

Briefing to the OV market regarding potential opportunities for providing certification for fish exports for a no deal EU exit

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Overview

The UK currently exports £5.4bn of annual exports of animals and animal products to the EU. In the event of a No Deal, each export consignment of animals or animal products going to the EU would require an Export Health Certificate (EHC) to be issued prior to the consignment being dispatched. EHCs are currently required for exports of these products to the 'rest of the world' but not the EU.

The UK currently produce 52,000 EHCs per year for exports to the 'rest of the world' and we expect this would increase by up to 350,000 in the event of a No Deal, including 200,000 EHCs for fisheries alone. Each EHC requires certification by an authorised signatory that can be either a qualified vet known as an Official Veterinarian (OV) or by a qualified Local Authority Environmental Health Officer (EHO).

Local Authority preparedness to meet increased EHC demand is currently limited and as such there is likely to be a gap between increased demand for EHC certification services for exporters and the availability of authorised signatories available to sign the EHCs.

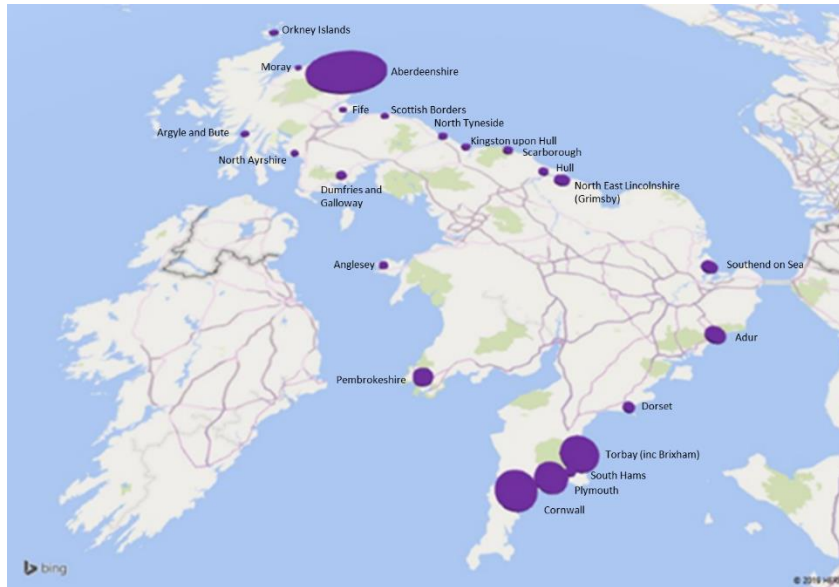
How this might impacts the UK Veterinary market

The private sector Official Veterinary market does not have a history of fulfilling an authorised signatory function for fish EHCs. However, we believe it is well positioned to address this demand in the short, medium and long term as this demand presents new opportunities for the OV market.

The requirement of an EHC for UK to EU trade places a significant pressure on exporters, some of whom will require rapid inspection of fish consignments given the high perishability of the product and to fulfil customer orders so as to remain competitive. There are parts of the fish export market that are likely to prioritise a skilled and responsive veterinary service so as to meet the mandatory EU regulations and continue to trade, their primary source of income.

Defra's own initial analysis suggests that the deficit in authorised signatories may be as high as 135 FTE roles at for Day 1 no deal. Areas that are likely to experience the highest demand are shown in Graph 1 below.

Graph 1. Locations of potential hotspots of demand within the UK (Excluding Northern Ireland)



Defra is therefore actively encouraging the private veterinary market to respond to this emerging demand in advance of Day 1 and as quickly as possible following it. Below we have listed a number of steps that both Defra and APHA have taken to support the private market in responding to this potential demand under their Government remit covering the fishing industry and the export of fish products.

How Defra are supporting the UK Veterinary market to mobilise to meet this demand.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is currently providing free Product Exports (PX) training for OV's wishing to become eligible to certify fish consignments and sign EHCs. APHA have emailed all OV's regarding this training. The offer of free training is due to close on 29th March and a link to further information regarding training is provided [here](#).

APHA has launched the Official Controls Qualification for Certification Support Officers (CSOs). CSOs can support the delivery of EHCs animal products excluding germplasm/germinal products. They cannot sign EHCs themselves but can perform tasks to provide OV's with the assurances they require to certify, increasing their efficiency and productivity. [Free CSO training is currently available](#).

Defra has also created an online tool entitled "find a professional" hosted on [Gov.uk](#) that will enable exporters to search and nominate OV's and EHO's to inspect their consignment and sign EHCs. This tool will be available to English, Scottish and Welsh exporters of fish and fish products from Day 1 onwards and will provide a single point of access to the OV market.

What OV's can do to best position themselves to respond to this demand

- Vets should seek to engage with exporters in establishing commercial arrangements to provide a bespoke EHC certification capability. This should include making arrangements for providing inspection and EHC certification services at times and locations where there is a stated demand.
- Read the [APHA Briefing Note 06/19](#) setting out the terms of the free Products Exports (PX) training being provided. Take advantage of the free training on offer before 29th March 2019.

- Read the [APHA Briefing Note 22/18](#) setting out the terms of the Certification Support Officer (CSO) training being provided.
- Visit [Gov.uk](#) to request that their business is added to the 'Find a professional to certify export health certificates' listing.
- Visit Gov.uk for any further advice or information on no deal planning for the fisheries sector