



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

## APHA Briefing Note 38/20

# Certifying Officers to Obtain Disease Clearance for certain Export Health Certificates from the APHA Vet Gateway

**Date issued: 10 December 2020**

### Purpose

1. To inform Certifying Officers that the Centre for International Trade – Carlisle (CITC) will not issue disease clearances for all Export Health Certificates (EHC) that will be used at the end of the transition period. Certifying Officers will be required to obtain their own clearance for certain EHCs from information published on the APHA Vet Gateway.

### Background

2. When the UK leaves the EU on 31 December 2020, exports from Great Britain to the European Union (EU) and Northern Ireland will require an EHC which will be issued to Certifying Officers through the EHC Online service. More information about this service is available for Certifying Officers on the [APHA Vet Gateway](#).
3. Many of the EHCs contain paragraphs within the health attestation that require confirmation that the country or area of origin is free from specific diseases.
4. CITC currently provide such clearance using a 618NDC document which is provided for every EHC containing a disease paragraph. All disease clearances are issued with a time limitation to a maximum of 15 days validity.
5. The current manual process of issuing disease clearances can delay the speed at which EHCs can be issued by CITC and, if the validity period lapses, the Certifying Officer must submit a request for a new disease clearance.
6. The EHC Online service automates the application process to route many EHCs directly to the Certifying Officer where the EHC can be printed on normal office

paper. Enabling Certifying Officers to obtain their own disease clearance considerably increases the efficiency of the end to end certification process.

7. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and Defra have obtained agreement from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to permit Certifying Officers to obtain their own disease clearance, where the clearance is considered to be a straight forward for area or country freedom for diseases that have never occurred in the UK or only occurred many years ago.
8. Additional guidance has been published on the [APHA Vet Gateway Export Certification Procedures](#) page to enable Certifying Officers to use the ET152 and ET171 disease occurrence lists to obtain their own straight forward disease clearances.
9. The Notes for Guidance for each EHC will advise the Certifying Officer whether they should obtain their own disease clearance or whether CITC will continue to issue a 618NDC document providing clearance where the disease status can only be ascertained from an APHA database.
10. Certifying Officers should obtain their disease clearance in advance of certifying each export consignment, as close to the time of certification as possible.
11. Post certification when Certifying Officers are completing their decision in the EHC Online service to confirm they have approved the EHC, an additional data entry field will need to be completed to enter the date the disease clearance check was undertaken. The additional data entry field will only be activated for EHCs that require the Certifying Officer to obtain disease clearance from the APHA Vet Gateway. These EHCs can only be approved and closed on EHC Online when the date the disease clearance was completed has been entered.
12. This process will initially be implemented for EHCs required for trade to the EU and Northern Ireland post transition on 1 January 2021.
13. This procedure will be further implemented to include some Third Country EHCs during 2021 which are issued through the EHC Online service.

## Further Information

- [APHA Vet Gateway OV Instructions for Exports](#)
- [Export or move live animals or animal products to the EU from 1 January 2021](#)
- APHA's Centre for International Trade – Carlisle, email: [exports@apha.gov.uk](mailto:exports@apha.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 03000 300 201

