

**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

**Notes for Guidance: Export Health Certificate  
for entry into the European Union or Northern  
Ireland of captive birds, other than racing  
pigeons immediately released after entry 8460**

**April 2026**

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**No: 8460 NFG**

**EHC for entry into the EU or NI of captive birds, other than racing pigeons immediately released after entry.**

**NFG FOR THE CERTIFYING OFFICIERS (CO)**

## **1. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION**

[Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2020/692](#)

[Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2020/689](#)

[Commission Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2019/2035](#)

[Regulation \(EU\) No 2016/429](#)

[Regulation \(EU\) No 2017/625](#)

[Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2024/351 - Model EHC amending Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2021/403](#)

Any EU legislation referenced in the certificate must be complied with and EU legislation can be accessed on the following link. You should ensure you use the latest version: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>

Please note that Official Control Regulations 2017/625 have repealed Regulation (EC) No 854/2004, 882/2004 and Directive No 96/23/EC. Please see link:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017R0625&from=EN>

### **Consolidated legislation**

Consolidated texts, which integrate the basic instruments of EU legislation with their amendments and corrections in a single, non-official document, are available. Each consolidated text contains a list of all legal documents taken into account for its construction.

You can search for consolidated texts by using the 'find results by document number' option on the European Commission website. Once you have selected the relevant legislation, click 'document information', and then scroll down to 'all consolidated versions' and select the most recent version.

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>

Please note that the consolidated text may not contain the latest amendment to the legislation, as it takes several weeks for this to be updated.

Texts provided in this section are intended for information only. Please note that these texts have no legal value. For legal purposes please refer to the texts published in the 'Official Journal of the EU'.

## IMPORTANT

These notes provide guidance to COs and exporters. The NFG should have been issued to you together with the relevant export certificate applicable for dispatch of certain birds, other than poultry, intended for dispatch to the EU or NI. The NFG should not be read as a standalone document but in conjunction with the health certificate.

We strongly suggest that exporters obtain full details of the importing country's requirements from the veterinary authorities in the country concerned, or their representatives in the UK, in advance of each consignment.

[Please note, policies are being reviewed. NFG will be further amended to provide specific guidance. Traders should look at NFGs regularly for any updates]

**A declaration by the master of the ship, as set out in Annex III of Commission Regulation (EC) No 403/2021, shall accompany to veterinary certificates for imports into the EU of terrestrial animals where the transport of those commodities includes transport by ship, even for part of the journey. You can find Master of the ship declaration here:**

<https://www.gov.uk/export-health-certificates/master-of-the-vessel-declaration-8466>

## 2. SCOPE OF THE CERTIFICATE

EHC for entry into the EU or NI of captive birds.

'Captive birds' means any birds other than poultry that are kept in captivity, including those that are kept for shows, races, exhibitions, competitions, breeding or selling;

Excluded are birds kept in captivity for the following reasons:

- a) the production of:
  - i. meat
  - ii. eggs for consumption
  - iii. other products
- b) restocking supplies of game birds
- c) the purpose of breeding of birds used for the types of production referred to in points (a) and (b)
- d) racing pigeons immediately released after entry

This certificate is to be completed according to the notes for the completion of certificates provided for in Chapter 4 of Annex I to Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/2235.

## 3. CERTIFICATION BY AN OV

In **England, Scotland and Wales**, this certificate must be signed by a Government Veterinary Officer (e.g. APHA, FSA or FSS employed veterinary officers) or by an OV appointed by APHA on behalf of Ministers in Defra, the Scottish Government or the Welsh Government and who hold the appropriate Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary) (OCQ (V)) authorisation.

OVs must sign and stamp, with the OV stamp, the health certificate in ink of a different colour to that of the printing of the EHC. There is no requirement to sign and stamp in a specific colour.

The OV should keep a copy of the signed certificate and any supporting documents for at least two years after signature or receipt/dispatch of the consignment, whichever is later. These can be electronic copies.

### **EHC in foreign language/s of the EU Member States (MSs).**

EHC should be in English and the foreign language of the Border Control Post (BCP) of entry in the EU. The original copy of the required EHC must accompany the consignment to the BCP of entry.

Listing of the EU MS BCPs can be found here: [https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/vet-border-control/bip-contacts\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/vet-border-control/bip-contacts_en)

The foreign language certificate as received from the APHA Centre for International Trade at Carlisle or via the Export Health Certificates Online system (EHCO) and bearing the same unique reference number as the English certificate, should be considered an official and accurate translations of the English, as published in EU legislation.

The (sub-) paragraphs / options and how they are numbered and formatted is identical in the English and foreign language editions and to the legislation published by the European Commission. Therefore, the same phrases/sentences in the foreign language versions as in the English version should be struck through and these deletions should be stamped and initialled in both versions. Both versions must also be signed (as opposed to being initialled) and stamped by the OV, the foreign language certificate is deemed to be a genuine and properly authorised translation of the English version.

This also applies to any instructions in the guidance notes to strike out certain paragraphs or to certify statements that the country is free of certain notifiable diseases etc.

Additional information can be found in APHA Official Veterinarian Training: <https://improve-ov.com/instructions/instructions.php>

### **SIGNING AND STAMPING**

When signing a certificate, the CO should ensure that the certificate contains no deletions or alterations, other than those which are indicated on the certificate to be permissible and any corrections to permitted entries, subject to such changes being initialled and stamped (in the margin) by the CO. Permissible deletions are normally indicated in the 'Notes' section at the end of the certificate, with the instruction 'Keep as appropriate' or 'delete if not applicable'.

- Where the certificate contains optional or contextual statements, the statements which are not relevant shall be crossed out, individually initialled, and stamped by the CO, or completely removed from the certificate.
- Permitted paragraphs and sections may be crossed out by applying a 'Z' across the section or paragraph rather than crossing out line by line.
- There is no requirement for a date and time to accompany each stamp. The date is only entered at the required entry field in Part I of the certificate, and at the end where the CO signs, stamps and dates that action.

- We are aware of some BCPs demanding that all handwritten information in Part 1 of the EHC is initialled and stamped, including handwritten scoring out of otherwise blank boxes. There is no legal requirement in EU legislation that all the hand-written information entered in the certificate must be signed and stamped. It is only in the case of correction, in any part of the certificate, or in the case of statements to be crossed out, that the certifier must add signature (or initials) and stamp. This has been confirmed by the European Commission. The Commission noted however, in the case of a hand-written certificate, it is expected that the same one person completes the document. If not, the BCP might suspect that empty boxes were completed by another person after the certificate has been signed by the official.

You should consider checking with the specific BCP regarding their preference when it comes to the stamping and initialling of handwritten scoring out of otherwise blank boxes in Part I of the EHC.

- **Clarification from the European Commission means that all pages (as opposed to sheets of paper) are signed and stamped once individually in place of fan stamping and in addition to any permitted alterations. There is no requirement to fan stamp.**
- COs are reminded to consult the NFG prior to the certification of each EHC. NFG will be updated with this new information in due course.

Further Information COs should make sure they are familiar with all relevant guidance and other documents relating to EHCs and that they discuss requirements with exporters in advance.

See <https://improve-ov.com/instructions/instructions.php?ta=8>

You can also contact APHA's Centre for International Trade (CIT) on 03000 200 301.

## **PART I: DETAILS OF THE CONSIGNMENT**

All boxes in Part I of the certificate must be completed. When a box is not applicable/optional, and not filled, please score it through.

Please use schedule to be attached to the certificate if there is not enough space to fill the information. See Section 'Addition of Schedules' below.

Please complete all the boxes in Part I of the certificate in accordance with the guidance laid down in Chapter 4 of Annex I to [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2020/2235, Amended by Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2023/2744](#).

The Harmonised System (HS) Code is a commodity classification system used as a basis for customs tariffs and for international trade statistics.

**It is the exporter's responsibility to ensure that the HS code is entered correctly and accurately reflects the product(s) being consigned.**

Further information on HS Codes can be found online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/trade-tariff/sections> and

<http://madb.europa.eu/madb/euTariffs.htm>

## I.27 Identification of the commodities.

“Species” – list the name of the species with Latin name in brackets e.g. “Domestic pigeons” (*Columba livia*)

“Breed / category” – list their specific breed and whether they are for breeding etc

“Identification system” means the way the birds are identified – e.g. “leg ring” or “microchip”

“Identification number” Captive Birds must be identified in line with Article 53 of Commission Delegated Regulation 2020/692. This requires a unique marked closed ring attached at least to one leg of the animal with a visible, legible and indelible display of an alphanumeric code or an injectable transponder with a legible and indelible display of a numeric code that contains at least the following information:

- a) the code of the third country or territory where they were initially identified conforming with ISO Standard 3166 in the two-letter or three-letter format;
- b) a unique serial number.

The EU Commission has confirmed that it is acceptable, when injectable transponders are used, that the country code of the identification code of the birds is numeric, in accordance with ISO standard 3166-1 numeric. Therefore, for birds identified in the UK with an injectable transponder, the numerical code “826” can be used.

“Quantity” - enter the number of birds in the consignment.

## PART II: Health Information

### II.1 Animal Health Attestation

**II.1.1** - Enter the territory code. GB is listed for all of the relevant commodities. The relevant regulations are [Implementing Regulations \(EU\) 2021/404](#) and [2021/405](#). These regulations have been amended by [Implementing Regulations \(EU\) 2021/634](#) and [2021/606](#), adding the GB and the Crown Dependencies to the relevant lists.

The certifying OV must check the UK’s status in the third country list in Annex VI of Regulation (EU) 2021/404 against the commodity he/she is certifying and ensure that the relevant provisions are certified accordingly.

**II.1.2** - The establishment must be named and supplied with an approval number that appears on a list of establishments published by the Commission. This name and unique approval number must be in Box I.11

**(a)** - Ensure that the approval has not been suspended by APHA

**(b) & (c)** - should be certified on the basis that the farm and animal establishments are registered and approved by APHA and receive regular animal health visits from a veterinarian. Frequency of such visitation is proportionate to the risk. Records of animals should be kept for 3 years.

**(d) & (e)** These paragraphs can be certified by an OV on the basis of the information contained within the interactive disease map. The map can be found using the following link [Avian Influenza Export Health Certification Check \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com). When selecting layer of `10

km racing pigeon/captive bird movement restricted area`, the map indicates 10km zones around outbreaks of HPAI that remain active for 30 days.

For Newcastle disease, this can be certified by checking the list of [Notifiable Diseases- ET171](#)

**(f)** This can be deleted for birds other than for consignments of psittacidae. The certifying OV would need to seek the relevant evidence/access to records to satisfy themselves that these requirements on these points are complied with. This can be signed on the basis that this disease is notifiable in the UK.

**II.1.3** - The clinical examination must be done within 24 hours of loading and may only be performed by an OV of the country of origin. The OV should be vigilant for highly pathogen Avian Influenza (AI) and Newcastle disease.

**II.1.4. (a), (b), (c), (d), (e)** - The certifying OV would need to seek the relevant evidence/access to records to satisfy themselves that these requirements are complied with.

**(c)** This clause applies to all captive birds, including captive birds of Galliformes species and it may be certified after the OV has checked the establishments records. As per Article 57 of 692 regulations, the vaccination of captive birds against the Newcastle disease is an option, not a requirement. One option must be deleted, as applicable. The OV is advised to keep a copy of the records to support their certification. If the captive birds have been vaccinated against Newcastle disease, then the second option must be certified and the OV should confirm that all administrated vaccines comply with both the general and specific criteria of Annex XV to Delegated regulation (EU) 2020/692. If captive birds were previously imported from another country, the vaccination detail included in the import certificate can be used as evidence.

**(d)** the tests should be carried out on samples taken by or under the control of the competent authority. Taking and testing of samples can be found here <https://improve-ov.com/instructions/instructions.php?ta=8>

**II. 1.4. (f)** - May be certified on the basis of notifiable disease clearances, as above, as the animals came from holdings in the UK.

**II.1.4. (g)** - Enter the date of the clinical examination. The clinical examination must be done within 24 hours of loading and may only be performed by an OV of the country of origin. The OV should be vigilant for highly pathogen AI and Newcastle disease.

**II.1.5** - May be certified if all of the points (a)-(e) are complied with at time of loading. Containers must be labelled as per point 4 of Annex XVI to Regulation (EU) 2020/692 relevant for captive birds.

**II.1.6** - Enter the date of dispatch to the EU.

The certifying OV must ensure that the transport was cleaned and disinfected with an authorised disinfectant before loading in accordance with the relevant provisions of Retained EU Regulation No 1/2005 and that other parts of the attestation are complied with. See Section 9 on Animal Transport Attestation and [Gov.uk](http://Gov.uk) for further information on approved disinfectants. Every animal should be fit for the journey that is planned. A declaration from the owner / transporter must be sought to confirm relevant requirements have been met.

**II.1.7** - This should be deleted except for instances where consignments are being exported to a Member State or zone thereof which has been granted the status free from Newcastle disease virus without vaccination in accordance with Article 66 of Commission Regulation (EU) 2020/689 and comply with the points listed. The list of Member States with this status can be found in Annex X to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) [2021/620](#). To certify this point, the OV should seek the relevant evidence/access to records to satisfy themselves that these requirements on these points are complied with.

(a)-(b) may be certified as required on inspection of the establishment records and on receipt of an owner's declaration/veterinary declaration that the OV deems sufficient to provide the necessary reassurances to certify these requirements. (b) requires for the captive birds to have been kept under official veterinarian supervision for at least 14 days prior to the date of loading.

(c) the tests should be carried out on samples taken by or under the control of the competent authority and testing carried out at an official laboratory.

#### **4. NOTIFIABLE DISEASE CLEARANCE**

**NOTE:** Avian Chlamydiosis clearance should be obtained by the OV based on their knowledge of and records held at the Captive Bird Breeding Establishment.

Some export certificates for animals and animal products will include statements that will require the OV to certify that specified zones or the entire country of origin are free from certain diseases.

COs must check the following sources of disease information for the United Kingdom immediately prior to certification, to ensure disease freedom statements can be certified:

- the [ET171 Notifiable disease occurrence list for Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#) available on the Improve International website in the Export documents
- the [ET152 UK status for non-notifiable disease relevant to export certification](#) available on the Improve International website in the Export documents.
- For any postcodes in Northern Ireland, COs can obtain clearance using the interactive map provided by DAERA that can be found here: [AI Trade Map](#)

#### **For Great Britain:**

**In the absence of a specific Notifiable Disease Clearance (618NDC) from CITC:** COs may certify that GB has disease free status or region free status for those diseases mentioned in the health certificate, once they have checked the disease list(s) for the last occurrence of the disease and have ensured it complies with the time frames in the certificate.

In the event of a disease outbreak that affects a CO being able to obtain their own disease clearance, CITC will notify COs to make it clear which disease freedom statements should not be certified and where necessary, will issue a 618NDC notifiable disease clearance if the EHC can continue to be issued for certain regions that retain free status.

In the event of a disease outbreak after the EHC has been issued that affects the disease clearance, COs must not certify the EHC and must contact CITC immediately for advice on

whether certification can still take place. If a disease outbreak affects the disease clearance procedures for this EHC, a 618NDC will be reinstated by CITC which will be issued with the EHC until a time when disease clearance can be reinstated.

**NOTE:** This does not apply to Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs) or Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) freedom statements.

## **5. COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE**

Certification Support Officers may not be utilised for gathering evidence relating to this certificate.

## **6. CONSIGNMENTS OR PARTS OF THE CONSIGNMENT ORIGINATING FROM NI, EU MEMBER STATES OR FROM A THIRD COUNTRY [WHEN APPLICABLE]**

### **NI origin:**

Consignments could potentially contain animals which have originated in NI. The certificate/documentation which the animal arrives into GB with may not contain sufficient information for the GB CO to sign the EU EHC.

Disease clearance for animals originating in NI can be completed using auto-clearance NDC found here:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/notifiable-diseases-northern-ireland>

Where regional or local level disease clearance is required, this can be certified upon request on the basis of information from NI in the form of a declaration or a supporting health attestation.

Animal health statements which refer to the prohibition of certain vaccination programmes e.g. against FMD or CSF or ASF can be certified at a national level by the CO on the basis that NI also enforces a ban on such vaccinations in accordance with EU regulations.

Statements relating to implementation of a national system for identification and registration of livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry) can be certified on the basis of the requirement to register all livestock animal births, moves and deaths on the DAERA database.

### **EU origin:**

It is possible that some consignments may contain animals that are of EU origin and were imported into GB on a GB EHC. The GB EHC may not contain enough information to allow the CO to sign an EU EHC.

In such cases, the CO will need further information from the EU member state regarding particular attestations on the EHC that cannot be signed by the CO without support documentation. Thus, the GB exporter must request from the EU exporter an attestation or written declaration from an EU registered vet. The GB exporter may wish to obtain these directly from the EU vet who has inspected the animals before export from the EU.

This supporting information must be in writing and kept by the GB CO. The GB CO is not required to attach it as a supporting document to the EHC, unless requested by the EU BCP or told otherwise.

**Third country origin:**

It is also possible that some consignments may contain animals that have been imported to GB from non-EU countries and fulfilled a residency period in GB, and GB exporters intend to export then to the EU. In these cases, COs may obtain a copy of the EHC for the import of such animals from the Third Country to GB.

GB COs are not required to attach a copy of the Third Country EHC as a supporting document to the EHC, unless requested by the EU BCP or specifically instructed in the NFG.

**It is the GB exporter's ultimate responsibility to obtain any necessary support documents (from the EU member state exporter/Third Country exporter), to enable GB COs to be able to certify the live animals in good time before the export to the EU.**

**7. CLINICAL EXAMINATION**

OVs must subject the birds on the day, within 24 hours, prior to dispatch to a clinical inspection and found free of obvious signs of disease.

OVs must use their professional judgement to determine the level of inspection required in order to ensure that no animal is exported which shows signs of infectious disease and that animals are fit to travel to their intended destination.

**8. ANIMAL TRANSPORT ATTESTATION****Animal Welfare**

Council Regulation EC No 1/2005 (EC) is implemented under the Welfare of

Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006 and parallel legislation in Scotland and Wales. If transported by air, animals should be transported in accordance with International Air Transport Association (IATA) standards.

Every animal should be fit for the journey that is planned and all animals should be transported in conditions guaranteed not to cause them injury of unnecessary suffering. The conditions related to fitness of animals for transport during the intended journey are set out in Article 3(b) and Annex I, Chapter I of Council Regulation 1/2005. Animals should be in good health, free of illness, free of significant wounds and able to walk without pain on all legs. Animals that are injured or that present physiological weaknesses or pathological processes shall not be considered fit for transport.

**9. ADDITION OF SCHEDULES**

When the space in Part I or Part II of the certificate is insufficient to accommodate full details of the consignment a schedule may be used. In the relevant section of the certificate the CO should annotate the certificate 'see attached schedule'. A new schedule should be created (typed or clearly written) containing the same information as that required in the certificate. The schedule must include the certificate reference number on each page and must be signed, dated and stamped by the CO in a colour other than the printed text on each page

and under the last entry. The schedule forms part of the certificate. All pages of the certificate, including the schedule, must be sequentially numbered. Any blank spaces in the schedule or the certificate should be struck through with diagonal lines.

Further guidance is available here:

<https://improve-ov.com/instructions/instructions.php?ta=8>

## **10. CERTIFIED COPIES OF EHCS**

When completing export certification, the CO and, if applicable, FCCO must make photocopies of, or scan and save all documents they certify. OVs must retain copies of certification documents in accordance with RCVS Certification principles.

<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/supporting-guidance/certification/>

COs must retain copies of all export documentation for a period of two years. A certified copy of this EHC does not need to be returned to the APHA CITC. For the purposes of completing routine Quality Assurance checks on export certification, CITC may request certified copies of certification from COs.

Further details on Post Certifying Procedures, ‘certified copies’ of certification and the types of documents that should be retained by COs can be found on [APHA Official Veterinarian Training](#).

## **11. LEGAL STATEMENT**

References in this guidance to “assimilated EU Regulation” should be interpreted as references to assimilated law, as defined under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

## **12. DISCLAIMER**

This certificate and NFG are provided on the basis of information available at the time and may not necessarily comply fully with the requirements of the importing country. It is the exporter’s responsibility to check the certificate against any relevant import permit or any advice provided by the competent authority in the importing country. If these do not match, the exporter should contact the APHA in Carlisle.

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [liveanimalexports.carlisle@apha.gov.uk](mailto:liveanimalexports.carlisle@apha.gov.uk)

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# Version History

## EHC

### **2025**

No significant changes.

## NFG

### **Version 12: Published April 2026**

**II.1.7** – Updated following amendment to Annex X to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/620

### **Version 11: Published 29 October 2025**

References to Vet Gateway updated to Official Veterinarian Training throughout.

**Legal Statement:** Wording updated.

### **Version 10: Published 16 June 2025**

**NOTIFIABLE DISEASE CLEARANCE** – Section amended to include reference to AI map for NI.

### **Version 9: Published 31 July 2024**

**Applicable Legislation:** Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/351 added

### **Version 8: Published 22 Sep 2023:**

**Part I: Detail of Consignment I.27 Identification No:** Is amended adding further guidance in line with Article 53 of Commission Delegated Regulation 2020/692, further information is also added about the transponder numeric code after receiving clarification from the EU Commission.