



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Veterinary Checks on Live Animals Import Information Note (IIN) VCLA

November 2023

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1. Important Information

Import Information Notes (IINs) are technical documents containing import requirements and are for use by importers and border officials.

Please be aware that import conditions may be updated due to changes in policy or legislation. Please ensure that you check the current version of the IIN as well as the IIN specific to your commodity [online](#).

Importers should note that the information given relates only to animal health and public health conditions of import. It does not give guidance on other conditions that may need to be met.

References to European Union legislation within this document are references to direct EU legislation which has been retained in Great Britain (retained EU law as defined in the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018) and can be viewed on the UK legislation website ([legislation.gov.uk](#)).

Please note that any links to legislation provided in this document are for information purposes only and may not be the most recent version.

References to imports into Great Britain in any Import Information Note also includes imports into the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

References to trading partners includes non-EU, EU and EFTA countries.

The Border **Target Operating Model** (TOM) is the new approach to importing into Great Britain that will be progressively introduced from the end of January 2024. Guidance on the TOM can be found here:

[The Border Target Operating Model: August 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

2. Scope

General conditions and veterinary checks applicable to live animals imported into Great Britain are provided for in both [Retained EU Regulation 2017/625](#) and the [Trade in Animals and Related Products Regulations 2011](#). Similar legislation is in place in Scotland and Wales.

[Import Information Notes](#) (IINs) provide a summary of specific import conditions for different types/species of animals (for example if a health certificate is required). You should consult the relevant IIN before any animals are consigned to Great Britain.

Notice of the import of live fish and shellfish should be given to the Fish Health Inspectorate, Cefas, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8UB (Tel: 01305 206 700, Fax: 01305 206 602, Email: fhi@cefas.co.uk).

Live fish and shellfish for direct human consumption are checked in accordance with veterinary checks on products of animal origin. You should contact the Food Standards Agency for advice on import conditions (E-mail: imported.food@food.gov.uk).

Notice of the import of live ornamental fish and shellfish should be given to the Border Control Post (BCP) – see section 3 below.

Information on imports of pet animals is available on the [GOV.UK website](#).

3. Pre-notification

Live animals must be checked on entry into GB to ensure that they meet the animal health import conditions. These checks must be carried out at an approved BCP which are approved for different species of animals and you should ensure your proposed entry point is approved for the animal you wish to import.

- [Contact details for UK BCPs](#)

Government vets employed by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) carry out the required checks.

Pet animals as defined in Regulation 576/2013 have to enter through an approved point of entry for the species concerned.

Until the end of 2024, imports from the EU, and certain imports from Greenland and EFTA countries, do not need to enter Great Britain via a BCP and are not subject to veterinary checks at the border. APHA will continue to carry out identity and physical checks on EU imports of live animals at their destination based on assessments of biosecurity and public health risks until the end of 2024.

- Consignments from trading partners (other than the EU, and some imports from Greenland and EFTA countries) may only be imported through an approved Border Control Post (BCP).
- The person responsible for the consignment must give notice of the proposed entry of the consignment at least one working day before arrival (with a derogation to 4 hours before arrival if there are logistical constraints).

- The notification shall be made to the inspection staff at the BCP using the Import of products, animals, food and feed system (IPAFFS). The common health entry document (CHED) is used by operators to give prior notification of arrival of a consignment. Operators responsible for consignments must complete and submit the Part 1 of the CHED on IPAFFS. They are also responsible for the charges raised to cover for the completion of the checks at the BCP. Further information regarding IPAFFS can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Any other electronic means agreed with the BCP to inform about the intended arrival of a consignment in advance are not to be considered as an official pre-notification.

4. Presentation at the BCP

On arrival the animal(s) must be conveyed directly to the BCP where they will be subject to documentary and identity checks and to a physical examination. Importers must notify the BCP if, for any reason, the arrival of a consignment is cancelled, postponed or delayed.

Consignments presented for import at a BCP must be accompanied by the original documentation (e.g. health certificate(s) or commercial document where appropriate); faxed or photocopied certificates are not acceptable. Generally, APHA will retain the original health certification.

The animals will not be permitted to leave the BCP, nor the customs clearance area, except with a CHED provided by the BCP confirming that all the veterinary checks have been carried out. The animals must be taken directly to the place of destination, given on the CHED. The CHED must accompany the consignment to the first point of destination.

For elephants and artiodactyla and their cross-breeds, following arrival at the premises of destination after leaving the BCP, animals for breeding and production may not be moved from the premises for 30 days unless consigned to a slaughterhouse.

5. Fees

A fee will be charged for veterinary checks carried out at BCPs on imports of live animals. Details of the charge made for BCP checks on live animals is available on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk) or by contacting the relevant BCP.

BCP operators, who are independent of Defra, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government may also charge for the use of their facilities. The level of their fees is a matter for the operator and the importer.

6. Special transitional import arrangements

There are currently transitional arrangements in place for specified territories in order to deliver the Government's decision to phase in official controls on imports from those countries after leaving the EU. The transitional arrangements apply to imports entering GB, they do not cover Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man.

Transitional arrangements apply to live animals subject to official controls at a BCP that originate from an EU member state, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland. These arrangements are set out below.

Live animals which originate from a third country other than those listed above, but arrive via an EU member state, may also qualify for the transitional arrangements in circumstances where (before importation into GB) such animals:

- have been presented to a member state BCP recognised by the Secretary of State,
- are accompanied by a properly completed and validated CHED; and
- have been pre-notified in GB.

For more details, please see Annex I.

The transitional arrangements apply until the end of the transitional staging period. The introduction of border checks for EU animals are as follows:

- From 1 January 2021 importers are required to pre-notify authorities via IPAFFS for their consignments of live animals listed in Annex I to retained EU Regulation 2019/2007 entering GB. Additionally, these consignments must be accompanied by a certified Export Health Certificate. APHA will continue to carry out identity and physical checks on EU imports of live animals at their destination based on assessments of biosecurity and public health risks.

The live animals must remain under restricted movement at the place of destination indicated in the health certificate until the completed and signed health certificate has been uploaded on IPAFFS.

The person responsible for the transportation of the live animals to the place of destination must be in possession of the appropriate authorisation in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005.

- From the end of 2024 live animals will also need to enter via a point of entry with a Border Control Post (BCP) that has been designated to receive these animals. This will be in addition to pre-notification and certification required from 1 January 2021. The consignment will be subject to documentary, ID, and physical checks.

7. Transit/transshipment through Great Britain

Rules to follow if you're moving animals or animal products from one third country to another third country and transiting Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales):

[Transiting animals and animal products through Great Britain - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transiting-animals-and-animal-products-through-great-britain)

Please note that different rules apply depending on the origin and destination.

8. Common Health Entry Document (CHED)

On completion of the veterinary checks the BCP authorised officer will complete and sign the CHED providing the necessary fees have been paid. The CHED will record the outcome of the checks. It should accompany the consignment to the specified place of destination and should be kept there for inspection by enforcement officers as proof the consignment was checked on entry. In exceptional circumstances if the consignment is to be split as it is destined for two or more locations, the operator, when giving pre-notification, must declare the BCP as the place of destination in the CHED for the entire consignment. When the CHED for the entire consignment has been finalised by the inspector, the operator must request that the consignment be split and must submit a CHED for each part of the split consignment. The inspector will finalise the separate CHEDs for each part of the load, provided the quantities do not exceed the quantities specified in the CHED for the whole consignment: an additional fee will be charged for each CHED. The operator is responsible for ensuring that a copy of the CHED for each part of the split consignment accompanies the relevant part to the place of destination and until released for free circulation.

9. Rejected consignments

If the checks at the BCP show that an animal does not comply with the animal or public health import requirements relating to that animal, or where such checks reveal an irregularity, the official veterinarian must initially place the animal under detention, isolation or quarantine, as appropriate, pending further official decision.

Unless immediate action is necessary in order to respond to a risk to human or animal health or animal welfare or to the environment, the official veterinarian may, after consultation with the importer or the importer's representative, order the person responsible for the consignment:

- (a) to shelter, feed and water and, if necessary, treat the animal;
- (b) if necessary, to place it in quarantine or isolate it for so long as is necessary to ensure that there is no risk to human or animal health; or

(c) to re-dispatch the animal in accordance with Article 72 of the Official Controls Regulation without delay.

(d) if re-dispatch is impossible, in particular for welfare reasons, the official veterinarian may order the importer or the importer's representative to arrange for the slaughter of the animal to spare any avoidable pain, distress or suffering.

If the consignment is to be re-exported, you will need to confirm to the BCP that the consignment will be accepted by the relevant third country before the BCP releases the consignment for re-export.

The importer or the importer's representative is liable for the costs incurred in these measures.

10. Consignment returned to the UK from a third country

Consignments which have been exported and returned to GB following rejection at the border in a third country must be checked on entry. Special rules are in place for returned consignments. Details are available in IIN RPTC/2.

- [IIN RPTC/2](#)

11. Other import conditions

This list is not exhaustive and other controls may apply to imports. It is the importer's responsibility to ensure all import conditions are met.

(a) Welfare

Importers are reminded that they must comply with rules on the welfare of animals during transport. For information on the rules see the gov.uk website.

- [Welfare of animals during Transport](#)

(b) Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

The import of some species of animals may require export and import certificates under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). CITES permits must be issued in advance of import and they can take up to **15 working days** to process. Applicants should be aware of this when applying for their permits. Those species

requiring CITES permits must be moved in compliance with CITES guidelines for the transport and preparation for shipment of live animals.

- [GOV.UK website – CITES pages](#)

For further information please contact the APHA – CITES team:

Centre for International Trade - Bristol
Horizon House
Deanery Road
Bristol
BS1 5AH

Tel: +44 (0) 3000 200 301

Fax: +44 (0) 28 415 2510

Email: wildlife.licensing@apha.gov.uk

(c) Invasive non-native (alien) animal species

There are 30 species of invasive non-native (alien) animal that are listed as of concern to the EU because of their:

- Invasiveness
- ability to establish in several nations across Europe

They cause severe problems for native animals and the environment.

For further information please follow the following links:

- Non-native species in England and Wales - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/invasive-non-native-alien-animal-species-rules-in-england-and-wales>
- Non-native species in Scotland - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/non-native-species-code-practice/>

(d) International Air Transport Association (IATA)

Transport by air must also comply with the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) Live Animal Regulations (LARs). The airline carrier should be aware of these Regulations.

(e) Post Import Checks

UK national legislation may also require the importer to carry out certain checks on the animals at destination.

12. Diseases in imported animals

Importers must report signs of illness or disease in imported stock to [APHA](#). In the event of disease being suspected to exist in any of the animals, APHA may require the slaughter or destruction of the animals, without compensation to the importer, if such slaughter or destruction is considered necessary for the purpose of disease prevention and control.

13. Safeguard Measures

Emergency safeguard action can be taken at very short notice to prohibit or restrict the importation of certain animals from certain countries following an outbreak of disease or a public health issue. Information on the latest updates concerning disease outbreaks which may affect imports into the UK can be found on our Topical Issues page on the website.

Further information on the International and UK monitoring of animal diseases may be found on the animal disease monitoring website.

Importers can get the latest news about exotic notifiable disease outbreaks from the APHA subscription service.

- [Topical issues](#)
- [Animal diseases: international and UK monitoring](#)
- [Exotic notifiable disease outbreak subscription service](#)

14. Legislation.gov.uk

Consolidated legal texts, which integrate the basic instruments of retained 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 inputting the 'document number' and 'year' and then clicking the option 'All UK Legislation (including originating from the EU)' on [legislation.gov.uk](#).

Once you press 'search', you can find the relevant legislation listed with the full title of the legislation. Once you have selected the legislation, you may see the following message at the top of the page:

"Changes to legislation: There are outstanding changes not yet made to XXX. Those changes will be listed when you open the content using the Table of Contents below. Any changes that have already been made to the legislation appear in the content and are referenced with annotations."

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. EU Exit amendments to legislation may take several months too. We advise to read the legislation alongside the EU Exit amendments made in the below UK laws:

- [The Import of, and Trade in, Animals and Animal Products \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#)
- [The Official Controls \(Animals, Feed and Food, Plant Health etc.\) \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#)
- [The Official Controls \(Animals, Feed and Food, Plant Health etc.\) \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) \(No. 2\) Regulations 2020](#)
- [The Aquatic Animal Health and Alien Species in Aquaculture, Animals, and Marketing of Seed, Plant and Propagating Material \(Legislative Functions and Miscellaneous Provisions\) \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#)
- [The Animals, Aquatic Animal Health, Invasive Alien Species, Plant Propagating Material and Seeds \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#)
- [The Trade in Animals and Animal Products \(Legislative Functions\) and Veterinary Surgeons \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019](#)

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 legislation.gov.uk.

Further information on changes in relation to EU legislation and UK law can be found on legislation.gov.uk. Please continue to use legislation.gov.uk to find EU retained law applicable to Great Britain. Please avoid using the EU Commission website for information on imports into Great Britain.

15. Contact for further information

For further information regarding import requirements, contact the APHA Imports team:

Centre for International Trade - Carlisle
Eden Bridge House
Lowther Street
Carlisle
CA3 8DX

Email: Imports@apha.gov.uk

Telephone: 03000 200 301

Annex I - Imports into Great Britain from a non-EU country via an EU Member State

The following conditions apply in respect of animals originating in a non-EU country which are imported into Great Britain via an EU Member State and where the veterinary checks have been carried out at a BCP in an EU Member State:

Live animals subject to veterinary checks that originate in a non-EU country and transit EU territory before arriving in GB do not need to enter GB at an established point of entry with an authorised BCP if:

- the goods have a GB [health certificate](#) certified in the third country of origin
- a GB importer has pre-notified on [IPAFFS](#) at least one working day before the expected time of arrival at the point of entry
- you can show proof of a successful health inspection - you can upload the CHED to the IPAFFS notification

On IPAFFS, select the EU member state the goods are travelling from as the 'country of origin'.

If the goods have not met these criteria, then they must:

- be pre-notified on [IPAFFS](#) at least one working day before the expected time of arrival at the point of entry - select the non-EU country the consignment originated from as the 'country of origin'
- have a GB export health certificate
- enter GB at an [established point of entry with an authorised BCP](#) so they're available for document, identity and physical checks



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

Animal and Plant Health Agency
Centre for International Trade - Carlisle
Eden Bridge House
Lowther Street
Carlisle
CA3 8DX

Email: Imports@apha.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/apha

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government and Welsh Government.