



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

## APHA Briefing Note 19/26

# Conditional authorisation requirement for Approved Blood Samplers in England and Wales

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## Purpose

1. To remind Approved Blood Samplers (ABSs) and their Supervisors of the requirement for ABSs to be conditionally authorised before any blood sampling can be carried out during the period of practical training.

## Background

2. The ABS role was introduced in England and Wales on 31 July 2025, whereby para-veterinary professionals in private veterinary businesses can be authorised by APHA to collect blood samples from cattle.
3. Currently, ABSs are only permitted to carry out blood sampling for specific purposes permitted under the relevant legislation, namely bluetongue in England and Wales, and BVD in Wales only. This requirement applies whilst the ABS is in training and after full authorisation has been granted.
4. ABSs must carry out blood sampling under the direction and supervision of an Approved Veterinary Supervisor - Blood Sampling (AVS-BS) and deputy AVS-BS.

## Conditional authorisation requirement

5. Upon successful completion of the OCQ(AHP) - ABS theory training and online examination, the ABS must nominate an AVS-BS and deputy on their Improve International personal training dashboard. The AVS-BS and deputy must confirm understanding of their responsibilities and accept the role. **Conditional authorisation cannot be granted if this has not been completed.**

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6. Before the ABS can start their practical training, they must await confirmation of conditional authorisation from APHA. This is a requirement in the Policy for Authorisation of Approved Blood Samplers in England and Wales (OV69).
7. Only once the ABS has received confirmation of conditional authorisation can they start blood sampling cattle during their practical training. **AVS-BSs must ensure that the ABS is conditionally authorised before supervising any blood sampling.** If there is any doubt as to whether the ABS has been granted conditional authorisation, please contact the APHA OV Team using the contact details below.
8. Since the introduction of the ABS role on 31 July 2025, the APHA OV Team has identified non-compliance whereby ABSs have blood sampled cattle prior to being conditionally authorised. This is a breach of the Policy for Authorisation of Approved Blood Samplers in England and Wales (OV69).
9. In these cases, any blood sampling carried out before the ABS was conditionally authorised cannot count towards the training requirements. This has resulted in ABSs having to repeat practical training and thus delaying full authorisation.
10. APHA will continue to monitor implementation of the ABS role and manage any non-compliance with the Policy for Authorisation of Approved Blood Samplers in England and Wales (OV69). It is important that all requirements for authorisation are followed to allow APHA to provide assurance for this role. If further non-compliance is identified, it may be necessary to reconsider the future of the ABS role.

## Action

11. It is imperative that ABSs, AVS-BSs and deputies **read** the Policy for Authorisation of Approved Blood Samplers in England and Wales (OV69) and ABS instructions to understand the requirements and their role and responsibilities.
12. ABSs and AVS-BSs must ensure that an AVS-BS and at least one deputy is nominated on the ABS's personal training dashboard **before** any blood sampling is carried out.
13. ABSs and AVS-BSs must ensure that the ABS has received confirmation of conditional authorisation from APHA **before** any blood sampling is carried out.

## Further information

14. For general information about the ABS role and how to enrol, visit the [Improve AHP website](#).

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15. The ABS instructions are available on the [Improve OV](#) and [Improve AHP](#) websites.
16. The [Policy for Authorisation of Approved Blood Samplers in England and Wales \(OV69\)](#) is available on the Improve OV and AHP websites.
17. Any queries relating to ABSs should be directed to the APHA OV Team at [CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk](mailto:CSCOneHealthOVTeam@apha.gov.uk).

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