided in Figure 2.
Figure 2. Summary of public health actions

ALL INCIDENTS
- HPT prepared to coordinate management of individuals exposed, who develop symptoms of influenza-like illness or conjunctivitis
- Ensure PPE advice has been provided (via partners)
- Provide regular updates to Centre Director, LA, DPH and NIS

STRICT APPROACH
- ANTIVIRALS Groups A-C receive antivirals
- ACTIVE FOLLOW-UP Groups A and C
- PASSIVE FOLLOW-UP Group B*

STANDARD APPROACH
- ANTIVIRALS Groups A-C do not need antivirals
- PASSIVE FOLLOW-UP For all groups A-C

* = Only if PPE and antiviral chemoprophylaxis consistently used throughout the incident; see 6.3.2 (otherwise active active follow-up)
References


2) Notifiable Avian Disease Control Strategy for Great Britain, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, January 2012 (Revised September 2018)

   www.who.int/influenza/human_animal_interface/HAI_Risk_Assessment/en/

   www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Health_standards/tahm/2.03.04_AI.pdf


6) ACDP meeting 15 June 2015
Annexes

Annex 1: Currently circulating avian influenzas of concern

AI mainly affects birds, but some strains can be transmitted to humans and other mammals and cause illness. It is those strains that are of interest to public health and so they are monitored through various routes. Of particular concern are influenza H5 strains, especially H5N1. In recent years there have been recombination events involving H5N1 that have resulted in the generation of new subtypes, some of which have been highly pathogenic for avian species (for example A(H5N8)). Influenza H7 strains are also monitored, partly because there are some strains highly pathogenic for avian species and partly because of the appearance of LPAI A(H7N9), which, although of low pathogenicity for avian species, has proved to cause higher morbidity and mortality in humans.

Defra monitors the situation in avian species in the UK but is alert to events in Europe and the rest of the world, which may have an impact on the UK. Defra updates on current situations and guidance for keepers of avian species can be found at: www.gov.uk/guidance/avian-influenza-bird-flu


The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations has a web-based application designed to support veterinary services by facilitating the organisation and access to regional and global disease information. This is updated regularly with up-to-date information on global animal disease distribution and current threats, including avian influenza. http://empres-i.fao.org/eipws3g/


It also publishes regular Disease Outbreak News, which sometimes includes avian influenza of significance to public health at: www.who.int/csr/don/en/

PHE monitors all of these sources of information and publishes updates, guidance and analyses at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/avian-influenza-guidance-data-and-analysis
Annex 2: The APHA response - summary of key actions following notification of suspected AI

Notification of suspected AI to APHA Local office by:
- Owner/person responsible
- Private veterinarian
- Inspector
- Active surveillance (UK Poultry Survey)
- FSA (e.g. at slaughterhouse)

Telephone assessment by duty VO at APHA Local Office

AI ruled out on clinical grounds

AI Suspected
- Duty VO visit to premises
- Movement restrictions begin

Duty VO visit to premises, discuss case with VENDU

AI Suspected
- Declared suspect premises
- Additional control measures enforced
- Blood samples and swabs taken and sent to APHA reference laboratory (initial results within ~6 hrs)

AI Ruled out by Microbiology
- Restrictions lifted

Initial samples positive for AI

Further testing
- Confirmatory tests (H and N subtyping, pathogenicity testing)
- Implementation of DEFRA Contingency Plan
- Disease control zones established as necessary
- Chief VO to notifies the OIE and EC within 24 hours
- Culling of birds and disposal of contaminated material
- Cleansing and disinfection
Annex 3: Defra command, control and communications structure

Annex 4: Key roles within the PHE Incident Management Team

Chair: strategic overview of local health response, appropriate delegation of tasks, receiving progress reports, briefing others (eg LA, Government Office, PHE teleconference). The chair should clarify liaison arrangements with Defra/APHA to ensure appropriate timely briefings. The chair should also ensure access to appropriate epidemiological and data management support at an early stage of an incident. The chair may be the PHE Centre Director, CCDC or the DPH.

APHA liaison: liaison between Defra and the IMT. Defra’s Health and Safety Team have oversight of the department’s occupational health provider during an outbreak. HPT must ensure that the nominated occupational health representatives at operational and strategic levels are kept appraised of key decisions, to enable appropriate advice and actions to be taken in terms of occupational health management.

LA DPH: the DPH has the overall assurance role and is responsible for communication with the public and local stakeholders.

CCDC/Consultant in Health Protection: responsible for leading the local human health risk assessment, and for advising the IMT on the most appropriate response measures, taking account of all the circumstances of the current incident and advice from PHE staff with specialist epidemiological and virological expertise in the field of influenza. In addition, they will be responsible for ensuring there are clear arrangements locally for managing and testing suspected symptomatic human cases among persons exposed during the incident, accessing emergency supplies of antivirals and liaison with NIS.

Office manager and administrative staff: record keeping, call handling, staff welfare, information for staff unfamiliar with local office systems, maintenance of rotas. Supporting appropriate epidemiological investigation to determine risk factors for infection and establishing extent of human-to-human transmission.

Emergency Planning Officer (EPO): staffing support and planning.

Communication managers: LA, NHS and PHE communication managers are responsible for appropriate liaison with their colleagues from partner agencies to ensure consistent public health messages and agreeing multi-agency media statements.

NHS representative: responsible for liaison with local NHS partners who will be tasked with prescribing and dispensing antiviral chemoprophylaxis.
Annex 5: Key interactions of the local IMT and external partners
Annex 6: Example health questionnaire for follow-up of exposed persons

Avian Influenza - Health Questionnaire

Consent to collect information concerning your current health; for this information to be reviewed by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA); and for this information to be passed to your local public health authority:

Avian influenza is primarily a disease of birds. It can, very rarely, be passed from birds to humans. You are being asked to provide the clinical information set out in the questionnaire, to assess whether there is any possibility that you, or any other people that you know of, are suffering from any symptoms of influenza.

The answers that you give will be checked by the official from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) who has come to your premises today. If you have answered 'yes' to any of these questions they will contact your local public health authority for further advice.

The completed form will be passed to your local public health authority and will become part of their records of this incident.

By completing this form you give consent to the information you provide being checked by APHA, and for APHA to pass this information, and information to enable them to contact you, to your local public health authority.

By providing the information requested on this form to the official from APHA you are helping your local public health authority to respond to any problems that you, your family, friends and contacts might have as quickly as possible.

Should you not wish to give this information to the official from APHA please ask them to arrange for your local public health authority to contact you directly.

Please complete the details overleaf and immediately hand back to one of the APHA team who has issued this form
## Contact Details and Health Information

**Personal details of the individual for whom the questionnaire is being completed**

(Please print)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Name</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second Name (Surname)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Phone Number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date (DD/MM/YYYY)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name and address of GP surgery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please state your role on the site</td>
<td>Private Vet / Farmer / Culling staff / Catcher / APHA Staff / Other (specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Contact’ is defined below as anyone who has been in contact with poultry, eggs, poultry litter/manure on this premises or has entered any building containing them, within the last 10 days.

### Details of contact with poultry with and without use of PPE

Personal protective equipment (PPE) includes FFP3 respirator, coverall, goggles, rubber/polyurethane boots and disposable nitrile/vinyl/heavy duty rubber (not latex) gloves. If you have not worn all these, then you should answer “no” to wearing PPE in the questions below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you had any contact with the following:</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dead/sick birds?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds in the 48 hours before they became sick?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faecal material/ eggs/ litter/ manure from infected birds while the birds were sick?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faecal material/ eggs/ litter/ manure from the sick birds in the 48 hours before they became sick?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you have answered yes to any of the above, when did you start having this contact?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you have answered yes to any of the above, when was the last date you had this contact <strong>without wearing PPE</strong>?</td>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you have answered yes to any of the above, when was the last date you had this contact <strong>while wearing PPE</strong>?</td>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you continue to work on the site, please state “Ongoing”.
Health Information – if you have ticked Yes to any of the questions above about contact with sick, dead birds or their faecal material/litter/manure/eggs, please answer the questions below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Have you developed a flu like illness (eg high temperature, cough, sore throat, runny nose, headache, aching muscles) in the 10 days since your last contact?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Have you developed shortness of breath in the 10 days since your last contact?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Have you developed sticky eyes(s)/conjunctivitis up to 10 days from after your last contact?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are you aware of anyone else associated with this incident who has developed any of these symptoms? If yes provide name and contact number if known, in the space below</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Have you taken any medication to prevent avian influenza (antiviral prophylaxis)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. If you have taken medication to prevent avian influenza, what was the name of this medication?</td>
<td>Name of medication:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. If you have taken medication to prevent avian influenza did you start taking this before or after your first contact?</td>
<td>(Please circle)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. If you have taken any medication to prevent avian influenza prior to your contact, what date did you start taking this and when did you stop taking it?</td>
<td>Date started:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If you are still taking this medication, please state “ongoing”).</td>
<td>Date stopped:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signed:...........................................  Dated:...........................................

APHA STAFF MUST IMMEDIATELY PHONE THE RELEVANT HEALTH PROTECTION TEAM IF ANY ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS 1-4 ARE YES
Annex 7: Management of persons exposed to Avian Influenza without PPE under the strict approach

The following algorithm applies to the public health management of persons who have been exposed to a confirmed, or possible, avian influenza in poultry or wild birds, where adequate PPE was not worn at the time of exposure and the strict approach has been applied.

For information and guidance on dosage for antiviral prophylaxis and treatment, please see: www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-treatment-and-prophylaxis-using-anti-viral-agents and specific guidance for A(H7N9)

Further information on avian influenza in birds may be found on the Defra website: www.gov.uk/avian-influenza-bird-flu

Advice on occupational exposure, including PPE, can be found on the HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/influenza.htm

Follow-up: Active follow-up should be for a period of 10 days following the last exposure (even if PPE was worn). Persons exposed are asked to report any symptoms, including conjunctivitis.

If in any doubt on the correct course of action, discuss with the Influenza Preparedness and Response team on 0208 327 6661 or the NIS Duty Doctor (out-of-hours) on 020 8200 4400.

If any person subject to public health follow-up becomes symptomatic, alert the Influenza Preparedness and Response team on 0208 327 6661 or the NIS Duty Doctor (out-of-hours) on 020 8200 4400.
Managing the human health implications of AI in poultry and wild birds: guidance for HPTs

1. **Category A**: Vet workers, farm workers or equivalent who had direct contact with birds or their faecal material or eggs before the incident was declared (or 48 hrs prior to the onset of clinical signs in birds and not wearing PPE). *This may include persons living on the farm if they have had direct contact with potentially infected material.*

2. **Category C**: eg members of the public (or others) inadvertently handling sick or dead birds, or their faecal matter that is confirmed to be infected with AI.

3. **No direct exposure**: Visitors to the infected premises who have not actually handled birds or their faecal material.

4. **Contacts**: Close contacts of people in category 1 or 2.

5. **No known exposure**: Individuals living or working in the protection zone, surveillance zone or risk area not conforming to any of the above categories.

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**Higher Risk**

0-7 days since last exposure: start oseltamivir prophylaxis, provide information and active follow-up

7-10 days since last exposure: oseltamivir not indicated, provide information, active follow-up

For all symptomatic persons (including conjunctivitis):
- Initiate oseltamivir treatment promptly
- Arrange for swabbing and serology testing
- Alert NIS

---

**Very Low Risk**

Provide information, and passive follow-up

Dependent on AI subtype. Provide information if requested

Consider providing information if requested

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0-7 days since last exposure: start oseltamivir prophylaxis, provide information and active follow-up

7-10 days since last exposure: oseltamivir not indicated, provide information, active follow-up

For all symptomatic persons (including conjunctivitis):
- Initiate oseltamivir treatment promptly
- Arrange for swabbing and serology testing
- Alert NIS
Annex 8: Management of individuals with prolonged ongoing exposure

The maximum recommended use of antivirals is for 42 days.

Where an individual has ongoing exposure which is likely to last longer than 42 days, a break in antiviral treatment is required.

Individuals with ongoing exposure should be allowed to continue their duties with ongoing exposure for 32 days while taking antiviral chemoprophylaxis. They should then be redeployed to duties where they are not exposed and should be followed-up for 10 days while they continue prophylaxis and are exposure free.

If further exposure is necessary, a 3 day break from antiviral prophylaxis should be observed. Subsequent to this they may return to duties where they are exposed and should recommence antiviral prophylaxis.
Annex 9: Supplementary guidance relating to people responding to a suspected or confirmed avian influenza incident

On declaration of a confirmed or suspected influenza, the number of persons responding should be kept to a workable minimum.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Anyone involved in the response to an AI incident who will be handling live or dead birds should use the recommended level of PPE. This is covered in guidance from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE):
www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/influenza.htm

Logistical arrangements

HPTs will be aware of the locations of small local emergency antivirals stocks and how to access these. If urgent replenishment is likely to be needed to meet the needs of the incident, this should be raised during normal office hours with National Infection Service, Colindale.

Seasonal influenza vaccination

Seasonal influenza vaccination is not recommended as a routine action in the response to avian influenza incidents. This is related to the time required for an individual to be protected from such a vaccination, which is normally longer than an individual’s exposure during the response to a single incident. It should be noted that a seasonal influenza vaccination is not expected to protect against a particular avian influenza strain identified in the incident itself. This advice has been discussed and agreed with the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP).

Serology

Unless otherwise advised, serology is not a routine investigation for these incidents and should only be obtained from exposed individuals following prior discussion with the PHE Virus Reference Department.

Useful contact details

Influenza Preparedness and Response Team (in-hours): 020 8200 4400
Colindale Duty Doctors (out of hours, health professionals only): 020 8200 4400
Virus reference department: 020 8327 6017 or VRD.enquires@phe.gov.uk.
Annex 10: Oseltamivir prophylaxis – factsheet for contacts

AVIAN (BIRD) FLU - ANTIVIRAL MEDICINE

WHY HAVE I BEEN GIVEN THIS MEDICINE?
You have been given a course of antiviral medicine called Oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) because you have come into close contact with poultry suspected or confirmed (delete as appropriate) to be infected with bird flu virus type [insert virus type]. This means that you might have been exposed to the bird flu virus. The risk to your health is low but taking antiviral medicine reduces this risk even further. It will also reduce the risk of you becoming unwell with an ordinary human flu virus, while you are taking the antivirals.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I TAKE?
To work effectively you must take one capsule every day until the course you have been given finishes or until your GP or other health professional tells you to stop.

CAN I TAKE THIS MEDICINE IF I AM PREGNANT?
If you are pregnant or are currently breast feeding, please bring this to the attention of the health professional who gave you the medicines, before you start taking them and they will advise you.

WHAT IF I HAVE ANOTHER MEDICAL CONDITION?
Please tell the health professional who is providing the antiviral medicines about any medical condition or allergies to medicines.

DOES THIS MEDICINE HAVE SIDE EFFECTS?
Not usually and side effects will generally be mild. Side effects have been rarely reported and include nausea and mild stomach ache/upset. Nausea is less likely if the medicine is taken with food.

WHEN SHOULD I START TAKING THIS MEDICINE?
As soon as you get it.

DOES MY FAMILY NEED THIS MEDICINE?
No, only people who are believed to have come into close contact with a bird infected with bird flu need to take the medicine. This is because only people who have handled or have been in very close contact with infected birds are at risk of getting bird flu.

WHAT IF I DEVELOP SYMPTOMS?
If you suddenly develop any of the following symptoms up to 10 days after your last contact with the affected birds or affected [farm/premises] it is important that you contact either your GP or other health professional by telephone as soon as possible. You should refer to this information sheet so they understand why you are taking these medicines.

The most important symptoms to look for are:
- High temperature/fever (temperature of 38°C or more)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Red, sore and sticky eye

Other symptoms may include:

- Body/muscle pain/aches
- Sore throat
- Runny nose

If you need any further advice or have any of the above symptoms and have not been able to contact a health professional, please contact [INSERT LOCAL HPT DETAILS] quoting [HPZONE REFERENCE]. Outside office hours you will be put through to [specify details of how to contact out of hours]
Annex 11: letter to GPs for patients who have received antiviral prophylaxis

Dear Colleague

Antivirals provided to your patient in relation to Avian Flu outbreak on xxxxxxxxxx at XXXX

Your patient detailed below is among those identified as potentially exposed to avian flu during an incident in [specify]. They have been provided with oseltamivir prophylaxis, as follows:

[patient name and address field]

Oseltamivir 75mg OD for 10 days PO. (modify as required*)

You will want to update your records with this information.

This potentially exposed person may contact you in the event that they experience fever, respiratory symptoms or conjunctivitis symptoms, up to 10 days after their last exposure to the affected premises.

We recommend that you contact your local Health Protection Team immediately if the patient(s) contact you; your local team will provide advice on how to investigate and manage these patients.

The team can be contacted via: [specify details for team local to GP surgery] quoting [HPZone reference].

Further information and guidance is also available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/avian-influenza-guidance-data-and-analysis

We thank you for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully

[suggest copy to local HPT duty desk for those not resident in same HPT area]
Annex 12: Advice on swabbing of symptomatic individuals exposed to confirmed avian influenza incidents

When an exposed person has developed symptoms compatible with human infection with Avian Influenza (AI) (including conjunctivitis), it is preferable to arrange for swabs to be taken by a healthcare worker using appropriate PPE, as per national guidance (insert link) which will include FFP3 respirators, gloves and eye protection. This facilitates obtaining the best sample safely. It is acknowledged that this will require communication with healthcare staff with appropriate skills and equipment, and that this can be difficult to facilitate. However, this is similar to the IPC requirements which would need to be in place to ensure that a patient could be safely clinically assessed if they requested it. This is no different to the situation posed by significant respiratory infections such as MERS-CoV. It should be clear that confirming the diagnosis for such individuals is for their clinical benefit, by facilitating appropriate clinical management.

There has previously been discussion about the use of self-swabbing in scenarios where an individual has a relevant exposure to an Avian Influenza incident but does not require immediate medical admission. It should be noted that in these situations, a human case of AI is regarded as an emerging infection, i.e. there is no existing, significant community transmission and likely to be little population immunity to any infection. This is why it is important to confirm or refute the diagnosis with a high quality specimen, explaining the preference for a healthcare professional to take this specimen and for appropriate PPE to be used. This is in contrast to the use of self-swabbing in other scenarios such as seasonal influenza, where community transmission is occurring. It should be noted that even in any future pandemic, self-swabbing would not be used before community transmission is established.
9. Glossary of abbreviations

ACDP – Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens
AI – Avian Influenza
APHA – Animal and Plant Health Agency
CCDC – Consultant in Communicable Disease Control
CCG – Clinical Commissioning Group
CHP – Consultant in Health Protection
Defra – Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DH – Department of Health
DPH – Director of Public Health
EPO – Emergency Planning Officer
ERD – Emergency Response Department
FFP3 – Filtering Facepiece class 3
FOB – Forward operations base
GP – General practitioner
HPAI – Highly pathogenic avian influenza
HPT – Health Protection Team
HSE – Health and Safety Executive
IMT – Incident Management Team
JCC – Joint Coordination Centre
LA – local authority
LPAI – Low pathogenic avian influenza
NDCC – National Disease Control Centre
NIS – National Infection Service
NHS – National Health Service
NHSE – NHS England
OIE – the Office International des Epizooties, now the World Organisation for Animal Health, but the acronym was retained.
PHE – Public Health England
PPE – Personal Protective Equipment
ROD – Regional Operations Director
VENDU – Veterinary Exotic Notifiable Diseases Unit
VO – Veterinary Officer