

New RSPCA chicken welfare standards available for RSPCA Assured members

Featuring important changes to progress chicken welfare

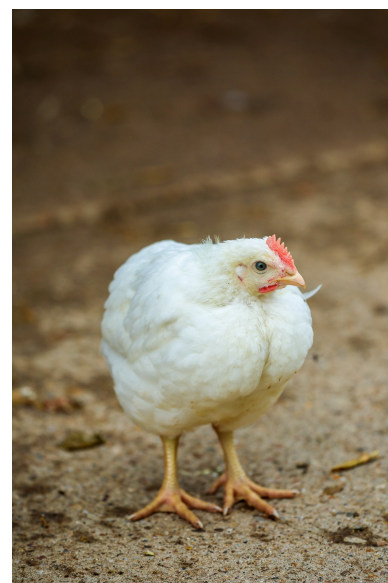
Monday 30 June 2025

RSPCA Assured has today announced the publication of the RSPCA's updated welfare standards for chicken to its members.

The [new version](#) of the standards will come into effect from **29 September 2025**, following the standard three-month notification period.

The updated standards include:

- **Development of a Housing Confinement Contingency Plan with veterinary input is now required:** This will be used in the event free-range birds need to be housed (eg during disease housing orders).
- **Responsible antibiotic usage:** New standards take a "prevention is better than cure" approach and require antibiotics to be used responsibly and only when necessary, with prophylactic use now prohibited. Each farm must also have an annual on-farm antibiotic use review to be part of the Veterinary Health and Welfare Plan.
- **AI and CCTV upgrades in abattoirs:** The new standards also strongly recommend that producers adopt new AI technology to improve animal welfare at slaughterhouses. The RSPCA is reviewing Intelligent Camera Surveillance for abattoirs to increase welfare oversight and flag up issues in real time.
- **Veranda installation recommendation:** A new ibox recommends that verandas be installed on all free-range chicken units. This is to encourage ranging, improve litter and provide semi-outdoor shelter. **This is a recommendation, not a mandatory requirement.**



RSPCA Assured Press Office
press@rspcaassured.org.uk
01403 286170 / 01403 915693

RSPCA Assured
4th Floor, Parkside
Chart Way, Horsham
West Sussex, RH12 1GY

01403 286170
hello@rspcaassured.org.uk
www.rspcaassured.org.uk

RSPCA press office
0300 123 0244/0288
press@rspca.org.uk

Duty press officer
Evening and
weekends
07825 158490

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RSPCA Assured news



RSPCA Assured assistant director of certification, Neil Scott, says: "We are able to continually progress and improve the lives of millions of farmed animals thanks to the ongoing commitment of our members."

"Our RSPCA Assured members have been helping us to improve the welfare of chickens since 1996, when the first RSPCA welfare standards for chickens were published."

"All RSPCA Assured members want the best for the animals in their care, and we hope these updated standards will help them to keep achieving their higher welfare goals."

The RSPCA welfare standards are continually improved and progressed using the latest scientific research, robust evidence and practical farming experience. During this process, the RSPCA consults other animal welfare and agricultural scientists, veterinary surgeons, retailers and farming industry representatives to ensure the standards continue to be at the forefront of farm animal care and welfare, whilst also being achievable on commercial farms.



New, potential or existing RSPCA Assured members who are in need of support or advice about meeting the updated chicken standards should [contact](#) RSPCA Assured's farming and technical engagement team via [membership services](#) online.

Find out more and view the updated chicken standards [here](#) and on the RSPCA website [here](#).

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