



The Moorland Association

Defra Gamebird Call for Evidence: A Practical Guide for People Who Live, Work or Participate in England's Uplands

I. Who this guide is for

You do not need to own or manage a grouse moor to provide useful evidence to Defra.

Defra's Call for Evidence is open to anyone, and it specifically welcomes responses from local communities and land users, as well as people directly involved in gamebird shooting, land management, conservation, research and public services. Defra also says it will consider well-documented operational and experiential evidence alongside published research and monitoring data.

This guide is therefore intended for people who live, work, volunteer or participate in England's uplands and who may hold relevant first-hand evidence, even though they do not own or manage a grouse moor.

That might include, for example:

- beaters, flankers, pickers-up, dog handlers, Guns and other shoot participants
- farmers, graziers and agricultural contractors
- peatland, habitat or vegetation-management contractors
- ecologists, surveyors and conservation workers
- people involved in wildfire prevention, preparedness or response
- local residents and community representatives
- rural businesses and game dealers
- veterinary or animal-health professionals
- people working in public services or other organisations with relevant upland experience

The important point is not whether you own the land. It is whether you hold **relevant evidence or experience that can help Defra understand what actually happens in the uplands.**

For example, you may have records of wildlife, restoration work, wildfire response, participation in shoot days, community activity, use of shot grouse, or changes in land management over time. You may also have direct experience of positive or negative impacts that are not recorded elsewhere.

The Moorland Association's own submission draws on published research as well as operational and experiential evidence from people working across the uplands. It also recognises that such evidence needs to be presented carefully, with its limitations made clear.

This guide is designed to help you identify which Defra questions may be relevant to you and how to present your evidence clearly and proportionately.

If you are a Gun, beater, flanker, picker-up, dog handler or other shoot participant and do not hold specialist evidence, Question 29 is likely to be the main question for you. After completing Questions 1-6, you can go straight to the Q29 guidance on page 9.

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

2. What is happening?

Defra is currently running a Call for Evidence on gamebird release, shooting and welfare during rearing in England. It opened on 4 September 2026 and closes at midnight on 1 November 2026.

The Call for Evidence covers a wide range of issues, including:

- biodiversity and habitats
- protected sites
- animal health and disease
- animal welfare
- wildlife crime
- the use of natural resources
- the effectiveness of current regulatory and voluntary approaches
- other environmental, social or societal impacts

Defra says that **no decisions have yet been taken on future policy changes**. The purpose of the exercise is to improve the evidence base, identify gaps and areas of uncertainty, and inform any future policy development.

For the uplands, an important distinction is that red grouse are wild birds. They are not bred, reared and released for shooting in the same way as pheasants, red-legged partridges or mallard. Defra recognises that distinction in the Call for Evidence.

Defra is seeking evidence of both **positive and negative impacts**. It welcomes published research, monitoring data, operational evidence and well-documented personal or professional experience. Evidence is more useful where it is clear what happened, where and when, how the information was obtained, and what its limitations are.

Economic evidence is being considered separately. Defra has commissioned an independent assessment of the economic value of the gamebird sector, so this Call for Evidence should not primarily be used to submit general evidence about jobs, wages, local expenditure or business turnover. Social, community and recreational effects can still be relevant where they directly answer one of Defra's questions.

For people who live, work or participate in the uplands, the key point is that **you do not need to provide a view on grouse shooting as a whole**. If you have direct evidence relevant to one or more of Defra's questions, that evidence may be useful in its own right.

3. Why your experience may matter

You may hold useful evidence even if you do not own or manage a grouse moor. Defra has said that it welcomes not only published research and official statistics, but also **monitoring data and well-documented operational or experiential evidence**. It also says that evidence will carry more weight where the evidence trail is transparent and verifiable, the relevant context is explained, and any limitations are made clear.

That means first-hand experience from people who live, work or participate in the uplands can be relevant where it helps Defra understand what actually happens in practice.

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

For example:

- a **beater, picker-up or other shoot participant** may be able to describe how many years they have taken part, how often they participate, what their role involves and what social or recreational value the activity has for them.
- a **farmer or grazier** may hold evidence about changes in grazing, vegetation, access, wildfire risk or other land-management conditions.
- a **contractor** may have records of peatland restoration, cutting, mowing, firebreak creation, habitat work or other practical interventions.
- an **ecologist, surveyor or conservation worker** may hold species counts, breeding records, habitat surveys or monitoring data.
- somebody involved in **wildfire response** may have direct evidence of fire behaviour, access, water availability, fuel conditions, response times, equipment or the effectiveness of firebreaks.
- a **local resident or community participant** may have relevant first-hand evidence about recreation, access, disturbance, community activity or other social impacts.
- a **game dealer, butcher or hospitality business** may hold practical evidence about what happens to shot grouse after shooting and how birds enter the food chain.

The MA's own submission uses evidence from people working across the uplands and recognises that employment and participation associated with grouse-moor management can involve activities beyond shooting itself, including habitat management, wildfire preparedness and response, liaison with Fire and Rescue Services and practical support on other land.

The key is to distinguish **experience from assertion**.

A statement such as: *"I have helped fight three wildfires in this area since 2021 and on each occasion access was provided along estate tracks"* is useful first-hand evidence.

A statement such as: *"Grouse moors always prevent wildfires"* goes beyond what that evidence can show.

Similarly: *"I have beaten on this moor for 15 years and normally take part on around 12 days each season"* is useful evidence of one person's participation. It would not, on its own, prove that the same experience applies across all upland communities.

Your evidence does not have to prove a national point to be useful. A clearly described local example can still help Defra understand how upland management, wildlife, wildfire, recreation or community activity operates in practice.

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

The most useful submissions will include:

- what you personally observed, recorded or were involved in
- where and when it happened
- how long your experience covers
- whether there are records or documents that support it
- what the evidence can reasonably show, and what it cannot

4. What counts as useful evidence?

Your evidence does not need to be academic research to be useful. Defra says it welcomes a range of evidence, including monitoring data and well-documented operational or experiential evidence. It also says that greater weight will be given where the evidence trail is transparent and verifiable, the context is clear, and the methods and limitations are explained.

For most people living, working or participating in the uplands, the most useful evidence will therefore be **specific, first-hand and capable of being checked where possible**.

A simple way to think about it is to ask:

- **What did you personally observe, record or take part in?**
- **Where and when did it happen?**
- **How often, or over how many years?**
- **Do you have anything that supports what you are saying?**
- **What can the evidence reasonably show, and what can it not show?**

Useful supporting material might include:

- photographs
- diaries or contemporaneous notes
- count sheets or survey records
- work logs or contractor records
- invoices
- training records
- wildfire or incident logs
- maps
- correspondence
- meeting notes
- veterinary or laboratory records

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

- records of participation in shoot days
- game-dealer or food-chain records

The important point is to distinguish between **what you know directly** and **what you think may explain it**.

For example: *“I worked on peatland restoration at this site between 2022 and 2025 and our records show that 38 hectares were treated.”* is direct evidence of what was done.

If you then say: *“Curlew numbers increased over the same period,”* that may also be useful evidence if supported by records.

But saying: *“The restoration caused the increase in curlew”* would require stronger evidence because other factors may also have affected bird numbers.

Likewise, a wildfire responder might be able to say: *“The fire reached this track at approximately 16:30 and crews used it for vehicle access and as part of the containment operation.”* That is useful operational evidence. It would not, by itself, prove that the track or any particular management practice prevented the fire from spreading further.

Defra is interested in both **positive and negative evidence**, so do not feel that your submission needs to support a particular conclusion. A documented example of something working well can be useful, but so can evidence that a measure failed, caused an unintended problem or did not produce the expected result.

The strongest submissions are usually those that are **precise, proportionate and candid about limitations**.

You do not need to prove what happens across the whole of the English uplands. A well-documented example from one place, one incident or one person's long-term experience can still add useful evidence to Defra's review.

5. How to respond

Defra's preferred method of receiving responses is through its online Smart Survey <https://consultations.defra.gov.uk/call-for-evidence-on-gamebird-release-shooting-and-welfare-during-rearing-in-england>

If you are unable to respond online, Defra says you may submit your response by email to Gamebirds@defra.gov.uk. Supporting documents can also be sent by email.

You do not need to answer every question in the Call for Evidence – but questions **1 to 6 are mandatory**. If these required questions are not answered, your response will not be considered.

These first questions ask for:

- your name and contact details
- whether you want to request confidentiality
- the capacity in which you are responding
- the name of any organisation you are representing

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

- where you or that organisation are located

For people who do not own or manage a grouse moor, **Question 4 is important because it allows you to explain the capacity in which you are responding.** Defra provides a wide range of options, including:

- as an individual
- as a farmer
- as part of the gamebird shooting sector, including a participant in shooting activities
- as a business, including one operating in the rural economy
- as a representative of a local community
- as an NGO or other non-profit organisation
- as an academic or researcher
- as a representative of a public body
- as a veterinarian
- “other”

Choose the description that most accurately reflects **the capacity in which you are giving the evidence.**

For example, someone who beats or picks up may respond as part of the gamebird shooting sector or as an individual. A farmer may respond as a farmer, a local contractor or rural business as a business, and somebody speaking formally on behalf of a community group may choose the local-community category.

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

Example Response Format

Call for Evidence Questions - About you

Please Note: Questions 1–6 are marked **Required** by Defra. Defra states that responses which do not answer all questions marked “Required” will not be considered.

The examples below show how somebody who participates in the uplands but does not own or manage a grouse moor might complete them.

Question 1: Would you like your response to this call for evidence to be confidential in the event of an access to information request? *(Required)*

MA guidance:

For most individuals providing ordinary first-hand evidence, the answer is likely to be **No**.

If your submission contains genuinely sensitive information, you can answer **Yes**, but Defra asks you to explain why. A request for confidentiality does not necessarily mean that information can never be disclosed under access-to-information law.

Do not include sensitive information unnecessarily, particularly details relating to active wildlife-crime investigations, precise locations of protected species or personal information about other people.

Question 2: Your full name *(Required)*

Question 3: Your email address or postal address *(Required)*

Question 4: In what capacity are you completing this call for evidence? *(Required)*

Defra provides a number of options, including:

- as an individual
- as a landowner or land manager
- as a farmer
- as part of the gamebird production sector
- as part of the gamebird shooting sector
- as a business
- as a representative of an NGO or other non-profit organisation
- as a representative of a local community
- as a representative of an interest group or trade association
- as an academic or researcher

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

- as a representative of a public body
- as an elected representative
- as an animal welfare organisation
- as a veterinarian
- other

MA guidance:

Choose the category that most accurately describes **the capacity in which you are providing the evidence**.

For example:

- a beater, flanker, picker-up or other shoot participant may select **“as part of the gamebird shooting sector”**
- a rural contractor may select **“as a business”**
- someone responding purely in a personal capacity may select **“as an individual”**
- someone formally representing a village or community organisation may select **“as a representative of a local community”**.

Question 5: If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, what is the name of that organisation? *(Required)*

Example answer for somebody responding personally: “Not applicable. I am responding as an individual and not on behalf of an organisation.”

MA guidance:

If you are responding personally, make that clear rather than leaving the question blank.

If you are genuinely responding on behalf of a business, community group, conservation organisation or other body, insert its name.

Do not name an estate, employer or organisation merely because you are connected with it if you have not been authorised to respond on its behalf.

Question 6: Where are you, or the organisation you are representing, located? *(Required)*

Defra provides two options:

- England
- Other – please specify

The Call for Evidence concerns activities in England, although Defra says relevant evidence from elsewhere may also be considered.

MA guidance:

Select **England** if you live or are based in England.

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

If you live elsewhere, select **Other** and specify where you are based. That does not automatically prevent you from contributing evidence if your evidence is relevant to the situation in England.

Note on Question 7: This is included here for those using Defra's online Smart Survey. If you are submitting a written response by email, you can omit this question. It is simply a routing question and adds no substantive evidence.

Question 7: Would you like to answer questions regarding gamebird release and shooting, or would you like to skip to the questions regarding gamebird welfare during rearing and breeding? (*this is simply a survey routing question on the Defra website*)

MA guidance: In most cases your response is "Answer questions on gamebird release and shooting"

For many people using this guide, Question 29 is likely to be the most relevant, so we go to that question next. Other Defra questions may also be relevant depending on the evidence you hold. These are summarised in Annex I. Please check the Annex and respond to any additional questions where you have direct, relevant evidence.

Question 29: Are there any additional positive or negative impacts, not covered above, for example recreational benefits? (Optional)

Defra specifically asks here about **additional positive or negative impacts**, giving recreational benefits as an example. It also makes clear that the economic value of the gamebird sector is being assessed separately and is outside this Call for Evidence.

MA guidance

For many people who shoot, beat, flank, pick up, work dogs or otherwise participate in grouse shooting, **this is likely to be the most relevant question.**

You do not need to own the land, employ staff or hold estate records to answer it. Defra is interested in social and recreational effects as well as environmental ones, and first-hand experience can be useful evidence where it is described accurately and proportionately.

Your response might cover your own experience of:

- participation in grouse-shooting days
- time spent outdoors and physical activity
- working with dogs
- friendships and social connections
- involvement with people of different ages or generations

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

- learning practical rural skills
- connection with the countryside
- local traditions or community life
- volunteering or helping with activities beyond shoot days
- any negative social or recreational effects you have personally experienced

The MA's main submission treats participation as extending well beyond the people who shoot. It identifies beaters, flankers, pickers-up, dog handlers, drivers and others as part of the recreational and social activity surrounding grouse shooting. It also stresses that evidence of wellbeing, community attachment or social benefit should not be presented as proof that grouse shooting alone caused those outcomes.

Your own experience can be evidence. You do not need to produce a scientific study. For example, if you have been beating on the same moor for 20 years, it may be useful to explain:

- how long you have been involved
- roughly how many days you take part each year
- what your role is
- whether you participate with friends or family
- whether people of different ages take part
- what other activities you undertake while involved
- what the activity means to you personally
- whether your involvement has changed over time

A response such as: *"I have beaten on two grouse moors in the Yorkshire Dales for 14 years. In a typical season I take part on around eight to twelve days. I originally became involved through a local friend and now regularly participate with people I have known for many years. The group includes people ranging from their late teens to people in their seventies."* is useful first-hand evidence.

It is much stronger than simply saying: *"Grouse shooting is important for rural communities."*

The first statement tells Defra **who, where, for how long and what actually happens**. The second is a general assertion.

Participation and recreation. You might describe what taking part actually involves. For example:

- how far you typically walk during a day
- the amount of time spent outdoors
- whether you work a dog
- whether you beat, flank, pick up or perform another role
- whether participation is regular or occasional
- whether it involves people from the surrounding community
- whether younger people are introduced to the activity

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

The MA's submission identifies outdoor activity, physical exercise, dog work, wildlife observation and participation in a shared rural activity as possible recreational effects, while being careful not to claim that these benefits apply equally to everyone.

Community and social connections

If this is part of your experience, explain it factually. For example: *"I first started beating with my father when I was 17. I am now 42 and my daughter has begun joining occasional days."*

or:

"There are around 25 regular beaters and pickers-up whom I see repeatedly through the season. Several of those friendships began through beating."

These are legitimate descriptions of **your own experience**.

Avoid turning them into claims such as: *"Without grouse shooting these communities would disappear."*
Your own experience cannot establish that wider conclusion unless you have evidence capable of doing so.

Wellbeing and enjoyment

Personal evidence about enjoyment, companionship, wellbeing or connection with the countryside is relevant, but keep it personal. For example: *"I work indoors during the week and regard beating days as an important opportunity to spend time outdoors, exercise and meet people I would otherwise rarely see."*
That is evidence of your experience.

Avoid: *"Grouse shooting improves people's mental health."*

The MA's main submission makes the same distinction. It identifies research showing an association between participation and reported wellbeing but cautions that factors such as exercise, social interaction, shared purpose and time outdoors may contribute and that the evidence does not establish shooting itself as the sole cause.

Negative experiences are relevant too

Defra asks about **positive and negative impacts**. If you have personally experienced negative effects connected with the activity, these can also be included. Examples might include:

- inconvenience to other countryside users
- temporary access issues
- noise
- smoke
- disagreement or conflict with other users
- anything about participation which has changed adversely over time

Again, describe what actually happened rather than making a general claim.

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

Do not turn Q29 into an economic argument

Defra is separately commissioning an independent assessment of the economic value of the gamebird sector. General claims about jobs, wages, hotel spending or the value of shooting to the rural economy are therefore not the main purpose of Q29.

However, the **social consequences** of somebody's role or participation can still be relevant. For example: *"I work locally as a joiner, but have beaten on the moor for 18 years and it is one of the main ways I regularly meet people from neighbouring villages."* is social evidence. Simply calculating how much that person earns or spends would principally be economic evidence.

Numbers can make your evidence more useful

Where you can do so accurately, give simple figures. For example:

"I have beaten for 16 years and normally attend between 10 and 15 days each season."

"There are usually around 30 beaters, flankers and pickers-up on the days I attend."

"Three generations of my family have taken part."

Do not invent precision. If you do not know the exact number, say "approximately", "typically" or "around".

A simple way to structure your answer might be:

My role: [Gun / beater / flanker / picker-up / dog handler / other]

Where I participate: [Moor / area / county]

How long I have been involved: [Years]

How often I participate: [Approximate number of days each year]

My first-hand experience: [What you do and what you have observed]

Social or recreational impact: [What effect participation has had, positively or negatively]

Who else is involved: [Family / local people / different age groups etc., where known]

Supporting evidence: [Any diary, photographs, records or other material, if available]

Important limitations: [For example: "This is my personal experience and I cannot say whether it is representative of other moors or participants."]

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

An illustrative response to Q29

I have participated as a beater and occasional flanker on [moor/area] since 2011. I normally attend around 10-12 days in a season when shooting takes place.

My involvement is recreational and social rather than professional. A typical day involves several hours walking over upland terrain and working as part of a team of beaters, flankers, pickers-up and estate staff. I have got to know a number of people through beating whom I would not otherwise have met regularly.

The group includes people of a range of ages. I first became involved through [friend/family/local contact], and I have subsequently introduced [family member/younger participant] to the activity.

For me personally, the principal benefits are time outdoors, physical activity, working with other people and maintaining friendships connected with the local countryside.

This is my personal experience and I cannot say that it is representative of everybody who participates in grouse shooting or of every upland community.

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.

Annex I: Other Defra questions which may be relevant

For many Guns, beaters, flankers, pickers-up, dog handlers and other participants, **Question 29 is likely to be the main question to answer**. However, some people who live, work or participate in the uplands may also hold direct evidence relevant to other questions.

You should only answer these questions where you have **specific first-hand, recorded or professional evidence**. General impressions or second-hand stories are unlikely to add much.

Defra question	Who might have relevant evidence?	What sort of evidence would be useful?	Important caution
Q8 – positive or negative impacts on biodiversity	Ecologists, bird surveyors, conservation workers, farmers, contractors or long-term participants who also undertake structured monitoring	Species counts, breeding records, habitat surveys, before/after records, photographs or documented changes in management and wildlife	Casual observations such as “there seem to be more birds” are much weaker than consistent records. Do not assume that one management activity caused a change simply because the two occurred together.
Q9 – impacts on species included in national indicators or the Red List	People involved in formal or repeated monitoring of curlew, lapwing, golden plover, black grouse, merlin, hen harrier or other relevant species	Dated counts, territories, breeding pairs, productivity, nest outcomes, lek counts or other consistently collected records	Give the method and period covered. Do not generalise from occasional sightings.
Q10 – whether recognised standards or guidance improve biodiversity outcomes	Contractors, conservation workers, trained practitioners or others who can show how a particular standard changed what was done	Evidence of a named code, consent or guidance; what changed as a result; records showing it was implemented; and any observed outcome	Merely saying that a code was followed is not enough. Defra is asking whether following it changed an outcome or reduced a risk.

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

Defra question	Who might have relevant evidence?	What sort of evidence would be useful?	Important caution
Q11 – what influences adoption and maintenance of good practice	Farmers, contractors, practitioners, conservation workers or others directly involved in implementing guidance or regulation	Specific examples involving training, clarity of guidance, timing, permissions, costs, practical constraints, availability of equipment or regulator engagement	This is not simply an opportunity to complain about regulation. Give an actual example and the practical consequence.
Q12 to15 – protected sites, habitats and standards on SSSIs	Ecologists, contractors, farmers, conservation workers or public-body staff with direct knowledge of protected-site management	SSSI monitoring, habitat surveys, consented work, restoration records, management agreements, photographs, species records or direct evidence of how a requirement operated	These questions usually require fairly specific site or feature evidence. Do not infer that favourable or unfavourable SSSI condition was caused by grouse shooting without evidence identifying the cause.
Q16 to 19 – disease and biosecurity	Vets, animal-health professionals, people involved in a confirmed disease incident, or others holding diagnostic evidence	APHA results, veterinary reports, laboratory findings, confirmed mortality incidents, biosecurity records or documented actions following an outbreak	A dead or sick bird is not by itself evidence of disease or of transmission through shooting. Avoid speculation.
Q20 – links with bird-of-prey crime	Someone with direct involvement in a confirmed incident, investigation or relevant monitoring	Police or Natural England records, confirmed incidents, verified monitoring records or direct involvement in an investigation	Do not submit rumour, hearsay or assumptions. Distinguish confirmed, suspected and unexplained events. Avoid disclosing sensitive nest locations or live investigation details.

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

Defra question	Who might have relevant evidence?	What sort of evidence would be useful?	Important caution
Q21 – whether high standards reduce bird-of-prey crime risks	People directly involved in implementing or monitoring relevant training, reporting or compliance systems	Training records, written procedures, reporting systems, independent checks, cooperation with police or Natural England, or documented changes following an incident	Evidence that a policy or training programme exists is not, on its own, evidence that it reduced offending.
Q25 – number of birds shot and how many enter the food chain	Game dealers, caterers, shoot participants with actual records, or others directly involved in collecting or handling shot grouse	Recorded numbers of birds, dealer records, collection records, destination of birds or repeated records over several seasons	Use actual figures where possible. Do not estimate unless you make clear that you are estimating and explain the basis.
Q26 – impact of birds entering the food chain	Game dealers, butchers, restaurants, hospitality businesses or others directly involved in handling or supplying grouse	Documentary evidence showing how birds were used, supplied, processed or distributed	General claims about the economic value of shooting are outside the main scope of this Call for Evidence because Defra is separately assessing economic value.
Q27 – waste or disposal of shot birds	Game dealers, shoot participants or others directly involved in handling birds after shooting	Numbers rejected or excluded from consumption, reasons, disposal records, dealer refusals or evidence that suitable birds were routinely used	Distinguish birds properly excluded because they were unsuitable from otherwise usable birds being unnecessarily wasted.
Q28(a) – use of lead shot	People with direct records of ammunition use or changes in ammunition practice	Ammunition records, trials of alternatives, documented changes in practice or other specific operational evidence	Only answer if you have something concrete. General debate about lead ammunition is better left to specialist evidence.

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The Moorland Association

Defra question	Who might have relevant evidence?	What sort of evidence would be useful?	Important caution
Q28(b) – misuse of medicated products	Vets, keepers or others directly involved in prescription, monitoring or management of medicated grit	Prescriptions, worm counts, dates of use and withdrawal, training, grit-tray records, environmental safeguards or evidence of an actual misuse incident	Defra asks about misuse , not merely use. The presence of medicated grit is not itself evidence of misuse.
Q28(c) – antimicrobial resistance	Veterinary, microbiological or specialist researchers	Relevant laboratory, veterinary or research evidence	This is a specialist area. Do not confuse antimicrobial resistance with resistance of parasites to worming treatments.
Q28(d) – misuse of pesticides	People with direct evidence of a confirmed incident, investigation or relevant professional records	Enforcement or investigation records, confirmed misuse, documented procedures or specialist monitoring	Do not repeat suspicions or allegations without evidence.
Q28(e) – other environmental or social impacts, particularly wildfire	Wildfire responders, farmers, contractors, beaters, flankers, pickers-up, local residents, Fire & Rescue personnel or anyone directly involved in a fire incident	Fire dates and locations, response times, hours worked, equipment used, tracks or access routes, water points, fuel conditions, firebreak performance, vegetation management, smoke, road closures, impacts on communities or recovery after fire	This could be highly useful operational evidence, but report what actually happened. Do not claim that one intervention “prevented” or “caused” an outcome unless the evidence supports that conclusion. The MA submission itself treats access, fuel management, hydrology, surveillance and response capability as potentially complementary parts of wildfire resilience.

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.



The practical test

Before answering any of these questions, ask yourself: **Do I know something directly, or do I merely have an opinion about it?**

If you have a dated record, first-hand experience, professional involvement, photographs, figures, correspondence or another form of evidence, it may be worth submitting.

If all you can add is a general view, something you have heard from somebody else, or an assertion which cannot be supported, it is usually better to leave that question unanswered.

Before you submit

- Check that Questions 1–6 are completed.
- Make clear which Defra question your evidence relates to.
- Check that any figures or factual claims have a source where possible.
- Do not include unsupported assertions or second-hand stories.
- Submit through Defra's Smart Survey before midnight on 1 November 2026.
- If you cannot use Smart Survey, responses can be emailed to gamebirds@defra.gov.uk

Moorland Association members manage more than one million acres of heather moorland across England and Wales. Drawing on practical experience, innovation and research, they work to conserve these internationally important habitats for wildlife, communities and future generations.