

Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators

Headline Performance Update
31 December 2021

Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators Headline Performance Update at 31 December 2021 (First Release)

The Forestry Commission publishes a range of key performance indicators (KPIs) to highlight our contribution towards forestry and woodlands in England, and to show barometers of trends in the wider forestry sector in England. The indicators reflect our objectives to expand, protect, improve and connect England's woodlands. They display some of the contributions Forestry England makes to people, nature and the economy through the nation's forests. Our use of indicators also reflects our commitment to evidence-based working, and to ensuring that there is a robust evidence base available to the forestry sector to underpin policies and operational decisions. As such they show part of how we are contributing to delivery of the government's 25 Year Environment Plan¹. The indicators also help us monitor aspects of *The England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024* published² in 2021.

We have refreshed the new suite of Forest Services indicators that were first reported in our Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Report for 2020-21, published³ in June 2021.

Our third quarterly monitoring report on the new set of six headline indicators is provided in this Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Headline Performance Update at 31 December 2021. The quarterly interim updates are provided where data are available. The six headline indicators are listed in Table 1.

The coverage of all our key performance indicators is England, and figures are at country level. Most of the indicators are based on statistical and geographical analysis of Forestry Commission administrative data, the National Forest Inventory, surveys conducted and commissioned for us by the Forest Research statistics team, data available from other parts of Defra Group and other available data collections.

This is an Official Statistics publication, produced with a view to adhering to the standards of the *Code of Practice for Statistics* (Office for Statistics Regulation and UK Statistics Authority, 2018). The Government Internal Audit Agency have assured the latest annual outturn statistics.

¹ HM Government (2018) *A Green Future: Our Plan to Improve the Environment*, London: Defra, 151 pages, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

² UK Government (2021) *The England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024*, London: Defra, 38 pages, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-trees-action-plan-2021-to-2024>

³ Forestry Commission (2021) *Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Report for 2020-21*, Bristol: Forestry Commission, 68 pages, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forestry-commission-key-performance-indicators-report-for-2020-21>

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We publish:

- Updates on the six headline Forest Services indicators quarterly
- Updates on the six headline Forestry England indicators annually
- Reports on the full suite of 38 Forestry Commission indicators annually.

See the [Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators web pages on GOV.UK](#) for these and other reports in this statistical series.

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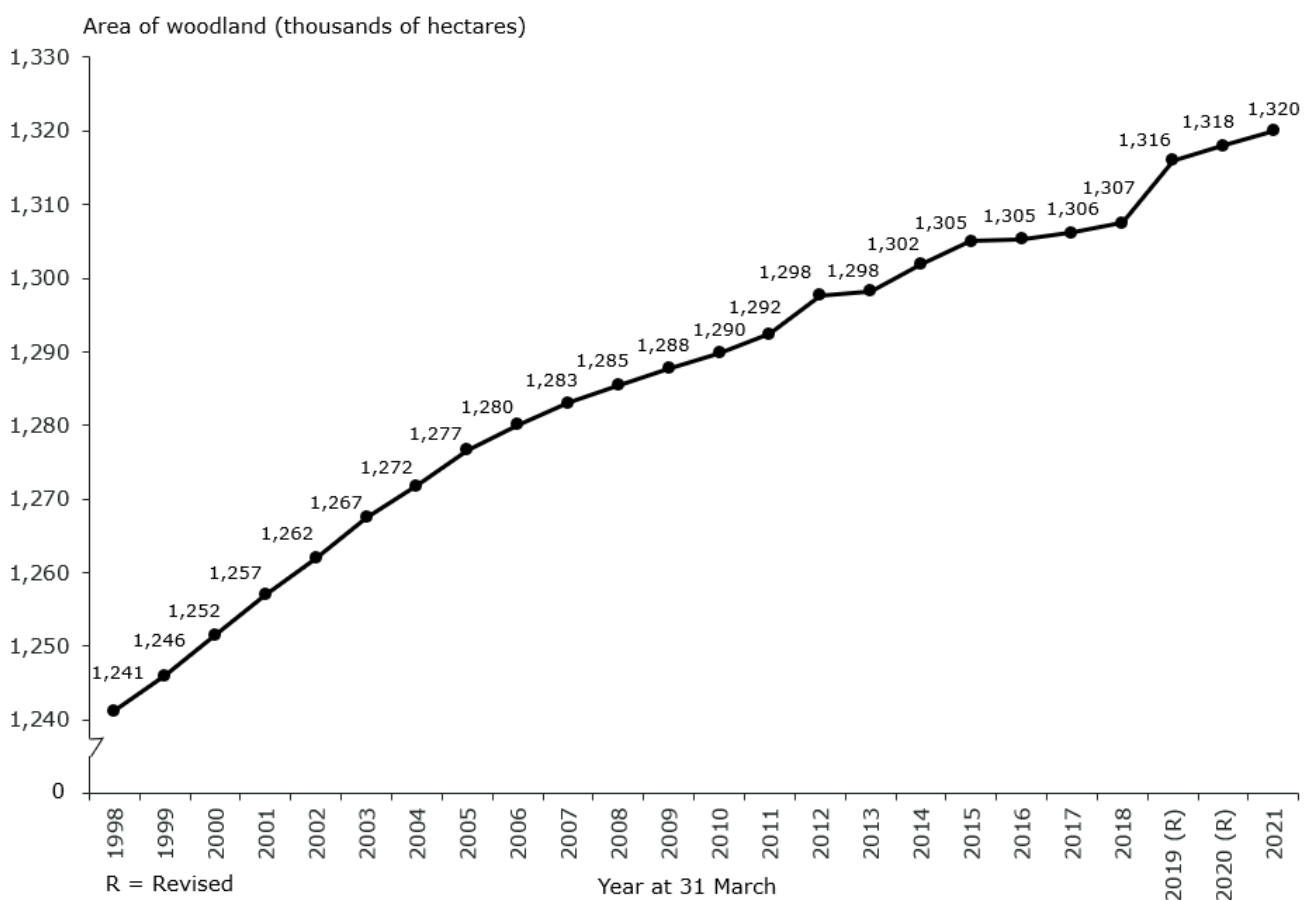
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10 February 2022

Forest Services Headline Key Performance Indicators

Expanding and connecting our trees and woodland

Area of woodland in England



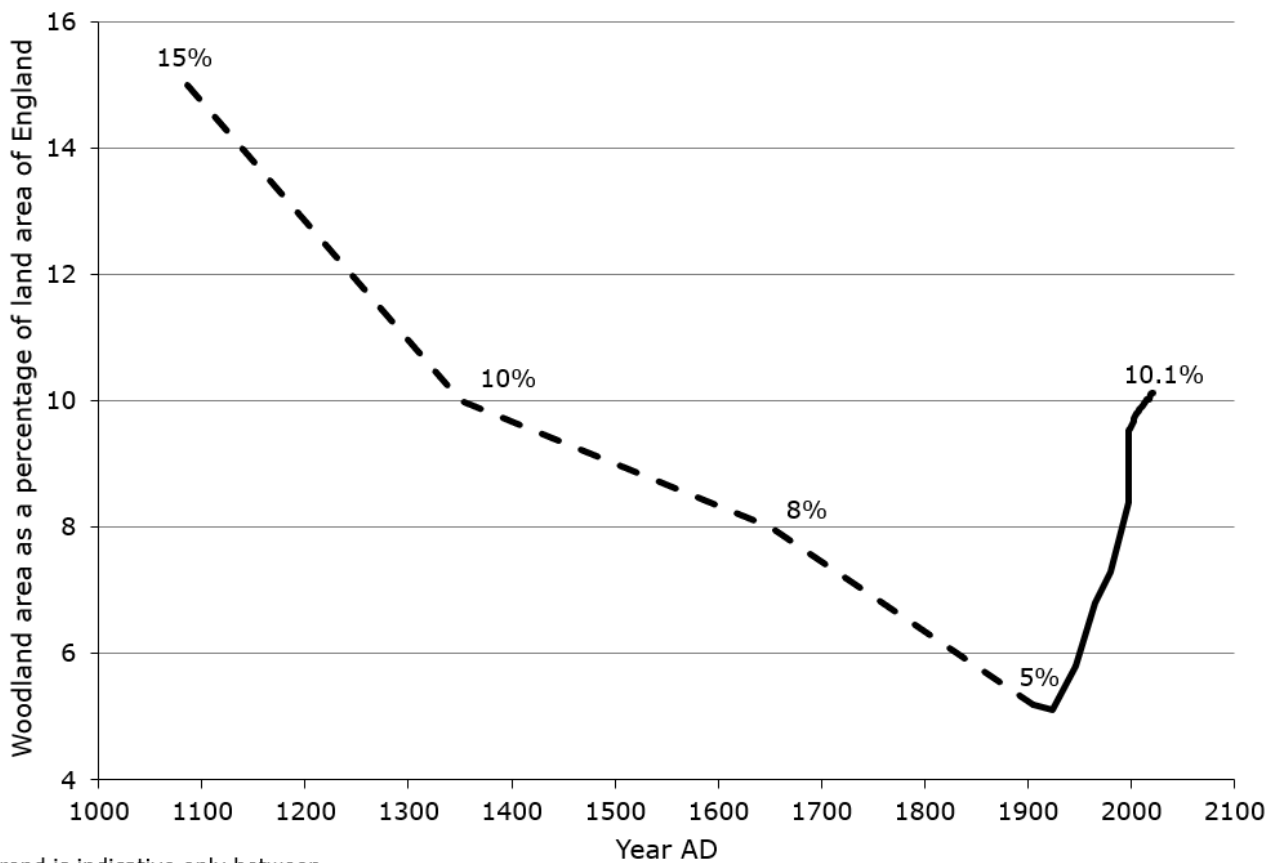
Source: [Forestry Statistics 2021](#) (Forest Research), based mainly on the [National Forest Inventory](#) and Forestry Commission administrative data.

Reports for this indicator are published annually. Our most recent report as at 31 March 2021 was included in our annual *Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Report for 2020-21* and is as follows⁴.

⁴ Forestry Commission (2021) *Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Report for 2020-21*, Bristol: Forestry Commission, Bristol: Forestry Commission, 68 pages, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forestry-commission-key-performance-indicators-report-for-2020-21>

The area of woodland in England is 1,320 thousand hectares at 31 March 2021. The March 2021 figure is an increase of 2 thousand hectares on the previous year, and the total is 10.1% of the land area of England. Woodland area figures at March 2019 and at March 2020 have been revised from those provided in Forestry Statistics 2020 to take account of updates to the National Forest Inventory woodland area map. The large increase in woodland area reported for 2019 results from updated analysis of remote sensing data, which revealed an additional 7,000 hectares of woodland in England. There is no change from the provisional statistics previously published.

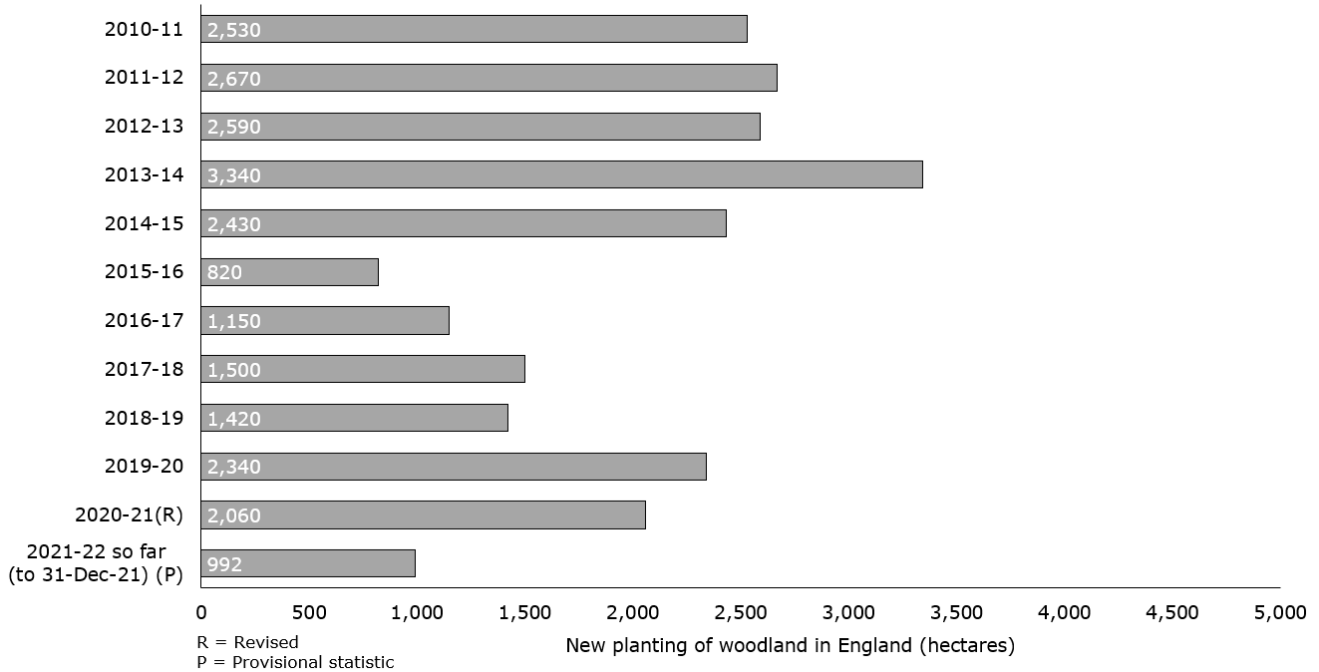
Figure 1: Long-term trend in woodland as a percentage of land area of England



Trend is indicative only between 1086 Domesday Book data and 1905

Source: Forestry Statistics

New planting of woodland and trees in England



Source: [Forestry Statistics 2021](#) (Forest Research) and Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators.

An area of 136 hectares of new planting of woodland was reported in the third quarter of 2021-22 bringing the year-to-date total to 992 hectares (after rounding). This level of reported new planting is higher than at the same point in 2020-21. It should also be noted that this may only be a partial picture of tree planting, as returns have not been submitted by all partners, in line with the seasonal nature of tree planting activity.

Table 2: New planting of woodland and trees in England, by source, 1 April 2021 to 31 December 2021: provisional statistics

New planting of woodland and trees in England		1 Apr 2021 to 31 Dec 2021 Area of woodland in hectares	1 Apr 2021 to 31 Dec 2021 Area of woodland equivalent in number of trees
Government-supported new planting of trees in England			
1	Rural Development Programme for England: CS and EWGS woodland creation	435	754,000
2	England Woodland Creation Offer	1	3,000
3	Woodland Carbon Fund	371	849,000
4	High Speed 2 Woodland Fund	56	101,000
5	Forestry England	6	6,000
6	Countryside Stewardship: other tree planting options	47	78,000
7	Environment Agency	..	..
8	Northern Forest	16	17,000
9	National Forest Company	0	0
10	Ministry of Defence	..	..
11	Highways England	..	..
12	Urban Tree Challenge Fund	..	..
13	Community Forests	..	..
Total Government-supported new planting of trees in England		932	1,807,000
Recorded new planting of woodland and trees in England supported by other organisations			
1	The Woodland Trust	60	79,000
Total new planting of woodland and trees in England		992 hectares	1,886,000 trees

Notes to Table 2:

1. Figures include trees in areas counting as woodland and some tree cover outside woodland.
2. .. denotes no data for this period.
3. The density of tree planting, in numbers of trees planted per hectare of land, varies between planting schemes.
4. Areas of woodland are rounded to the nearest hectare and tree numbers approximate and to the nearest 1,000 trees.
5. Figures may not sum due to rounding.
6. CS means Countryside Stewardship and EWGS is the former English Woodland Grant Scheme.
7. The England Woodland Creation Offer opened to applications in June 2021 for new planting going forward.
8. Future reports will include returns from other organisations' new planting of woodland and trees in England.

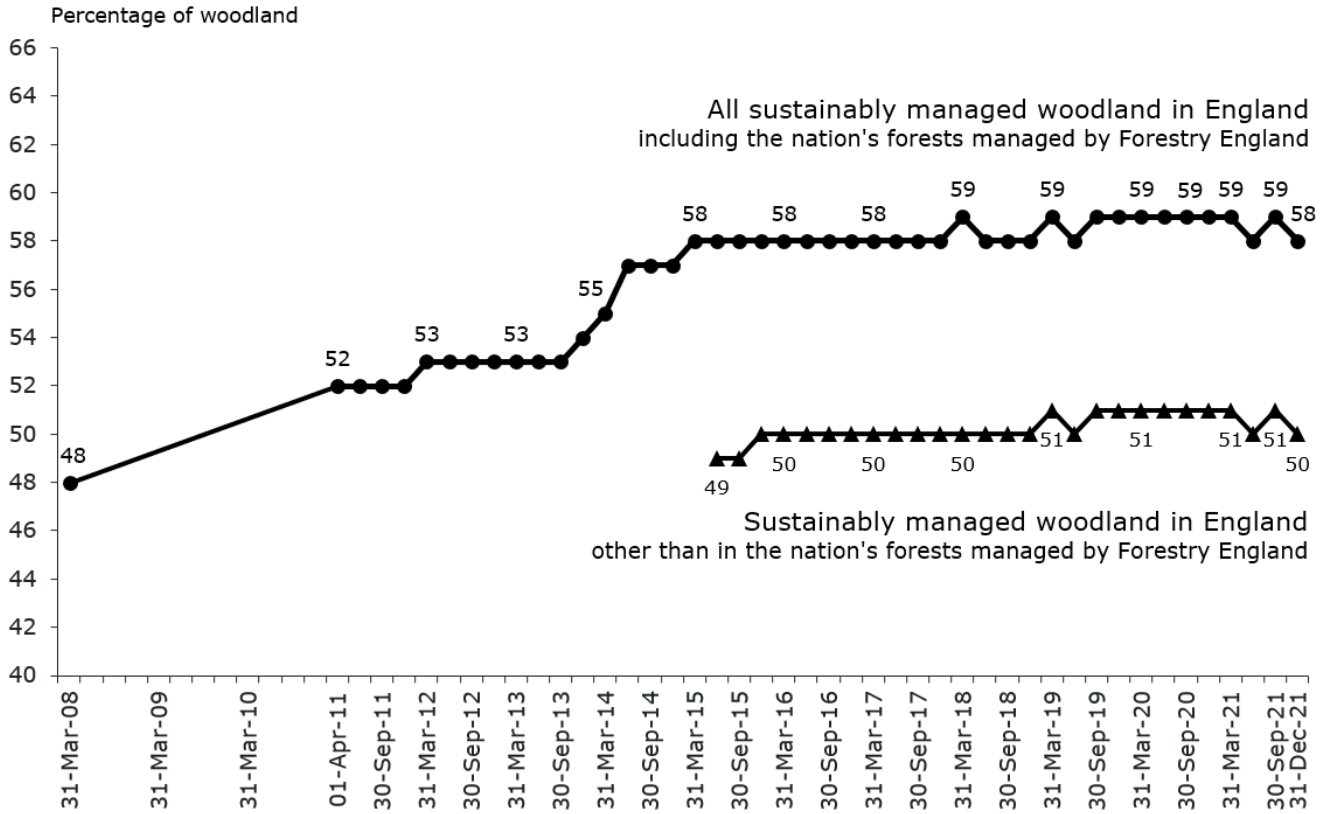
This indicator on new planting of woodland and trees in England at present includes recorded reporting of new planting of woodland that is either supported by Government or that supported by the Woodland Trust.

It therefore builds on and incorporates the most recent reports of the *Government supported new planting of trees in England* key performance indicator. The most recent full report of that indicator was for the full 2019-20 year⁵. All previous reports for that indicator, including details of the methodology of what is included, can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forestry-commission-corporate-plan-performance-indicators>

⁵ Forestry Commission (2020) *Government supported new planting of trees in England: Report for 2019-20*. Bristol: Forestry Commission, 10 pages. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/government-supported-new-planting-of-trees-in-england-report-for-2019-20>

Protecting and improving our trees and woodland

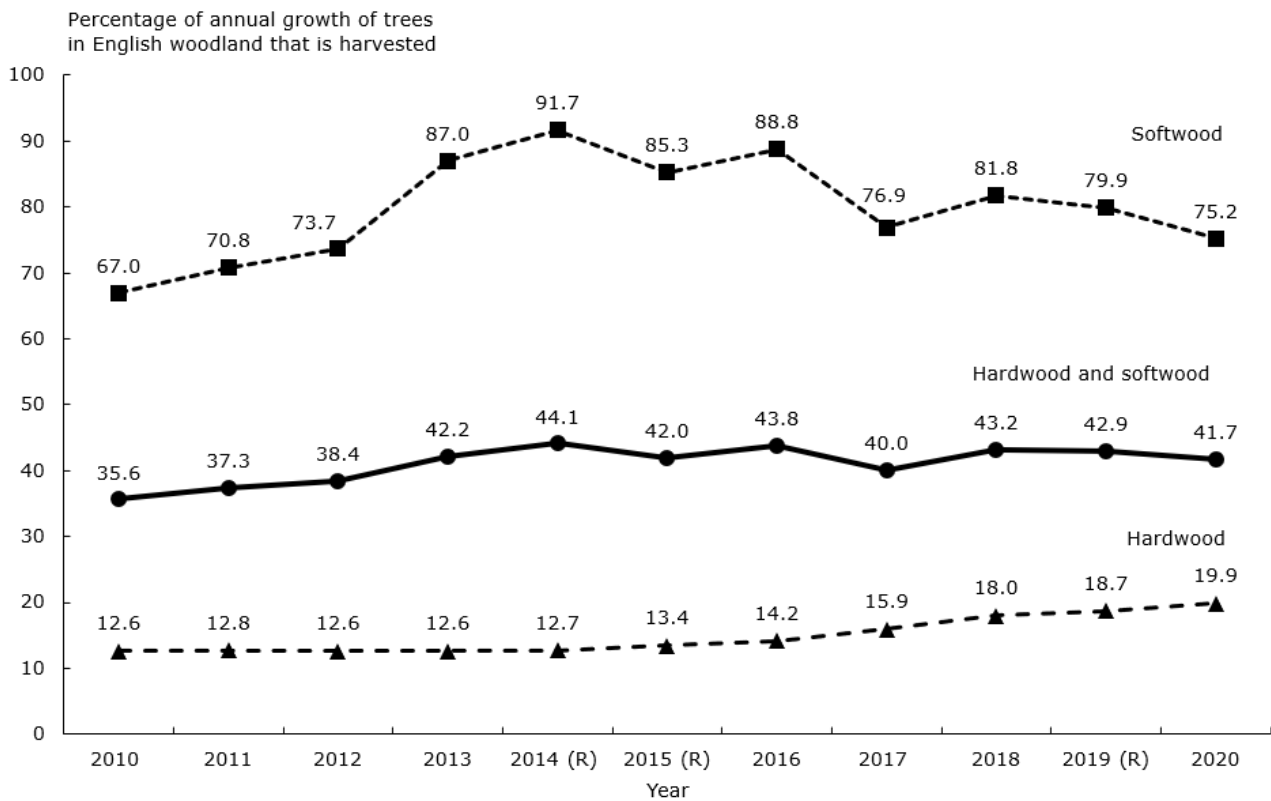
Percentage of woodland that is sustainably managed



Source: Forestry Commission administrative data and the [National Forest Inventory](#) (Forest Research).

As at 31 December 2021, 58% of all woodland in England was sustainably managed; totalling 768,000 hectares of woodland in management (at this date, when rounded). The equivalent figure for woodland other than in the nation’s forests was 50%, totalling 554,000 hectares of woodland in management. Evidence suggests markets for timber remain relatively strong. There is scope to further increase the area of woodland sustainably managed to meet demand for UK grown timber, to help manage tree pests and diseases, and to improve woodland resilience.

Percentage of the annual growth of trees in English woodlands that is harvested



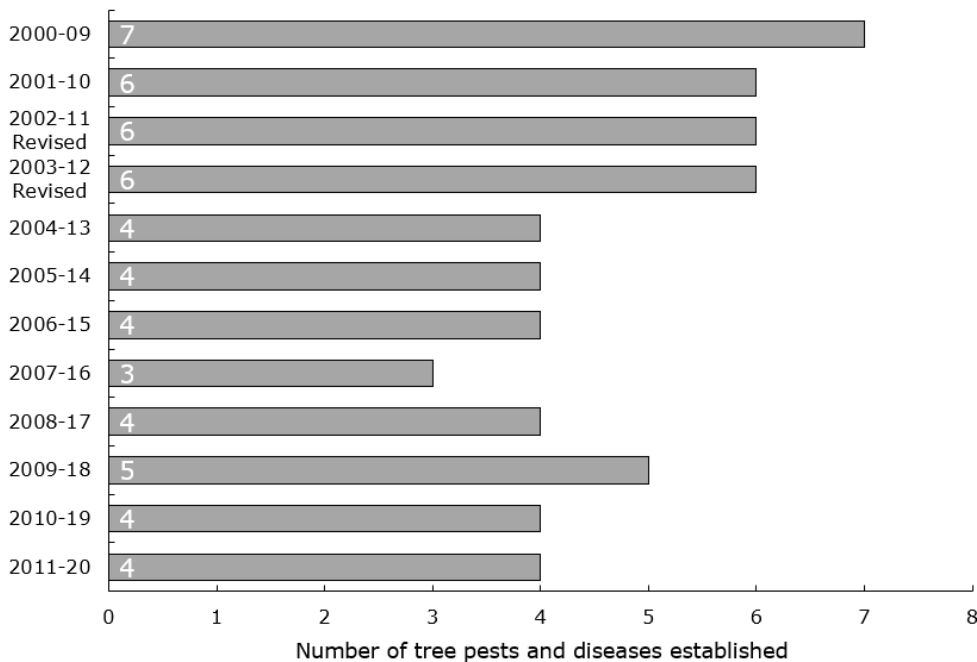
Source: Forest Research statistics on [UK wood production and trade](#) and [National Forest Inventory](#) team forecasts.

Reports for this indicator are published annually. Our most recent report is for the 2020 year and was included in our annual *Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Report for 2020-21* and is as follows.

There is an opportunity to considerably increase the hardwood harvest if new markets are developed. The proportion of softwood annual increment that is harvested remains high, reflecting strong demand and the age structure of the conifer woodland resource.

Number of additional tree pests and diseases becoming established in England within a rolling 10-year period

Rolling 10-year periods since 2000



Sequence of four 5-year periods since 2000



Source: Forestry Commission administrative data.

Reports for this indicator are published annually. Our most recent report is for the 2020 year and was included in our annual *Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Report for 2020-21* and is as follows.

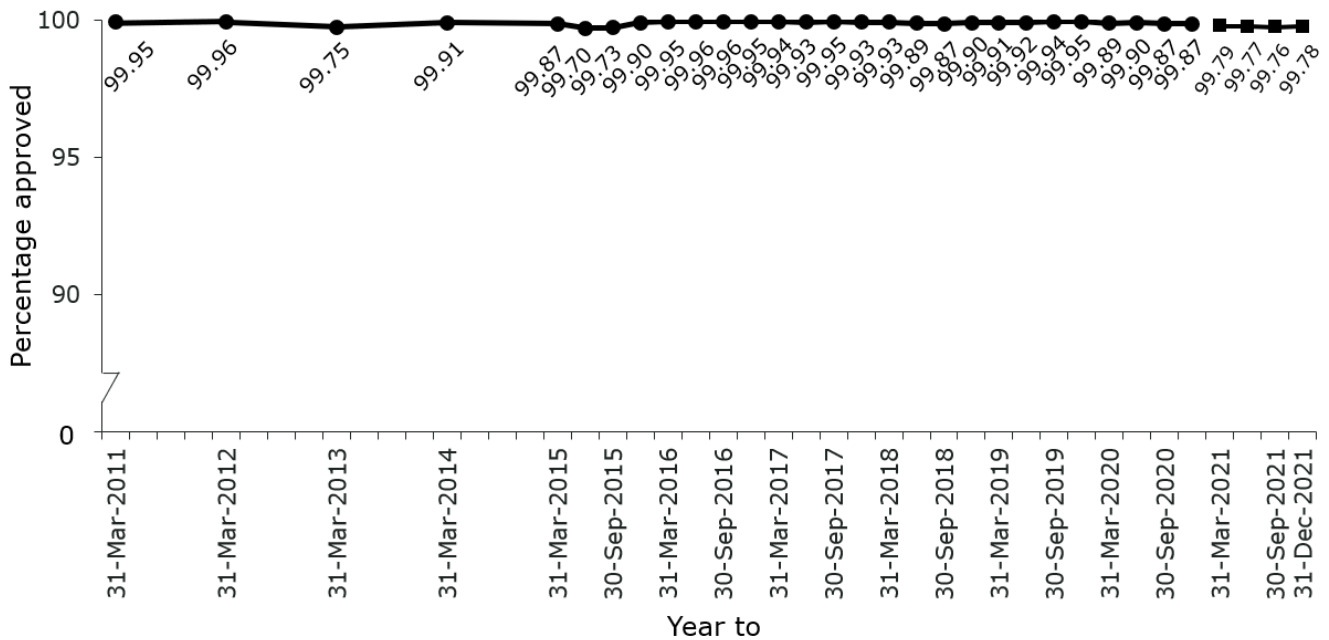
The number of additional tree pests and diseases becoming established in England within a rolling ten-year period fell from a peak of seven in the ten-year period 2000-09 to a low of three in 2007-16.

Four tree pests and diseases became 'established' in England in the most recent ten-year period 2011-20, namely:

1. Chalara dieback of ash (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) considered established in 2012. Ash dieback is present in most parts of the United Kingdom and continues to spread. New planting for replacement of trees lost is included in the support offered by the Local Authority Treescapes Fund.
2. Oriental chestnut gall wasp considered established in 2016. This is a larval pest of sweet chestnut trees present with a distribution limited to southern England and the Midlands. Research is underway to investigate potential biological control of this pest.
3. Sweet chestnut blight caused by the fungus *Cryphonectria parasitica*, has been identified at a number of sites in England where it is under official control. Ongoing surveillance has identified new outbreak sites in Kent and Nottinghamshire.
4. Elm zigzag sawfly (*Aproceros leucopoda*), considered established in 2018, and continuing to spread in southeast England and the east Midlands.

There are other tree pests and diseases, some of which have become established in England. These include for example *Phytophthora ramorum* considered established in 2003, with a limited distribution, and under official control to reduce the spread and intensity. Information on a range of forestry pests in England is available from the pest and disease resources webpage provided by Forest Research.

Percentage of known tree felling carried out with Forestry Commission approval



Source: Forestry Commission administrative data.

Report for year to 31 December 2021: 99.78% of known tree felling was carried out with Forestry Commission approval.

The overall figure of legal felling remains at a consistently very high level.