Forestry Commission

Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators

Report for 2022-23

Forestry Commission

Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Report for 2022-23 (First Release)

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Forestry Commission publishes a range of key performance indicators (KPIs) to show our contribution towards forestry and woodlands in England and indicate trends in the wider forestry sector in England. The KPIs reflect our priorities 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 KPIs also reflects our commitment to evidence-based working and to ensuring that there is robust data available to the forestry sector to underpin policies and operational decisions.

As such the KPIs reflect our strong commitment to play our part in supporting the delivery of the Government's plans as set out in the Environment Act 2021, 25 Year Environment Plan[1], the England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024[2] and the Tree Health Resilience Strategy 2018[3]. The indicators will help monitor achievement of Forestry England's five-year plan, *Growing the future: 2021-26*[4]. This *Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Report 2022-23* provides our latest information.

This report contains:

- Part 1: Forest Services headline key performance indicators, from page 12.
- Part 2: Forestry England headline key performance indicators, from page 24.
- Part 3: Other Forest Services indicators, from page 28.

We publish:

- Updates on the six headline Forest Services indicators twice per year[5].
- Updates on the six headline Forestry England indicators annually.
- Reports on the full suite of Forestry Commission indicators, 38 in all, annually.

The coverage of all the indicators is England. 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, and data available from other parts of Defra Group and other data collections.

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[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: UK Government, 30 pages at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-trees-action-plan-2021-to-2024

[3] Defra (2018) *Tree Health Resilience Strategy*, London: Defra, 63 pages at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tree-health-resilience-strategy-2018

[4] Forestry England (2021) *Growing the future: 2021-26*, Bristol: Forestry England, 18 pages, at https://www.forestryengland.uk/growing-the-future

[5] Available from the Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators webpage: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forestry-commission-corporate-plan-performance-indicators

This is an Official Statistics publication, produced with a view to meeting the standards of the *Code of Practice for Statistics* (Office for Statistics Regulation and UK Statistics Authority, 2022). The Government Internal Audit Agency have assured the latest and previous annual out-turn statistics.

See the Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators web pages on GOV.UK for other reports in this statistical series.

This Forestry Commission report is based on a wide range of contributions from our senior managers, indicator managers and data managers as well as our statistical and geospatial analysts.

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Published: 15 June 2023

Short term trends in the indicators

Method of assessment

A proper review of this *Indicators Report 2022-23* is best made by reading each report in full, ideally alongside other contextual information on that aspect of the forestry sector. To provide a summary, however, we also provide a simple assessment of short-term trends in each indicator. These show change in the indicator over time. They do not show whether the indicator has reached any actual or implied targets nor whether the current status is 'good' or 'bad'.

This assessment is a simple one made only by comparing the difference between the value of the indicator in the most recent single year for which data is available with the data for five years earlier. They do not account for unusual year(s) nor reflect fluctuations during intervening years. The assessment is made against a simple standard 'rule of thumb' threshold of 3% per 5-year period; see Table 1.

Table 1: Short term assessment categories and what they represent

Category of short-term trend	**Threshold**
Improving	>3% positive change over 5 years
Little or no overall change	Less than 3% change over 5 years
Deteriorating	>3% negative change over 5 years
Not assessed due to insufficient comparable data	Not applicable

Note: In many cases 'little or no overall change' is actually reported where strong performances have been maintained.

For some indicators we do not yet have a time series covering at 5 years. In these cases, the assessment covers the longest period available: 1, 2, 3 or 4 years. If change exceeds at least 1% per annum the direction of change is given simply as an acknowledgement of very recent trends and as a possible early indication of a more substantive direction of change that may be found at a later date. These assessments therefore need to be treated with special caution.

The approach is simplistic but broadly consistent in principle with the more sophisticated approach used for the UK Biodiversity Indicators (Defra, 2022).

Where the above approach is not feasible, trends have been assessed by a sensible comparison with our measure of 'what success looks like' for that indicator.

Readers are recommended not to place much weight on the simple trend assessments alone, and rather to consider the entire report for each indicator presented elsewhere in this document.

Table 2: Short term trends in the indicators

Indicator	Short-term trend[1]	Page
Part 1. Forest Services Headline Key Performance Indicators		
Expanding		
Area of woodland in England	Marginal increase	12
New planting of woodland and trees in England	Improving	14
Improving		
Percentage of woodland that is sustainably managed	Little change	17
Percentage of the annual growth of trees in English woodlands that is a harvested	Deteriorating	18
Protecting		
Number of additional tree pests and diseases becoming established in England within a rolling 10-year period	Improving	19
Percentage of known tree felling carried out with Forestry Commission approval	Little change	21

Note 1: See page 5 for the method of assessment of short-term trends in the indicators. A fuller version of the short-term trend category labels are shown in the method of assessment.

Table 2: Short term trends in the indicators continued

Indicator	Short-term trend[1]	Page
Part 2. Forestry England Headline Key Performance Indicators		
Land area of the nation's forests held by Forestry England	Little change	22
Total natural capital value of the nation's forests	Improving	23
Public engagement: Number of visits per annum to the nation's forests managed by Forestry England	Improving	24
Percentage of Forestry England's income that is self-generated	Deteriorating	25
Health and safety: Number of work-related accidents per 100 employees in Forestry England	Improving	26
Health and safety: Number of accidents per 100,000 visits to the main visitor hubs in the nation's forests	Improving	27

Note 1: See page 5 for the method of assessment of short-term trends in the indicators. A fuller version of the short-term trend category labels are shown in the method of assessment.

Table 2: Short term trends in the indicators continued

Indicator		Short-term trend[1]	Page
Part 3. Forest Services Indicators (other than Headline Indicators)			
Expanding and connecting our trees and woodland			
Expanding			
Net change in woodland area, based on the balance between new planting of woodland, and woodland removal		Improving	28
Percentage of new planting of woodland in England that is broadleaved woodland		Not assessed	31
Area of tree cover outside woodland in England		Not assessed	32
Connecting			
Connectivity of woodland in England		Little change	33
Trees and woodland as a part of the green economy			
Natural capital value of England's woodlands		Improving (note 2)	34
Gross Value Added from domestic forestry		Improving	35
Volume of timber brought to market per annum from English sources		Deteriorating	36
Number of apprentices, those with work based diplomas, and university students entering forestry	Apprentices and those with work-based diplomas	Improving	37
	University students	Little change (note 2)	37
Forest Services' training support for the English forestry sector (hours of training events)		Improving (note 2)	38
Carbon captured by English woodlands		Little change	39
Projected carbon capture in 2050 by Woodland Carbon Code woodland creation projects		Little change (note 2)	40

Note 1: See page 5 for the method of assessment of short-term trends in the indicators. A fuller version of the short-term trend category labels are shown in the method of assessment.
Note 2: The short-term trend assessment of this indicator covers less than 5 years; treat with more caution.

Table 2: Short term trends in the indicators continued

Indicator		Short-term trend[1]	Page
Part 3. Other Forest Services Indicators continued			
Protecting and improving our trees and woodland			
Woodland ecological condition in England using information from the National Forest Inventory		Not assessed	41
Percentage of woodland Sites of Special Scientific Interest (by land area) in desired condition in England	Favourable or unfavourable recovering condition	Improving	44
	Favourable condition	Little change	44
Hectares of restoration of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) and of open habitat in woodland in England	PAWS	Improving	45
	Open habitat	Deteriorating	45
Measure of what is happening to the number and variety of species that live in woodland; using Woodland Birds data		Deteriorating	46
Number of high priority forest pests in the UK Plant Health Risk Register (UKPHRR)		Little change	48
Area of woodland in England that is certified as sustainably managed		Deteriorating	52
Area of felling licenses issued		Little change	53
Connecting people with trees and woodlands			
Percentage of adults in England who visited a woodland or forest		Little change	54
Percentage of people in Priority Places close to accessible woodland in England		Improving	55

Note 1: See page 5 for the method of assessment of short-term trends in the indicators. A fuller version of the short-term trend category labels are shown in the method of assessment.

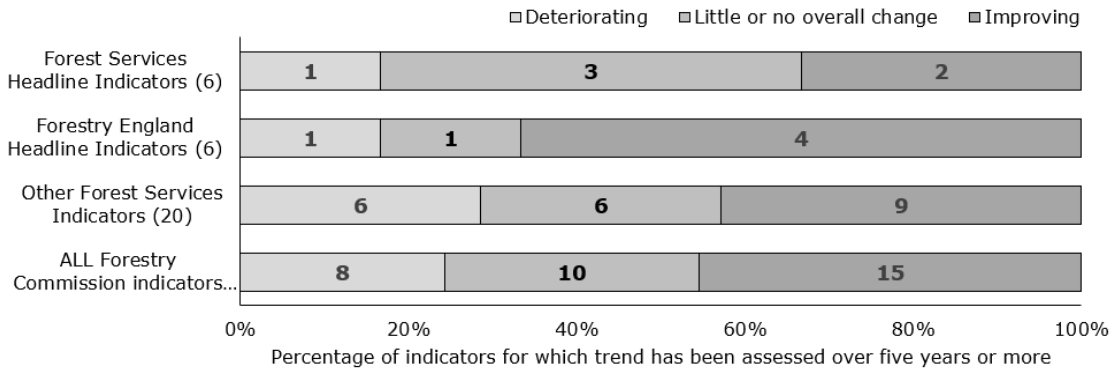
Table 2: Short term trends in the indicators continued

Indicator	Short-term trend[1]	Page
Part 3. Other Forest Services Indicators continued		
Organisational health		
Percentage of grant and felling license transactions completed on time or early	Deteriorating	56
Percentage of Forest Services grants and felling license customers who report their customer satisfaction as either very satisfied or satisfied	Improving	57
Number of work-related accidents per 100 employees (headcount) in Forest Services	Improving	58

Note 1: See page 5 for the method of assessment of short-term trends in the indicators. A fuller version of the short-term trend category labels are shown in the method of assessment.

There are 32 Forestry Commission indicators (out of 38 indicators reported in total) which trend has been assessed over a period of 5 years or more, and for which this simple assessment is more useful (see Figure 1). See page 5 for the method of assessment of short-term trends.

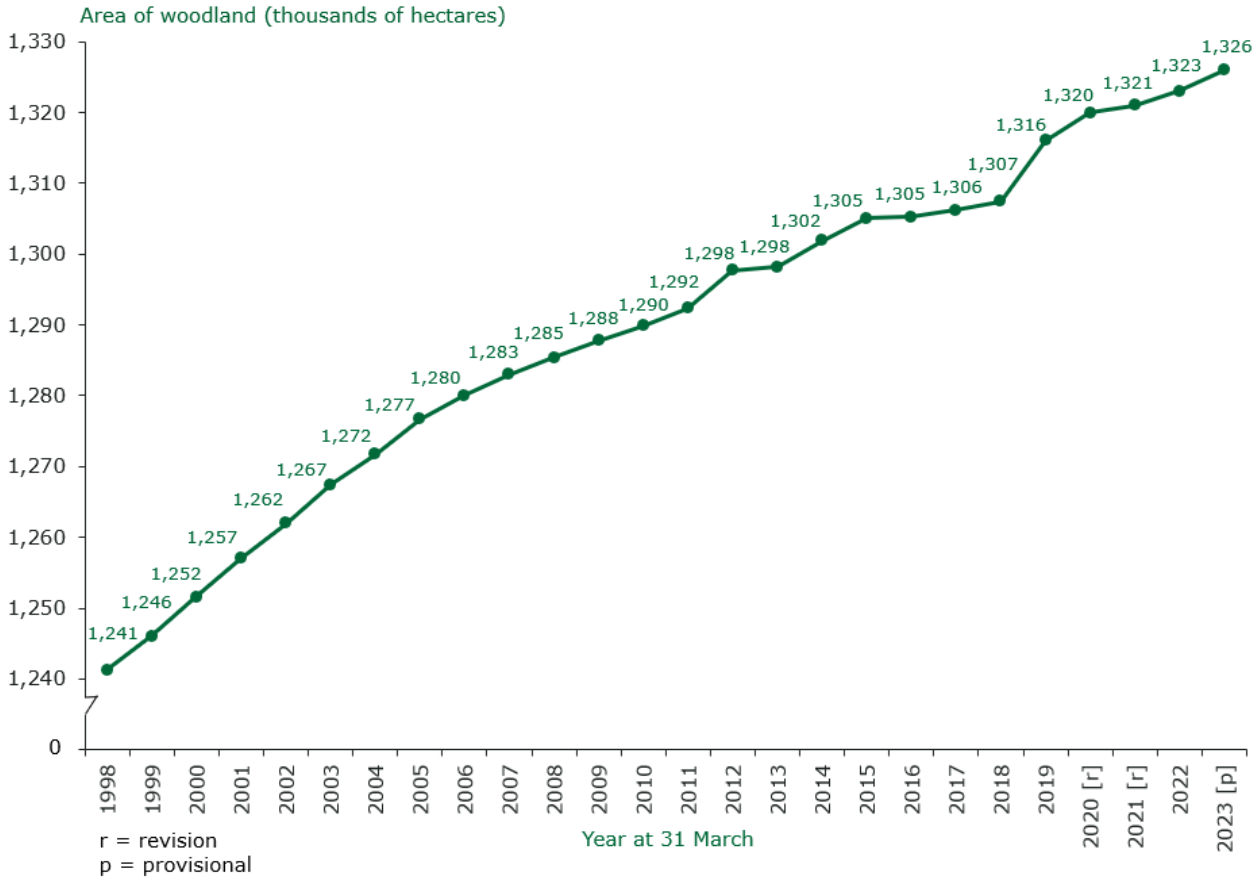
Figure 1: Summary assessment of short-term trends in the Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators at 31 March 2023



Part 1. Forest Services Headline Key Performance Indicators

Expansion of woodland

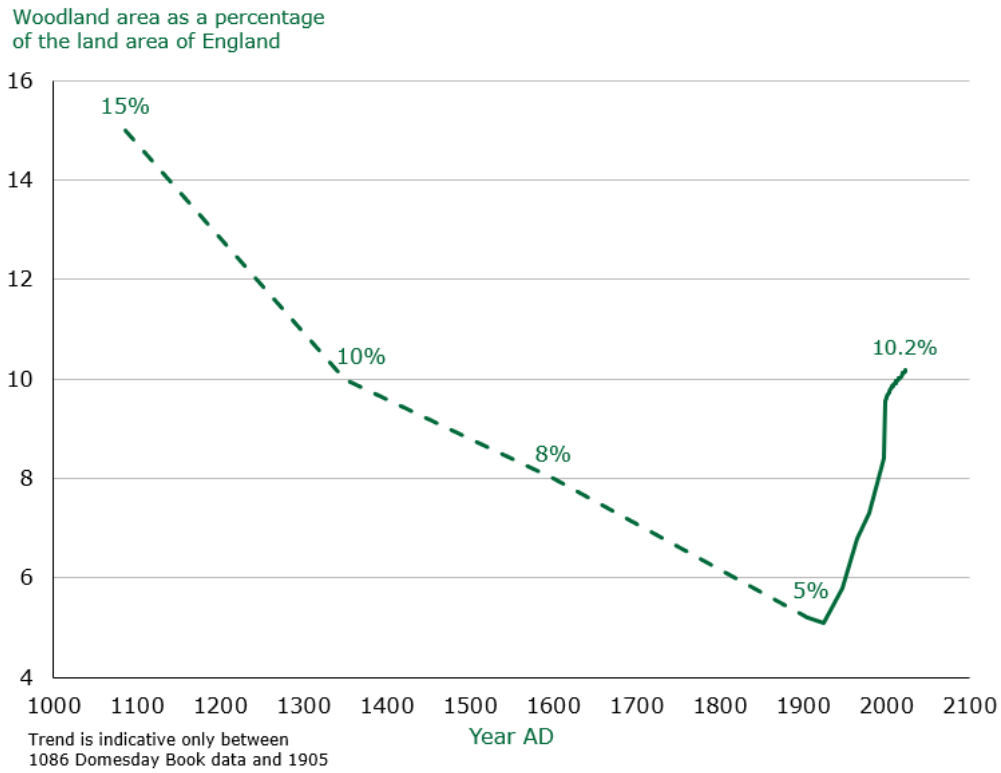
Area of woodland in England



Source: Forestry Statistics 2022 and Provisional Woodland Statistics 2023 (Forest Research), based mainly on the National Forest Inventory and Forestry Commission administrative data.

The area of woodland in England is 1,326 thousand hectares (10.2% of the land area) at 31 March 2023 (provisional statistics). This statistic is scheduled to be confirmed in Forestry Statistics 2023 (published by Forest Research) later in the year. The March 2023 figure is an increase of three thousand hectares on the previous year.

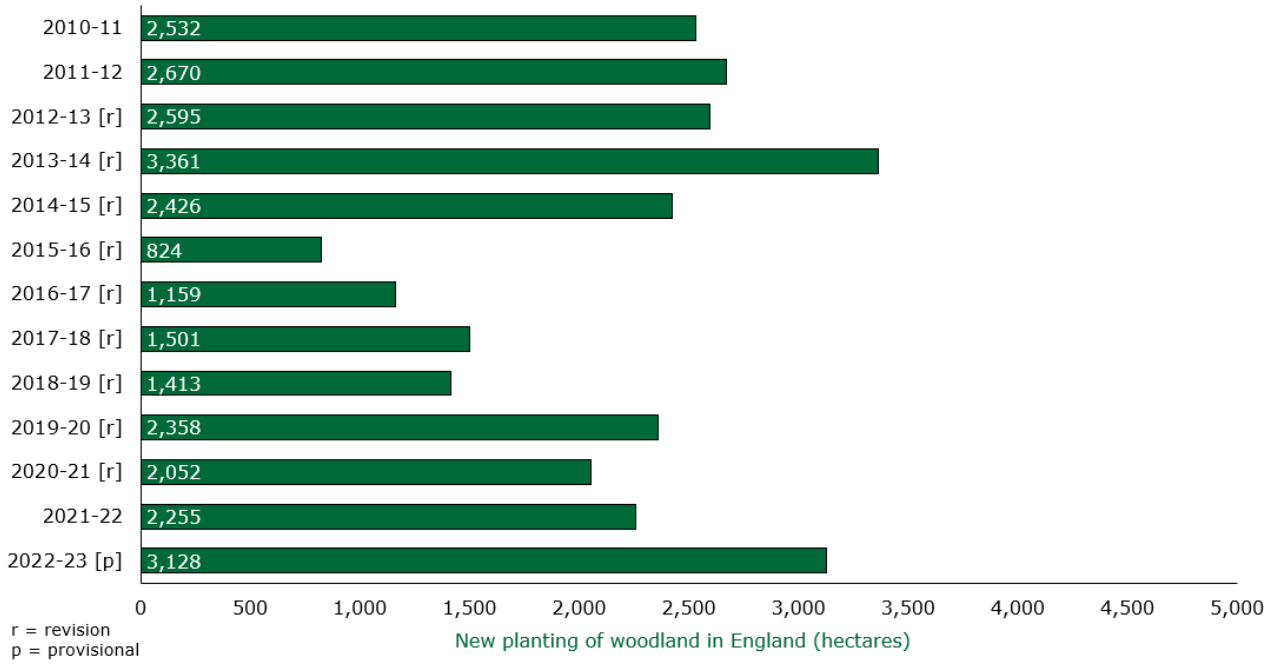
Figure 2: Long-term trend in woodland as a percentage of land area of England



Source: Forestry Statistics 2022 and Provisional Woodland Statistics 2023 (Forest Research)

Assessment of change in: Area of woodland	
Five-year trend, 31-Mar-23 compared to 31-Mar-18	Marginal increase in woodland area

New planting of woodland and trees in England



Source: Forestry Statistics 2022 and Provisional Woodland Statistics 2023 (Forest Research) and Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators.

A total of 3,128 hectares of new woodland planting was recorded in England in 2022-23, corresponding to about 4 million trees. Of this, Government funding supported the planting of 2,721 hectares, corresponding to about 3.6 million trees. The Community Forests and the Forestry Commission's England Woodland Creation Offer, were the largest contributors, supporting the planting of 953 hectares and 871 hectares, respectively; both are funded by the Nature for Climate Fund. Other contributions have come with support from Countryside Stewardship, the Northern Forest Partnership, the Woodland Carbon Fund, the High Speed 2 Woodland Fund, Forestry England, the Environment Agency, and the National Forest Company.

The total area of new planting was nearly 40% more than in 2021-22. The area supported by the England Woodland Creation Offer increased significantly, although we know due to the time between planting and paid grant claims that the area recorded for the financial year 2021-22 only showed a very small part of new planting that occurred in winter 2021-22.

In addition to 3,128 ha of new woodland being planted in 2022-23, Government funding supported the planting of 360,000 trees outside woodland, equivalent to about 499 hectares of additional tree canopy; the Environment Agency, the Local Authority Treescapes Fund and the Community Forests being the largest contributors. This brings the total area of woodland and tree canopy outside woodland newly established in 2022-23 to 3,627 hectares corresponding to 4,399,000 trees.

Table 3: New planting of woodland and trees in England, 2022-23

New planting of woodland by type of support	Area of woodland newly planted, 2022-23 (hectares)	Area of woodland newly planted, 2022-23 (equivalent in number of trees)
Woodland[1]		
Government-supported		
Countryside Stewardship woodland	165	282,000
England Woodland Creation Offer	871	1,446,000
Woodland Carbon Fund	68	109,000
High Speed 2 Woodland Fund	9	12,000
Forestry England	34	90,000
Countryside Stewardship: other tree planting options	205	328,000
Environment Agency	90	109,000
Northern Forest	224	144,000
National Forest Company	99	89,000
Community Forests	953	1,016,000
Woodland Creation Partnerships	4	4,000
Sub-total Government-supported	**2,721**	**3,628,000**
Other support and non-governmental organisations		
Woodland Carbon Guarantee	142	64,000
Woodland Trust	265	347,000
Sub-total	**407**	**411,000**
Total woodland	**3,128 hectares of woodland**	**4,039,000 trees within woodland**

Table 3 continued

New planting of trees outside woodland by type of support	Approximate area equivalent, 2022-23 (hectares)	Number of individual trees newly planted, 2022-23 (number)
Trees outside woodland[2]		
Government-supported		
Countryside Stewardship single trees[a]	21	17,000
England Woodland Creation Offer[b]	2	4,000
Forestry England[b]	1	<1,000
Environment Agency[b]	197	21,000
Northern Forest[a]	2	2,000
National Forest Company[b]	5	3,000
Community Forests[b]	60	139,000
Woodland Creation Partners[c]	8	11,000
Local Authority Treescapes Fund[a]	187	150,000
Urban Tree Challenge Fund[a]	17	14,000
Total trees outside woodland	Approx. 499 hectares	**360,000 trees outside woodland**
Total woodland and trees outside woodland	Approx 3,627 hectares within and outside woodland	**4,399,000 trees within and outside woodland**

Notes to Table 3:

1. Statistics for woodland are for planting that meets the National Forest Inventory (NFI) definition of woodland, namely as land with a minimum area of 0.5 hectare under stands of trees, and tree crown cover of at least 20%, or the potential to achieve this. The minimum width for woodland is 20 metres.

2. Statistics on trees outside woodland have been converted to an approximate equivalent area in hectares. Based on (a) the professional advice of the Trees and Woodland Scientific Advisory Group an assumed stocking density of 800 trees to 1 hectare has been applied, except (b) where we have actual scheme records or (c) there is a need for a mix of both.

3. The density of tree planting, in numbers of trees planted per hectare of land, varies between planting schemes.

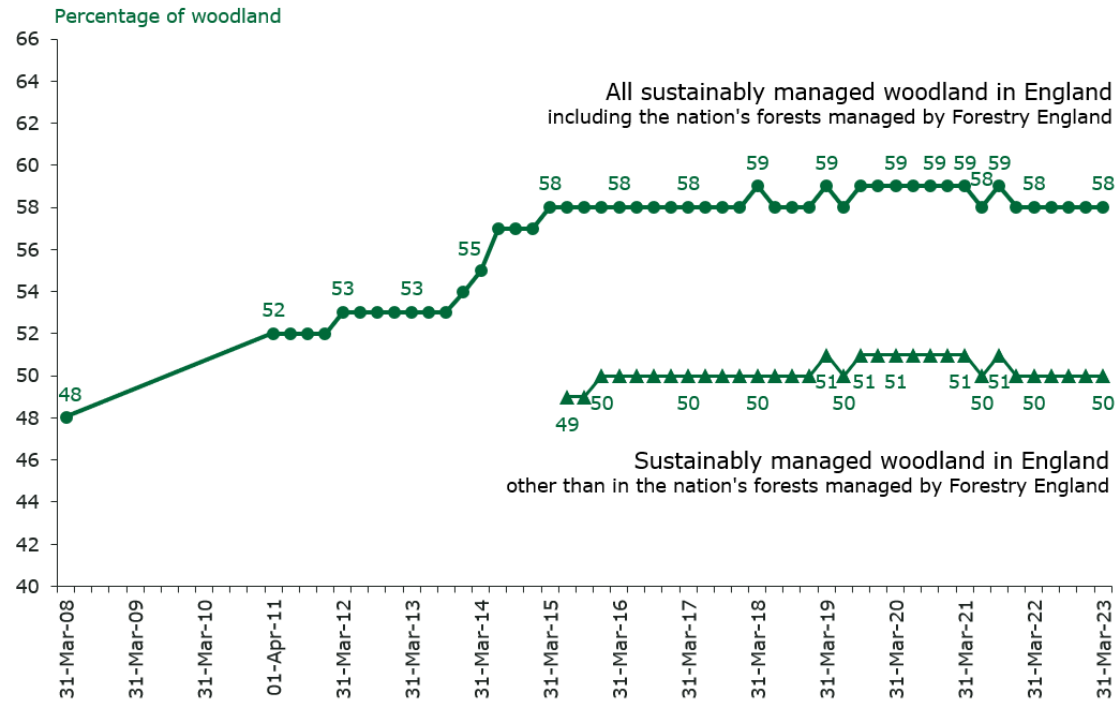
4. Areas of woodland are rounded to the nearest hectare and tree numbers are approximate and rounded to the nearest 1,000 trees. Statistics in the table may not sum due to rounding.

5. This indicator at present includes new planting of woodland that is either supported by Government or that facilitated by the Woodland Carbon Guarantee or supported by the Woodland Trust, and for which we have received records. It is anticipated that future reports will include other new planting of woodland and trees in England.

Assessment of change in: New planting of woodland and trees in England	
Five-year trend, 2022-23 compared to 2017-18	Improving

Improvement of woodland

Percentage of woodland that is sustainably managed



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

As at 31 March 2023, 58% of all woodland in England was sustainably managed (*ca.* 768,000 hectares). The equivalent figure for woodland other than in the nation's forests was 50% (*ca.* 554,000 hectares).

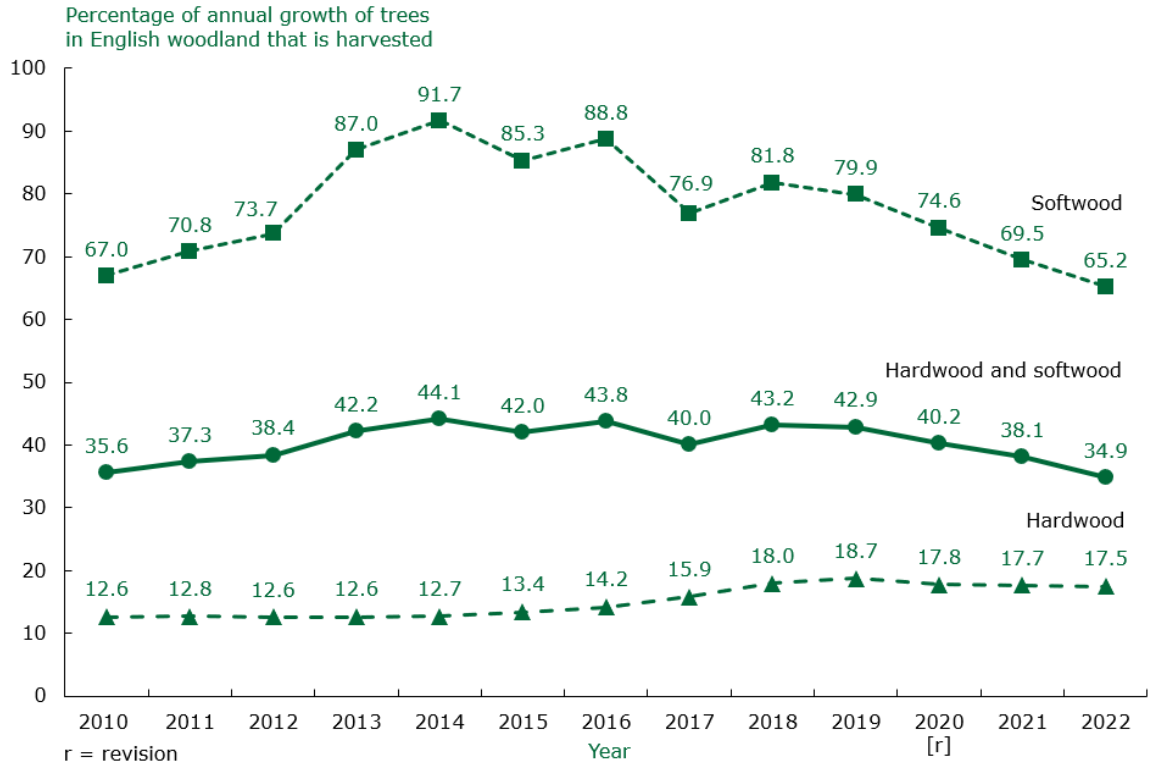
Our definition of 'sustainably managed' is woodland managed to the UK Forestry Standard that has a Woodland Management Plan, or for which we have provided a grant or felling licence in the last 15 years. It also includes all woodland in the nation's forests managed by Forestry England and all woodland on Defence Infrastructure Organisation training areas. It is recognised that other woodland might be considered as managed as well, however, we do not have the data to include this.

Demand for timber and timber products remains high, and there is scope to further increase the area of woodland sustainably managed to meet demand for UK grown timber and reduce England's reliance on timber imports in the face of global supply-chain uncertainties.

Increasing woods into management will also help to improve woodland resilience in the light of climate change and increasing tree pest and disease pressure.

Assessment of change in: Percentage of all woodland that is sustainably managed	
Five-year trend, 31-Mar-23 compared to 31-Mar-18	Little or no overall change

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



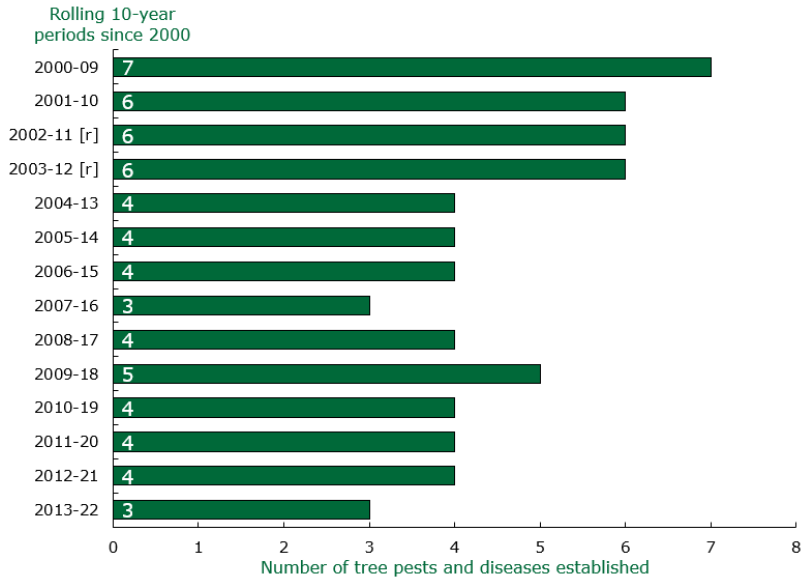
Source: Forest Research statistics on UK wood production and trade and National Forest Inventory team forecasts.

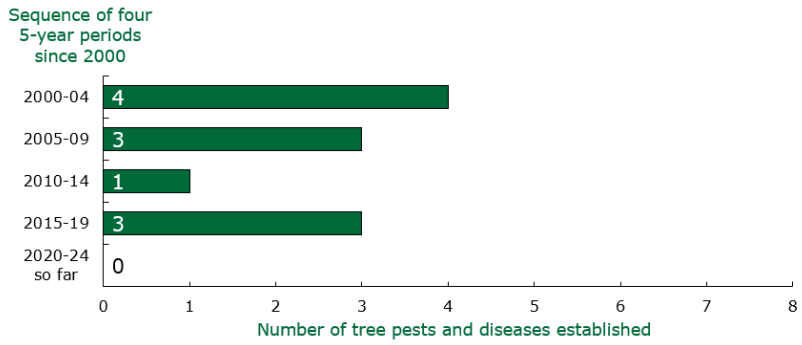
There is an opportunity to considerably increase the hardwood harvest if new markets are developed. The Woods into Management Innovation Fund includes a Timber in Construction Innovation Fund that should help to increase the percentage of hardwood harvested as products developed under the fund are market-tested. The proportion of softwood annual increment that is harvested has reduced but remains high (*ca.* 65%), reflecting ongoing strong demand. Private sector and Government action on increasing English softwood used in construction should help to increase the softwood harvest.

Assessment of change in: Percentage of the annual growth of trees in English woodlands that is a harvested	
Five-year trend, 2022 compared to 2017 (hardwood and softwood element)	Deteriorating

Protection of woodland

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





Source: Forestry Commission administrative data.

The number of additional tree pests and diseases becoming established in England within a rolling 10-year period fell from a peak of seven in the 10-year period 2000-09 to a low of three in 2007-16 and 2013-22.

In the most recent ten-year period (2013-22), three tree pests and diseases became 'established' in England:

1. Oriental chestnut gall wasp (*Dryocosmus kuriphilus*): The wasp population continues to spread and is now present at over 150 sites across southern England and the Midlands. In 2021, following a robust scientific review, approval was given for the release of a natural biological control agent, parasitoid wasp called *Torymus sinensis*, to

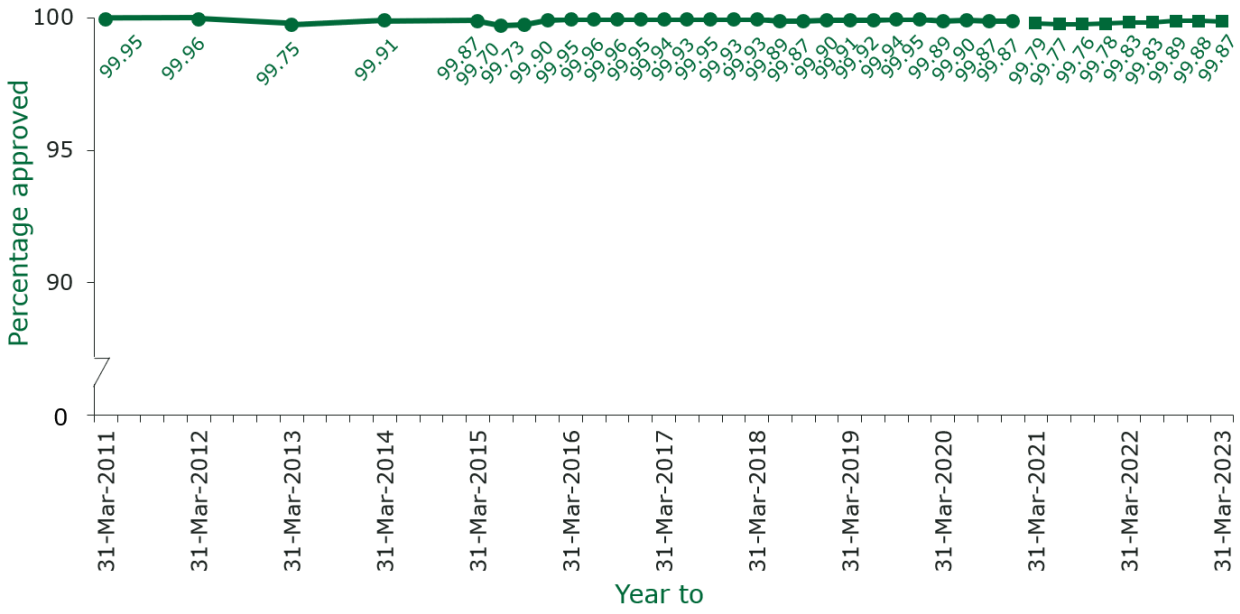
help reduce the spread of Oriental Chestnut Gall Wasp in England to protect the health of sweet chestnut trees. *Torymus sinensis* was already present naturally in England but in very low numbers. Further releases of the parasitoid will enable the population to build up to a level to effectively control Oriental Chestnut Gall Wasp. This method of biological control is used successfully in many countries across Europe.

2. Sweet chestnut blight (*Cryphonectria parasitica*): Surveillance has continued across England to determine the extent of the disease, with a view to removing infected trees where possible. There have been no significant new findings of the disease in the last year, and ongoing monitoring and management of sites is in place along with an extensive programme of research to inform longer term management actions.

3. Elm zigzag sawfly (*Aproceros leucopoda*): This continues to spread across a wide area of southeast England and the East Midlands. The full potential extent of its distribution is unknown, but the expectation is still that it will continue to spread and become a major competitor of other foliage-feeding species on elm trees.

Assessment of change in: Number of additional tree pests and diseases becoming established in England within a rolling 10-year period	
Five-year trend, 2013-2022 compared to 2008-2017	Improving

Percentage of known tree felling carried out with Forestry Commission approval



Source: Forestry Commission administrative data.

In the year to 31 March 2023, some 99.87% of known tree felling was carried out with Forestry Commission approval. This indicator is based on the date that a felling licence is approved, and so only accounts for known felling associated with those approvals. Previously, this metric was measured against felling applications received, and as such included metrics for a relatively small proportion of applications that were either amended, withdrawn, or refused.

Over recent years, the figures for tree felling where approval was sought has remained significantly greater than the known level of tree felling undertaken without Forestry Commission approval. However, we continue to see an increasing number of reports of unlicensed tree felling.

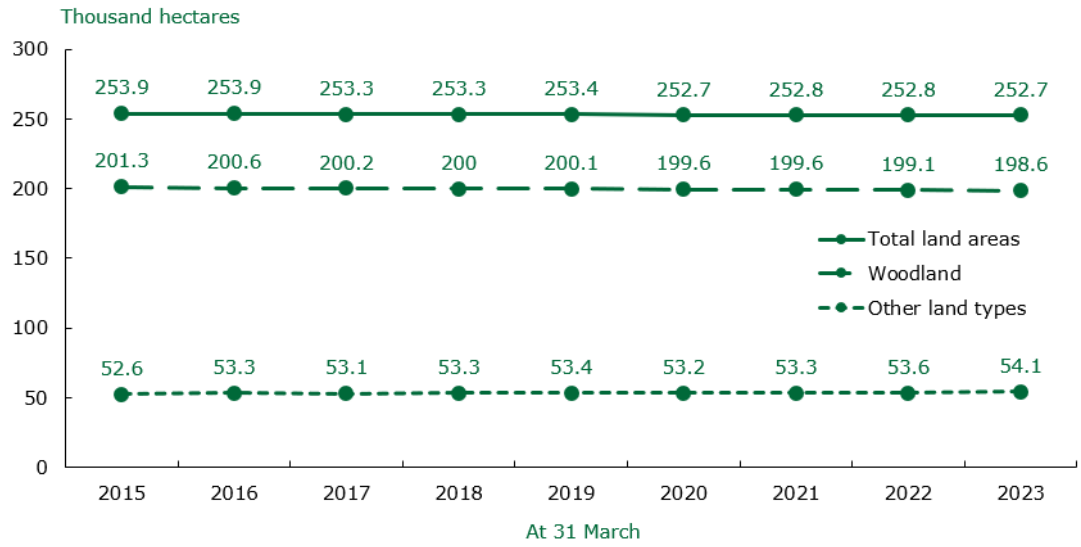
When we become aware of illegal felling, we gather relevant evidence to determine if an offence appears to have been committed, and we take appropriate enforcement action where the evidence demonstrates this. We are currently bringing together an in-house enforcement investigation team to address the continuing increase in enforcement cases.

Unlicensed tree felling is frequently, although not always, is often in anticipation of property development, and we continue to explore other means of changing behaviour in the development sector to reverse this increasing trend, not least through dissemination of recently established caselaw on this point.

Assessment of change in: Percentage of known tree felling that is carried out with Forestry Commission approval	
Five-year trend, 31-Mar-23 compared to 31-Mar-18	Little or no overall change

Part 2. Forestry England Headline Key Performance Indicators

Land area of the nation's forests held by Forestry England



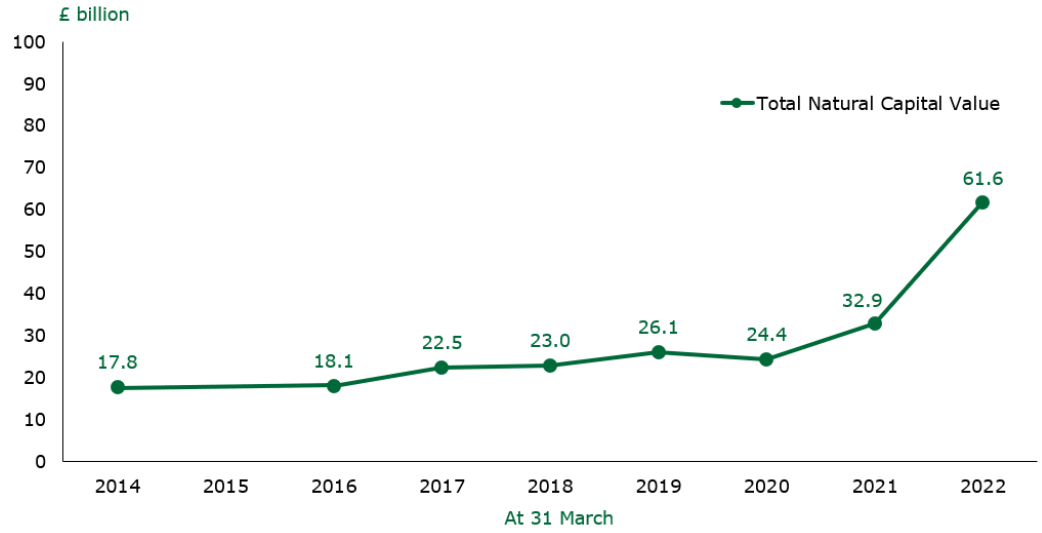
Source: Forestry England administrative data.

The total area of the nation's forests – those forests which are owned freehold or through leasehold by Forestry England – has been maintained, with very little change since last year. 'Woodland' area has gone down by approximately 40 hectares in line with longer term trends, but this KPI rarely sees substantial annual change, and has broadly remained the same since 2014.

NOTE: 'Woodland' here is a broad category that includes some open spaces within woodlands (for example, recently clear-felled sites), rather than just those areas with current forest cover at 31 March 2023. The chart shows the area in thousands of hectares. At 31 March 2023 our total area is 252,742 hectares. Previous years' woodland and other land types areas have been adjusted due to an amendment in the method of calculation and rounding from the total land areas. The total land areas are unchanged.

Assessment of change in: Land area of the nation's forests held by Forestry England	
Five-year trend, 31 March 2023 compared to 31 March 2018	Little or no overall change

Total natural capital value of the nation's forests



Source: Forestry England Natural Capital Accounts (Forestry England, 2023).

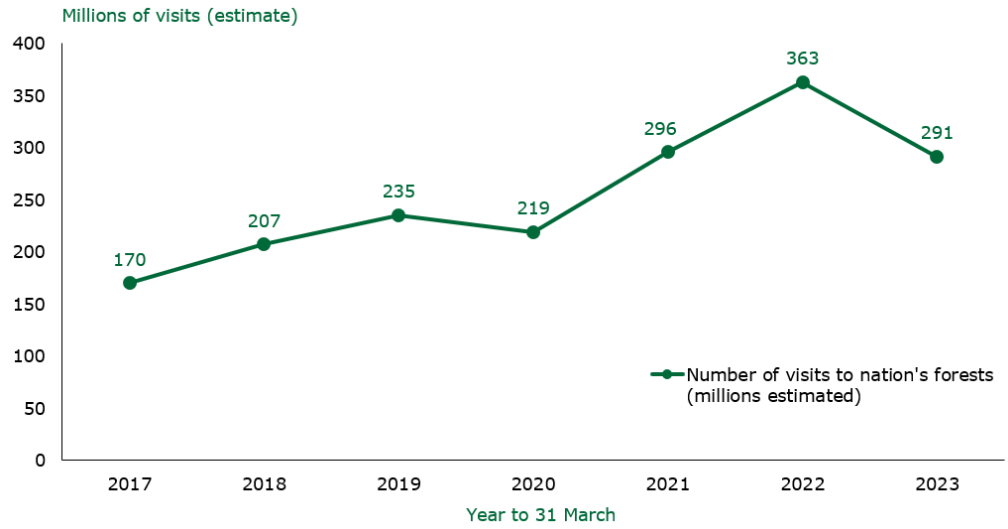
Note: These statistics were previously released in the Forestry England Natural Capital Accounts.

The total calculated natural capital value for the reporting year 2022-23 is £61.6 billion. This is the calculated net present value of the ecosystem services that our natural habitats have delivered this year and will deliver into the future – they are not a 'price tag' or market price for the nation's forests. Natural capital is a way of showing the extent of the positive impact they have on our lives, helping us to better understand and value these natural assets so that we can protect them. They are an attempt at showing the value to society of natural habitats and processes that are not captured under the historical cost convention modified to account for the revaluation of property, plant and equipment, inventories and available-for-sale financial assets. Approximately £27.5 billion of this is due to recreation and public access, and £16.9 billion due to carbon sequestration. Due to the timing of producing our natural capital accounts, this figure is based on data from the previous financial reporting year, and so is always one year behind the Annual Report and Accounts. This year's increase is due largely to the change in the estimated visits number to the nation's forests. The 2021-22 estimated visit numbers saw a substantial increase compared to 2020-21 (see below), and because the natural capital value is primarily comprised of recreation and carbon sequestration, this has led to the large increase in natural capital accounts valuation.

NOTE: The natural capital accounts include monetary flow figures for each ecosystem service. The total natural capital value is the net present value projected across the next 50 years. The net value of the annual monetary account for 2022-23 is £2 billion.

Assessment of change in: Total natural capital value of the nation's forests	
Five-year trend, March 2023 compared to March 2018	Improving

Public engagement: Number of visits per annum to the nation's forests managed by Forestry England

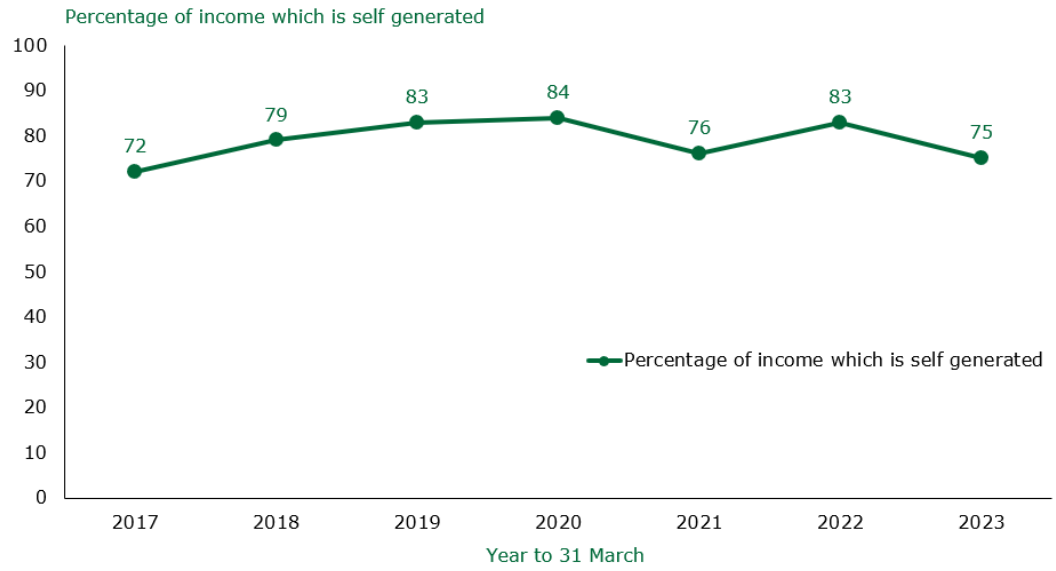


Source: Surveys conducted for Forestry England.

The total estimated visits to forests managed by Forestry England is 291 million for 2022 -23 which is lower than last year and more in line with 2020-21. Lower footfall in the nation's forests in 2022-23 is in line with the levels experienced by other providers of outdoor recreation access and leisure.

Assessment of change in: Number of visits per annum to the nation's forests managed by Forestry England	
Four-year trend only, 2022-23 compared to 2017-18	Improving

Percentage of Forestry England's income that is self-generated

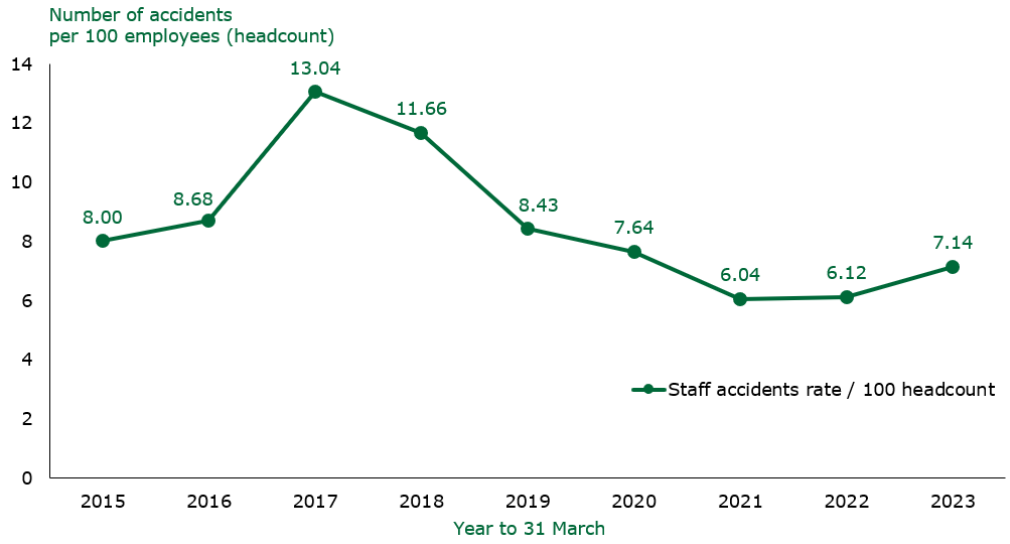


Source: Forestry England accounts.

This indicator shows how much of our income is self-generated and thus indicates the level of our reliance on government funding. While the trend historically has held at approximately 83% of self-generated income, barring the dip during the Covid-19 pandemic, the fall to 75% in this financial year comprises two elements. Our self-generated income reduced by £5.6 million, mainly due to conditions in the timber market. In addition, we were able to secure non recurrent funding from Defra in support of our capital programmes and continuing plant health work. It is anticipated that our self-generated income will return to above 80% in the coming year.

Assessment of change in: Percentage of Forestry England's income that is self-generated	
Five-year trend, 2022-23 compared to 2017-18	Deteriorating

Health and safety: Number of work-related accidents per 100 employees in Forestry England



Source: Forestry Commission administrative data.

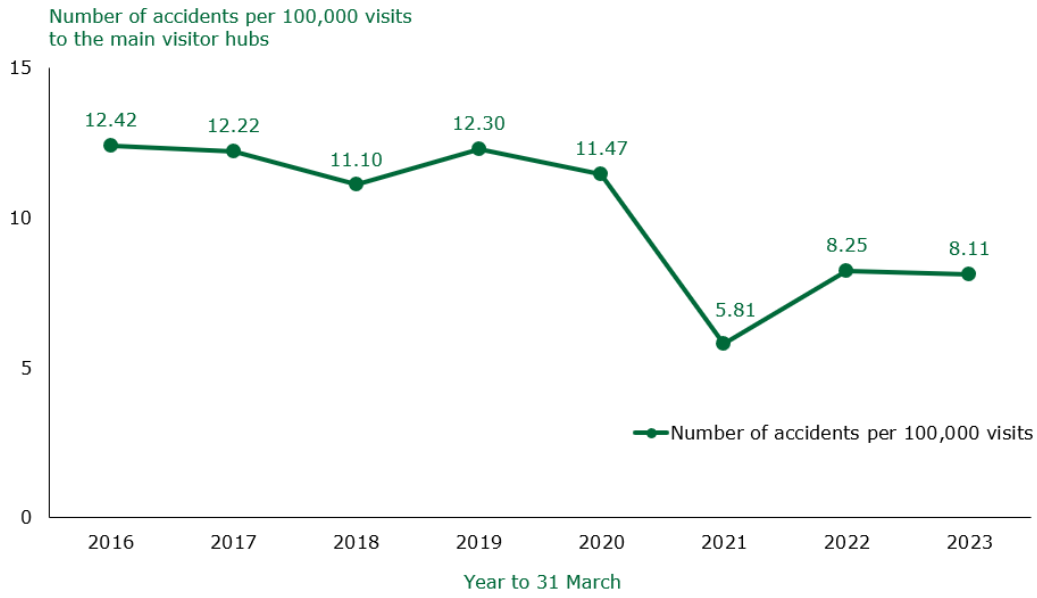
The number of accidents per 100 employees (headcount) for the financial year 2022-23 was 7.14. Staff headcount is approximately 5% higher than it was at the end of 2021-22, and so is relatively stable, whereas accidents reported are up to 90 from 68.

The proportional increase in accidents reported (5.9%) is slightly higher than the proportional increase in headcount, meaning that the staff accident rate this year is slightly higher than last year's. At this point, there is no reason to believe that this slight increase is part of a trend, and small fluctuations will always occur on a year-to-year basis.

The long-term trend shows a general decline in the accident rate since 2018-19. We moved to the Airsweb system for collating and reporting accident figures in August 2020, which has improved our reporting accuracy since its introduction.

Assessment of change in: Number of work-related accidents per 100 employees in Forestry England	
Five-year trend, 2022-23 compared to 2017-18	Improving

Health and safety: Number of accidents per 100,000 visits to the main visitor hubs in the nation's forests



Source: Forestry England administrative data.

The public accident rate is calculated from the total number of accidents over the financial year, which is divided by the total visits to main hubs. The rate is then shown as accidents per 100,000 visits. The accident rate for 2022-23 was 8.11 per 100,000 visits. This is a slight decrease compared to the previous reporting year (1.7% decrease). There have been both fewer visits to hubs this year, and a decrease in total public accidents reported – the decrease in accidents was larger, and so this has led to an overall lower accident rate.

Although visits to our main hubs have decreased this year, it has not been a substantial change, and the broad trend of increased visits since the Covid-19 lockdowns that occurred in the second half of 2020 has been maintained into 2022-23. We are at this point unable to determine what the precise driver of this is.

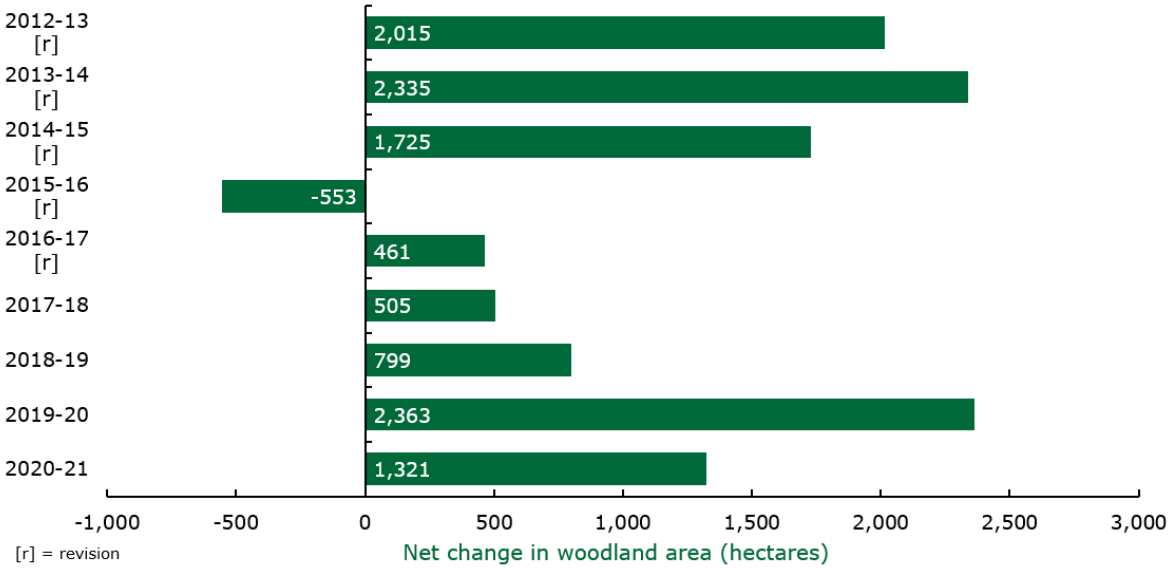
2020-21's public accident total was anomalously low. This is due to visit numbers being much higher than usual, whilst the number of accidents reported was low: this is likely the result of the change in staffing and resourcing at hubs during lockdowns, even when sites were open.

Assessment of change in: Number of accidents per 100,000 visits to the main visitor hubs in the nation's forests	
Five-year trend, 2022-23 compared to 2017-18	Improving

Part 3. Other Forest Services indicators

Expanding and connecting our trees and woodland

Experimental Statistics: Net change in woodland area, based on the balance between new planting of woodland and woodland removal



Sources: Forestry Commission administrative data and statistics – see Table 5 for detailed sources.

In 2020-21, the most recent year for which data are available, there was a net increase in woodland area of 1,321 hectares, once woodland removal for open habitat restoration and woodland loss to development is accounted for. The area of woodland lost to development (321 hectares) was broadly equivalent to the average over the most recent five years (381 hectares), while the area reported as converted to open habitat other than in the nation's forests (9 hectares) was much lower than in any of the preceding eight years. In contrast, open habitat restoration in the Nation's Forests (399 hectares) was the highest in any year in the time series, almost double the previous maximum.

Table 5: Components of net change in woodland area in England, 2012-13 to 2020-21 (Experimental Statistics)

hectares

Year ending 31 March	2013 [r]	2014 [r]	2015 [r]	2016 [r]	2017 [r]	2018	2019	2020	2021
Contribution to change in woodland area (Hectares)									
Woodland creation (+)									
a. Total new planting of trees in England (Source 1)	**2,595**	**3,361**	**2,426**	**824**	**1,159**	**1,501**	**1,413**	**2,358**	**2,052**
Woodland removal (-)									
Open habitat restoration other than in the nation's forests (Source 2)	341	693	273	434	200	197	286	89	9
Open habitat restoration in the nation's forests[1] (Source 2)	119	213	70	116	85	138	-105	-169	399
Attributable to development[2] (Source 3)	120	120	358	827	413	661	433	75	324
b. Total woodland removal	**580**	**1,026**	**701**	**1,377**	**698**	**996**	**614**	**-5**	**732**
c. Total net change in woodland area[3] (a. minus b.)	**2,015**	**2,335**	**1,725**	**-553**	**461**	**505**	**799**	**2,363**	**1,321**

[r] = revision

Sources:
1. Forestry Commission (2021) *Forestry Statistics 2021*, Edinburgh: Forestry Commission.
2. Forestry Commission (2023) *Key Performance Indicators: Report for 2022-23*, Bristol: Forestry Commission.
3. Forestry Commission (2016) *Preliminary estimates of the changes in canopy cover in British woodlands between 2006 and 2015*, Edinburgh: Forestry Commission, National Forest Inventory. Table 14 on page 53. Plus unpublished sample-based updates for 2015-16 and a revised figure for 2016-17 from the National Forest Inventory team.

Notes:
1. Current statistics for woodland removal in the nation's forests currently include both land sales as well as open habitat restoration. We propose to refine this for future reports to focus solely on open habitat restoration.
2. A single figure for woodland loss attributable to development was available for 2012-13 and 2013-14 combined. This was simply split evenly between these two years.
3. The net change in woodland area the years from 2012-13 to 2016-17 has been revised due to revisions to the new planting statistics.

Summary of methodology

Purpose

The aim is to have an indicator that combines all relevant known sources of woodland creation (gross) and woodland removal (gross), to show the balance between these (net) over the short term. This is to add to the fuller picture of change provided by the area of woodland in England statistics that incorporate methodological improvements such as better recognition techniques and more detailed sources of satellite remote sensing data.

Principles of what is counted

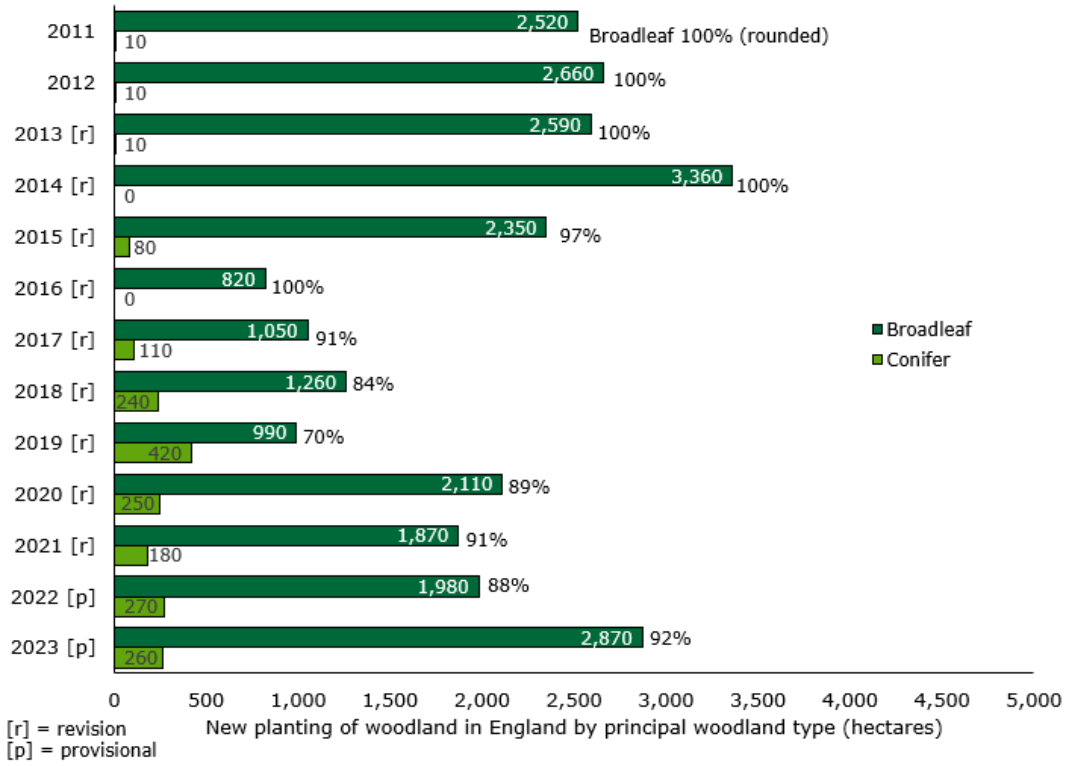
The indicator generally reports woodland creation and loss in England that conforms to the National Forest Inventory definition of woodland (of at least 0.5 hectares in area with a minimum width of 20 metres, and that have at least 20% canopy cover, or the potential to achieve this). Creation of integral open space of less than 1 hectare within existing woodland is not reported as woodland loss within the National Forest Inventory woodland loss data, but some of the losses to achieve open habitats restoration recorded as a part of open habitats in the nation's forests and elsewhere can be of smaller areas of woodland.

In this indicator figures are largely for financial years to 31 March except figures for area of woodland removal attributable to development that are for months June to June.

Figures are by year of records, not necessarily the year of woodland creation or woodland removal. In particular, unconditional felling licenses allow private woodland owners a number of years over which to conduct open habitat restoration.

Assessment of change in: Net change in woodland area, based on the balance between new planting of woodland, and woodland removal (Experimental Statistics)	
Five-year trend, 2020-21 compared to 2015-16	Improving

Percentage of new planting of woodland in England that is broadleaved woodland

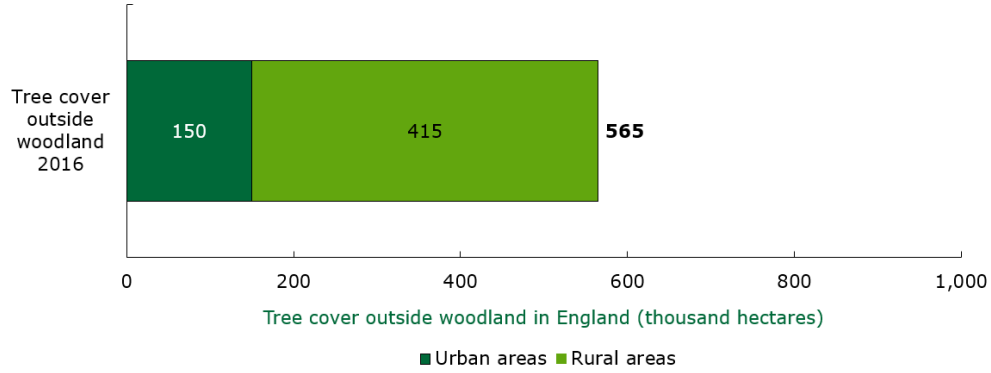


Source: *Forestry Statistics 2022* and *Provisional Woodland Statistics 2023* (Forest Research)

92% of the woodland reported as planted in England in 2022-23 was broadleaf, with the remainder conifer species. This is higher than the percentage of broadleaf planting in the previous five years with the indicator. The continuing dominance of broadleaf planting supports Government's nature recovery commitments. To increase timber stocks and improve timber security in the longer term, increasing the proportion of conifer in new woodlands may be desirable. Increasing the planting of conifer could also accelerate rates of carbon sequestration in the short term.

Assessment of change in: Percentage of new planting of woodland in England that is broadleaved woodland	
This indicator	Not assessed for this indicator

Area of tree cover outside woodland in England



Source: Tree cover outside woodland in Great Britain summary report (Forest Research, 2017).

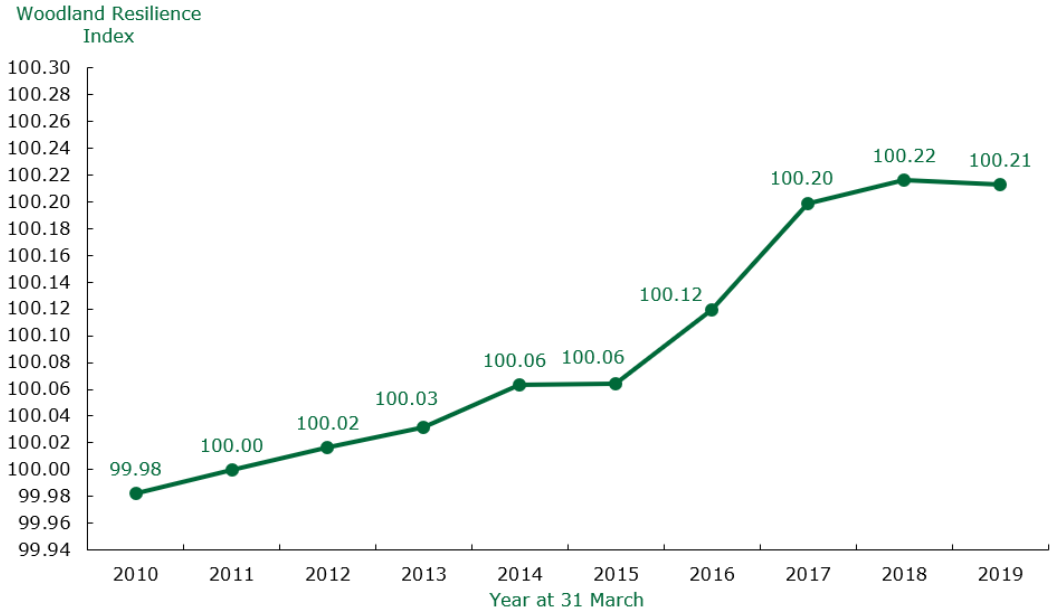
Tree canopy cover outside NFI woodland (i.e. woodlands more than 0.5 hectares in area) amounted to 565,000 hectares as of January 2016. This represented 30% of total tree canopy and woodland cover at the time, bringing total cover to 1.9 million hectares or 14.6% of total land area. 150,000 hectares of tree canopy cover outside woodland is in urban areas, while the Southeast and London had the largest area of non-woodland tree cover (124,000 hectares). The total area of non-woodland tree cover comprised 295,000 hectares in small woods between 0.1 and 0.5 hectares, 193,000 hectares in groups of trees and 'linear features' and 78,000 hectares associated with lone trees. An update will be provided in Forestry Statistics 2023, with a reference date of March 2022, as a component of the baseline for the statutory Tree Canopy and Woodland Cover target.

Note 1: The area figures shown are statistical estimates based on a methodology that combined remote sensing data with samples of aerial photography and field surveying across the country. The figure for total tree cover outside woodland in England therefore has a standard error of +/- 5%, as does that for rural areas; this is +/- 10% for urban areas.

Note 2: Full details of methodology and terms used can be found in the *Tree cover outside woodland in Great Britain* statistical report (Forest Research, 2017).

Assessment of change in: Area of tree cover outside woodland in England	
This indicator	Not assessed

Connectivity of woodland in England



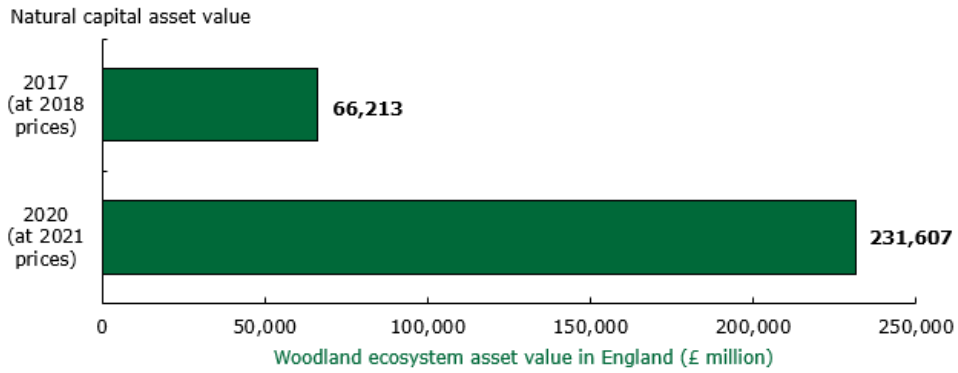
Source: Forestry Commission administrative data and the National Forest Inventory woodland map, modelled by the Urban Forest Research Group, Forest Research.

Maintaining and improving connectivity is important in promoting nature recovery in fragmented habitats, especially under a changing climate. When habitats are more connected, species populations can expand or migrate at different rates in response to threats and pressures. Greater connectivity makes it easier for woodland ecological communities to gradually adapt to changes in climate. Connectivity of woodland is measured according to the size and distribution of patches of forests and woodlands, relative to a value of 100 assigned to 2011. This indicator shows an increase in connectivity for forests and woodlands in England between 2011 and 2019, which is the last date for which data is available.

Assessment of change in: Connectivity of woodland in England	
Five-year trend, 31-Mar-19 compared to 31-Mar-14	Little or no overall change

Trees and woodland as a part of the green economy

Natural capital value of England's woodlands

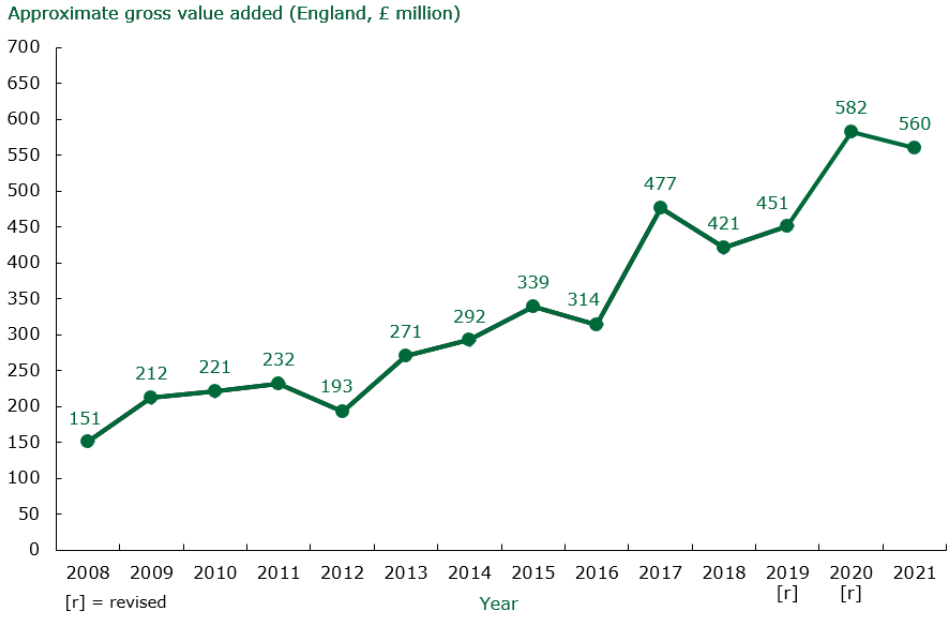


Source: *Woodland natural capital accounts: 2022* (Office for National Statistics, 2022).

The latest Office for National Statistics' report for Woodland Natural Capital identifies that *'As a result of changing methods and an expanding portfolio of natural services measured, this latest account cannot be compared with previous years' accounts on a like-for-like basis'.* The overall value of natural capital from England's woodlands is estimated at £232 billion in 2020, which is over three times higher than the 2017 estimate. Although the change in accounting methodology and inclusion of a wider set of services account for most of this change, the Forest Research, Forestry Statistics 2022, do indicate an increasing area of woodland in England year after year. Increased services from new woodland creation will contribute to a positive trend in ecosystem service value, that will be better identified in future accounts.

Assessment of change in: Natural capital value of England's woodlands	
This indicator two-year trend only	Improving

Gross Value Added from domestic forestry

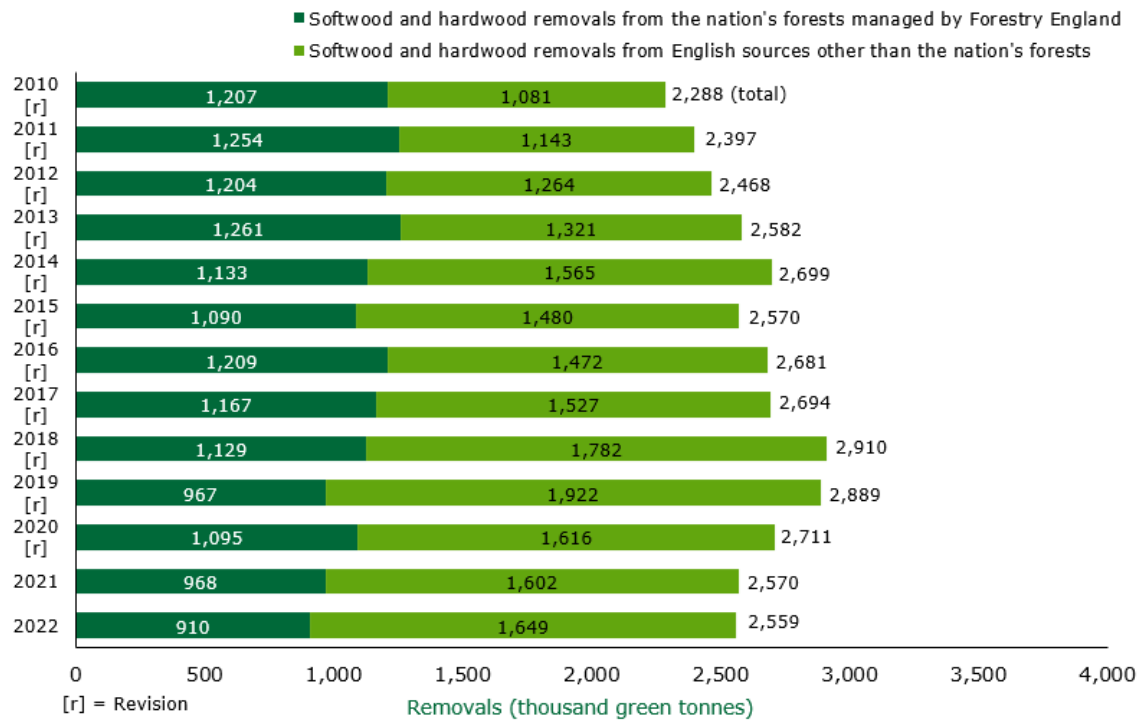


Source: Annual Business Survey 2021 and quality measures (Office for National Statistics).
Note: The graph shows the Gross Value Added from domestic forestry figures for each year with their respective standard errors.

Strong demand for domestic timber in light of reduced imports due to Covid trade restrictions helped forestry contribute a significant increase in GVA during 2020 which continued into 2021.

Assessment of change in: Gross Value Added from domestic forestry	
Five-year trend, 2021 compared to 2016	Improving

Volume of timber brought to market per annum from English sources

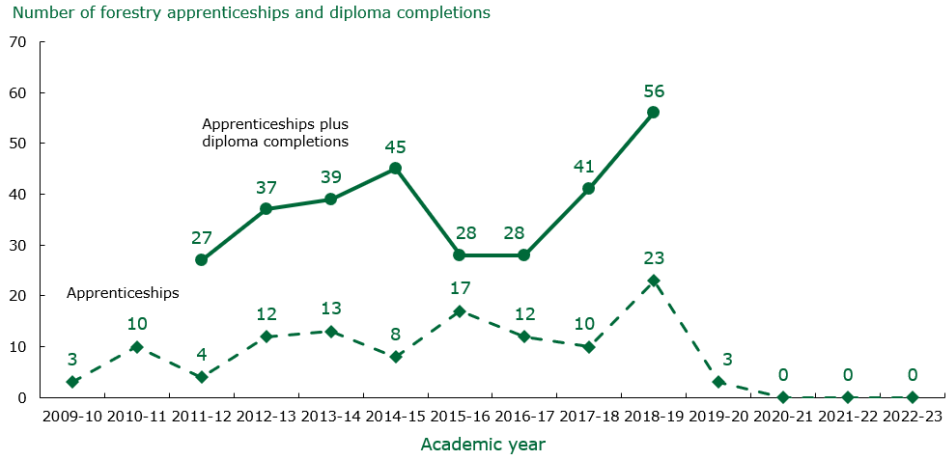


Source: Forest Research statistics on UK wood production and trade.

Timber supply chains continued to experience some disruption caused by shortages in the workforce in 2021, plus a series of storm events over winter 2021-22. Market demand for softwood remains strong and prices continue to be high, maintaining relatively high levels of production in privately owned conifer woodlands. Uncertainty remains around estimated hardwood production, especially volumes of hardwood delivered to energy markets, particularly in light of increasing levels of management of ash dieback.

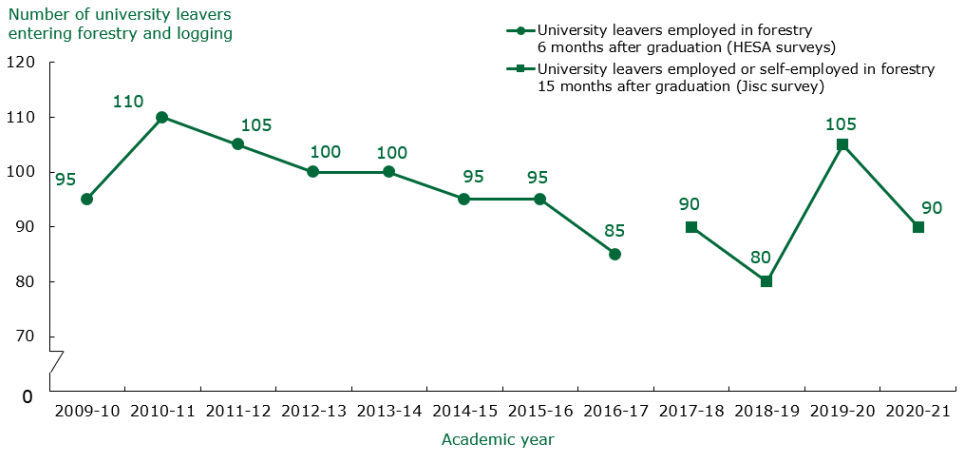
Assessment of change in: Volume of timber brought to market per annum from English sources (Total)	
Five-year trend, 2022 compared to 2017	Deteriorating

Number of apprentices, those with work-based diplomas, and university students entering forestry



Source: LANTRA.

Note: Data on diploma completions was unavailable to us for the three years 2019-20 to 2021-22.

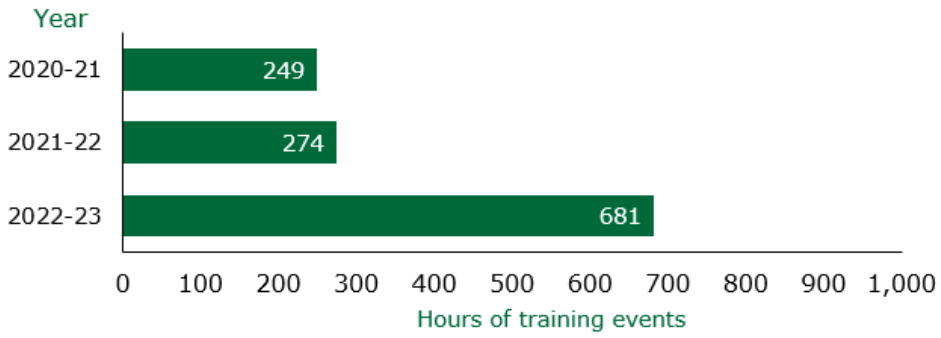


Sources: Destination of Leavers of Higher Education survey (Higher Education Statistics Agency, HESA)).and the Higher Education Graduate Outcomes Survey (HESA and Jisc).

The number of apprentices entering the forestry workforce is showing as 0 for 2022-23. This is due to the fact that this indicator is reporting on the 'Trees & Timber Framework' apprenticeship which is no longer available for enrolments. The number of apprentices completing the L2 Forest Operative apprenticeship in 2022-23 was 14. The L6 forestry apprenticeship run jointly by the FC and University of Cumbria launched in September with 19 FC apprentices and 6 from the private and charitable sector after receiving more than 400 applications, and the recruitment for the September 2023 attracted an even level higher of interest.

Assessment of change in: Number of apprentices, those with work-based diplomas, and university students entering forestry	
Apprentices and diploma completions, five-year trend, 2018-19 (latest data) compared to 2013-14	Improving
University leavers, three-year trend only, 2020-21 (latest comparable data) compared to 2017-18	Little or no overall change

Forest Services' training support for the English forestry sector (hours of training events)

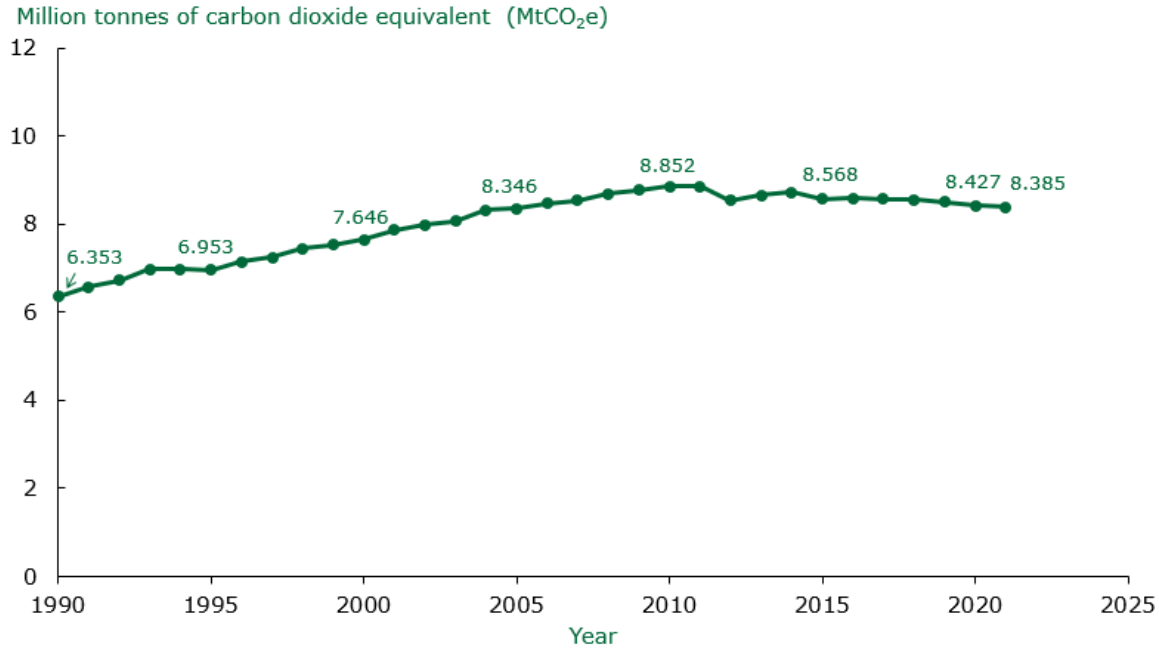


Source: Forestry Commission administrative records.
Note: Estimates from returns.

This is a relatively new indicator. Nearly 700 hours of training were provided for the sector covering a wide range of topics including woodland creation and associated incentives, regulations, deer and squirrel management, wildfire management, professional forestry skills, peat and wading birds.

Assessment of change in: Forest Services' training support for the English forestry sector (hours of training events)	
Two-year trend only, 2021-22 compared to 2020-21	Improving

Carbon captured by English woodlands

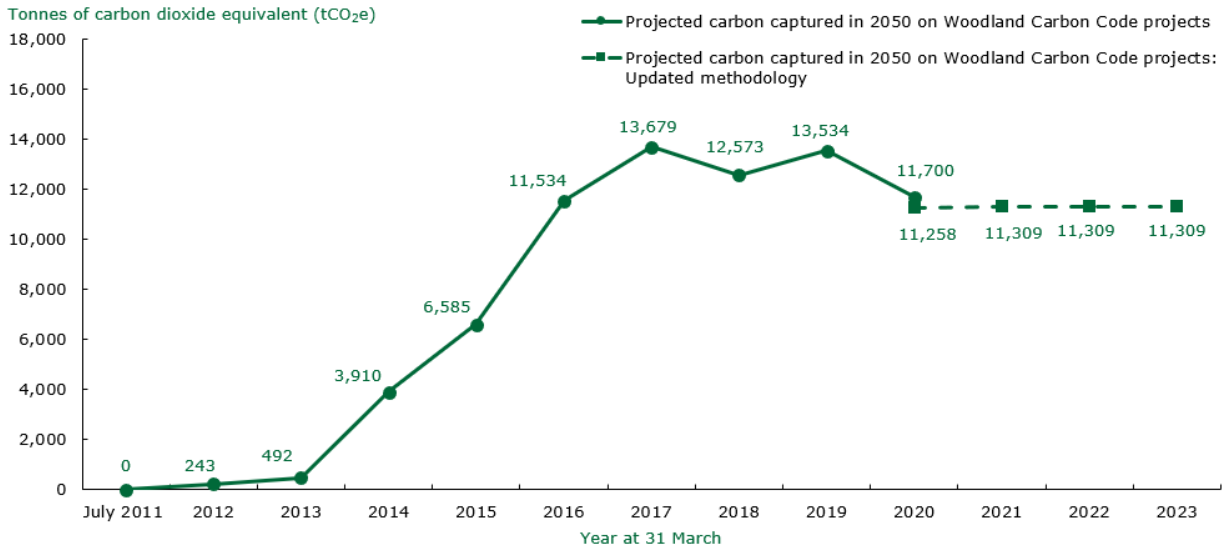


Source: Data from the Final UK greenhouse gas emissions national statistics 1990-2021, (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2023).

The net greenhouse gas sink strength of England's woodlands has decreased slightly from 8.427 $MtCO_2e$ in 2020 to 8.385 $MtCO_2e$ in 2021 (based on the updated time-series), but remained broadly stable; however, it is expected to decline in the medium term as the greenhouse gas sink strength is dominated by past planting rates and subsequent harvesting activity. A removal (or sink) of 8.385 $MtCO_2e$ is equivalent to 2.0% of total UK greenhouse gas emissions for 2020, or 17.5% of agricultural emissions (see Tables 1.1 and 1.2 of https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1146751/final-greenhouse-gas-emissions-tables-2021.xlsx for UK total greenhouse gas emissions and UK agricultural emissions, respectively.

Assessment of change in: Carbon captured by English woodlands	
Five-year trend, 2021 compared to 2016	Little or no overall change

Projected carbon capture in 2050 by Woodland Carbon Code woodland creation projects



Source: Provisional Woodland Statistics 2023 (Forest Research)

At March 2023, 123 projects were validated to the Woodland Carbon Code in England, compared to 108 in 2022. The 123 projects validated by March 2023 are expected to sequester 11,309 tCO_2e in 2050 and a total of 450,000 tCO_2e by 2050 at March 2023 (compared with 387,000 tCO_2e in March 2022). Of the validated projects, 46 have also been verified/checked at year 5 to ensure they are well established and on track to deliver the predicted carbon savings (an increase of 1 in the past year). Verified projects had sequestered 2,292 tCO_2e by March 2023 compared to 2,283 tCO2 by March 2022.

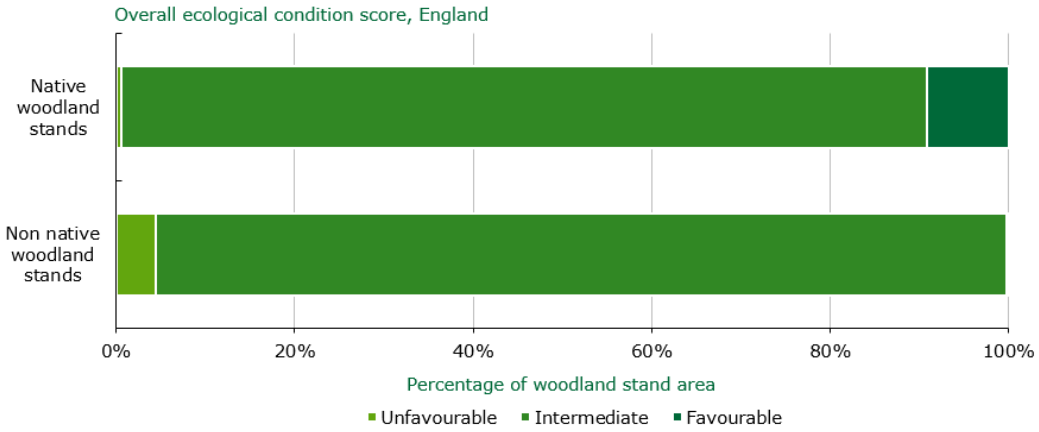
Registration of new projects with the WCC in England continues - 596 projects are currently registered and going through the validation process compared to 443 in 2022 and 165 in 2021. Registrations have stabilised – overall 168 new projects in the past year – after a peak in 2021-22 (287) which was due to a change in the rules regarding the timing of registration. This means registered project numbers are now at 719, up from 551 in 2022 and 264 in 2021. It is anticipated that a larger proportion of these projects will be validated over the next year.

All projects registered/validated by March 2023 in England are predicted to sequester 4.0 Million tCO2e over their lifetime of up to 100 years (compared to 3.3 Million in March 2022 and 2.5 Million in March 2021), and create 9.106 ha of new woodland (compared to 7392 ha in March 2022 and 5,348 ha in March 2021).

Assessment of change in: Projected carbon capture in 2050 on Woodland Carbon Code woodland creation projects	
Three-year trend only (new methodology), 31-Mar-23 compared to 31-Mar-20	Little or no overall change

Protecting and improving our trees and woodland

Woodland ecological condition in England using information from the National Forest Inventory



Source: Forestry Commission (2020) *NFI woodland ecological condition in England: classification results*, National Forest Inventory.

There are 914 thousand hectares of native woodland in England (around 68% of all woodland) and 419 thousand hectares of non-native woodland (30%). 99.5% of native woodland, and 95.6% of non-native woodland, is in favourable or intermediate condition, based on the latest available National Forest Inventory (2010-15) survey cycle data.

Up to 2020, the Biodiversity Strategy interim reporting of condition drew on the Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) data and area of priority habitat in management to indicate progress against Biodiversity 2020 targets. In early 2020 work concluded to analyse and agree the condition status of England's woodland. Fifteen ecological condition indicators were measured as part of the National Forest Inventory survey cycle 2010-15 and compared to a benchmark of a stand of ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) in good condition. This enabled native, near native and non-native woodland stands (outside of protected sites) to be classified as favourable, intermediate or unfavourable in terms of their ecological condition for the first time.

Ten reports were published in 2020 in relation to woodland ecological condition; executive summary, methodology, statistics and classification results, by country and for Great Britain. These reports and data can be found on the National Forest Inventory Woodland Ecological Condition pages of the Forest Research website.

Assessment of change in: Woodland ecological condition in England using information from the National Forest Inventory	
This indicator	Not assessed due to insufficient comparable data

Figure 3: The proportion of each woodland ecological condition (WEC) class, for each WEC indicator type in native woodland stands in England

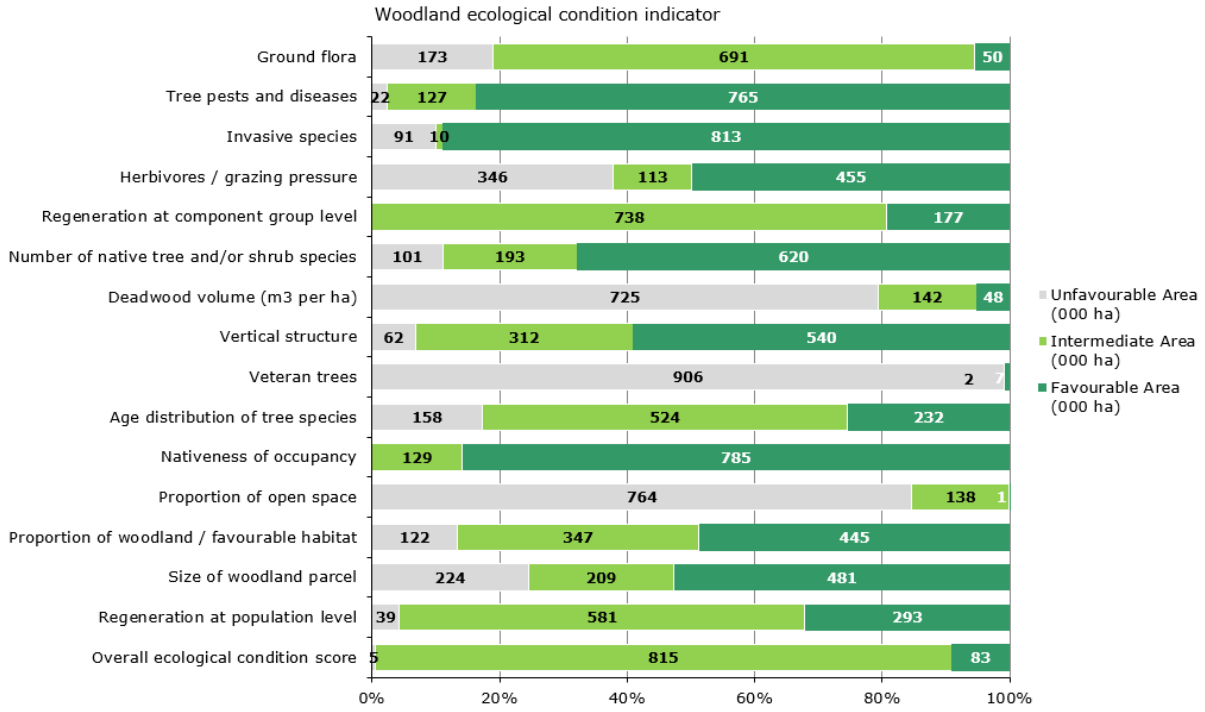
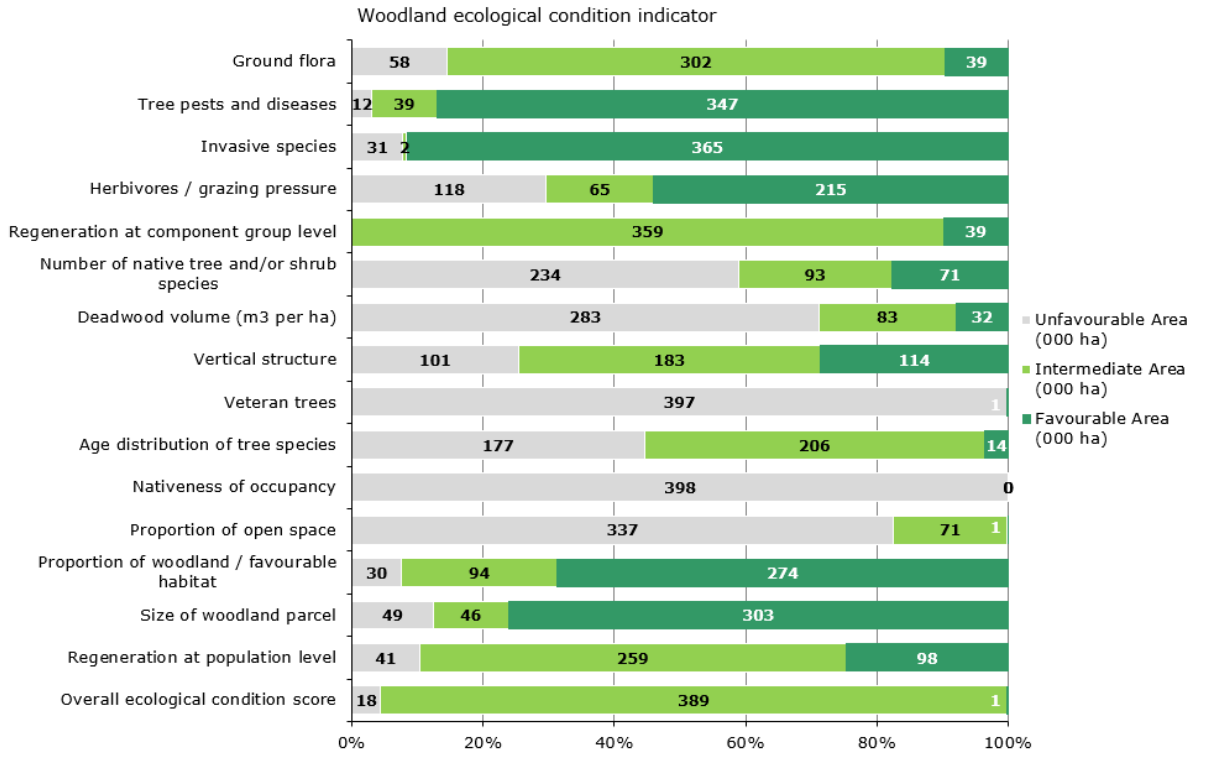


Figure 4: The proportion of each woodland ecological condition (WEC) class, for each WEC indicator type in non-native woodland stands in England



Notes on woodland ecological condition in England

Note 1: Native woodland

Native woodland is defined as stands with 50% or more native tree species occupancy in the upper canopy that either:

- form a discrete woodland parcel with a minimum area of 0.5 ha.
- form a woodland stand with a minimum area of 0.1 ha that is part of a woodland that is 0.5 ha or larger.

Note 2: Non-native woodland

Non-native woodland is defined as stands with less than 40% native tree species occupancy sitting within a woodland of any size.

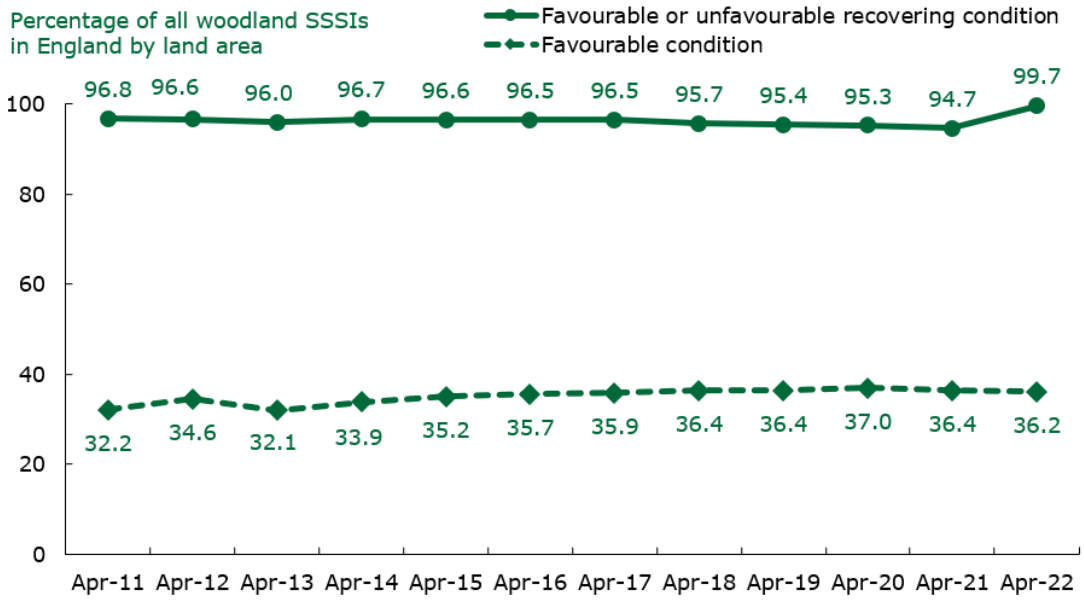
Note 3: Definition of the indicators:

The woodland ecological condition classification categories and indicators are defined in the methodology report: Forestry Commission (2020), *NFI woodland ecological condition in Great Britain: Methodology* National Forest Inventory.

Note 4: Classifications for each indicator and overall scoring

The National Forest Inventory woodland condition classifications for each of the 15 separate WEC indicators shown are shown in the Table 11.1 classification threshold summary (page 32) in the *NFI woodland ecological condition in England: classification results*. This also shows the overall scores that determine whether woodland habitat is in unfavourable, intermediate or favourable condition.

Percentage of woodland Sites of Special Scientific Interest (by land area) in desired condition in England

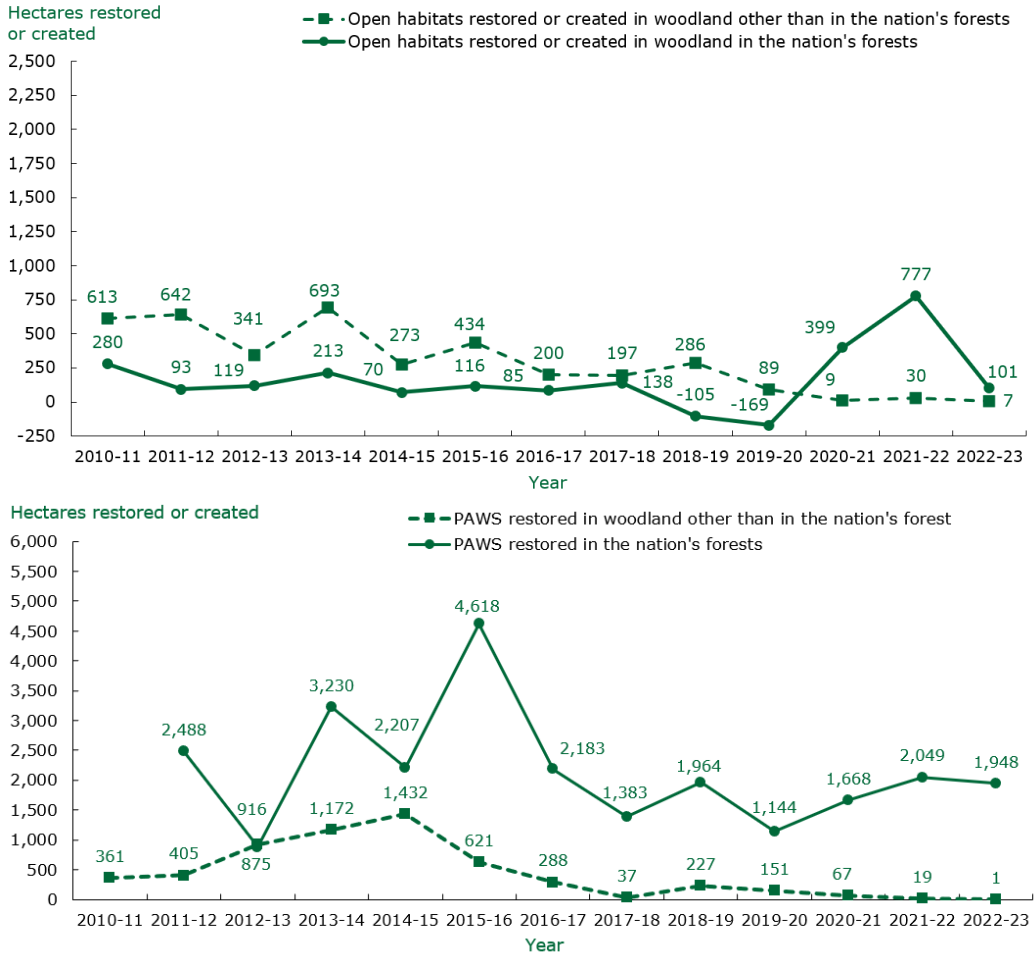


Source: Forestry Commission administrative data on grant schemes and Natural England data on SSSIs.

This indicator shows the percentage of all woodland Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) which are in either favourable or unfavourable recovering status. In previous years, we reported these figures for Forestry England separately to the figures reported for all other woodland. This year, the figure has been reported using the area of all woodland SSSIs in England, irrespective of ownership. Past figures have been amalgamated and presented to show trends over time. The new figures for April 2022 show an overall decrease of 0.2% (equating to 87 hectares) of woodland SSSIs in favourable condition, and an increase of 5.0% (equating to 15,970 hectares) in unfavourable recovering condition. There are just 973 hectares not in target condition. Woodland SSSIs condition are assessed by Natural England at regular intervals, with the condition status amended as required.

Assessment of change since in: Percentage of woodland Sites of Special Scientific Interest (by land area) in desired condition in England	
Favourable or unfavourable recovering condition, Five-year trend, Apr-22 compared to Apr-17	Improving
Favourable condition, Five-year trend, Apr-22 compared to Apr-17	Little or no overall change

Hectares of restoration of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) and of open habitat in woodland in England



Source: Forestry Commission administrative data.

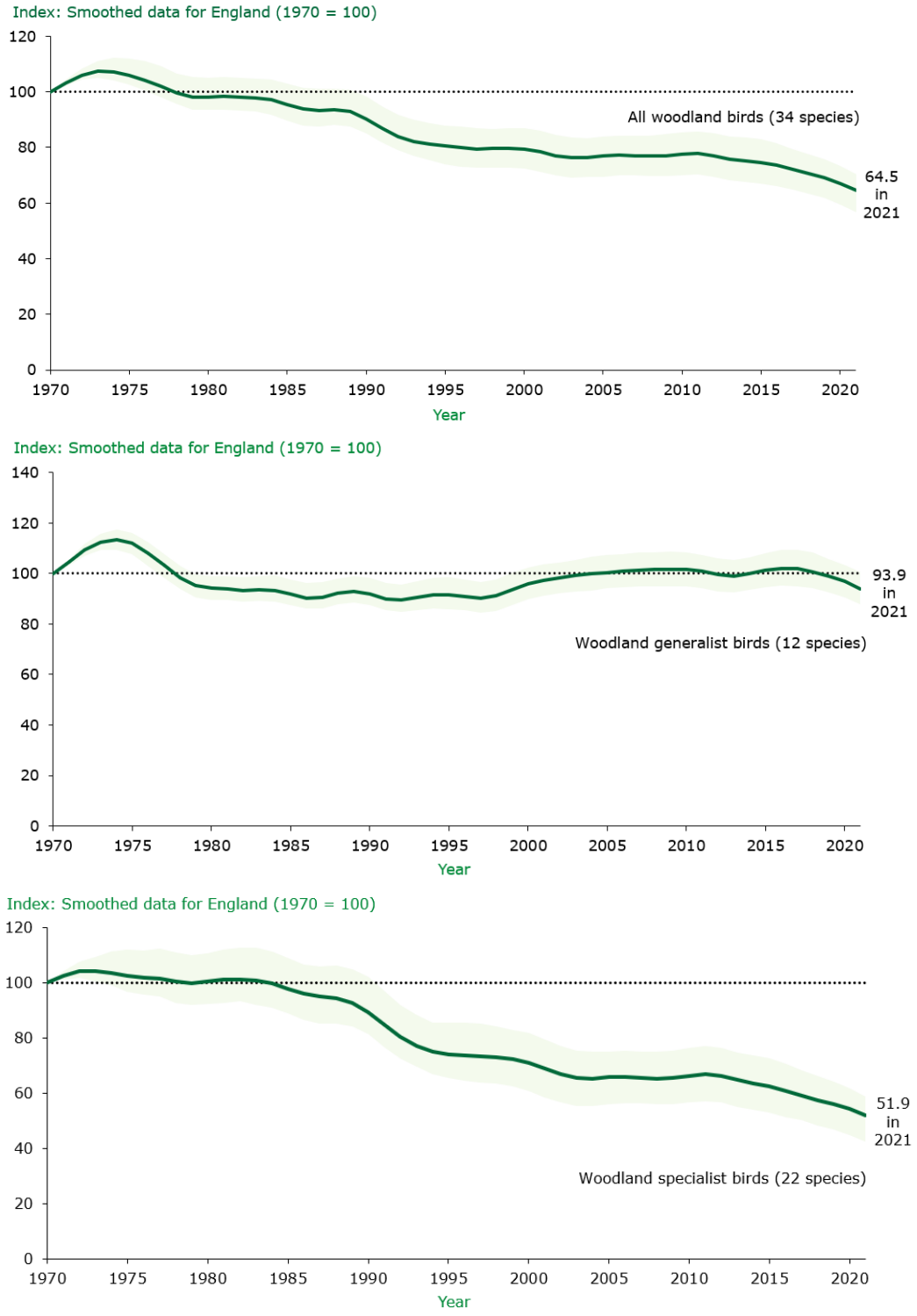
Note: There is no data for PAWS restored in the nation's forests in 2010-11.

This indicator shows the number of hectares of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) restored or worked each year, alongside the number of hectares of open habitat created or restored through woodland agreements. The latest figures show an increase to 1,949 hectares of PAWS worked in 2022-23. The figures also show an increase to 885 hectares of open habitats created or restored in 2020-22.

Assessment of change in: Hectares of restoration of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) and of open habitat in woodland in England.

PAWS restored in England Five-year trend, totals for 2022-23 compared to totals for 2017-18	Improving
Open habitats restored or created in England Five-year trend, totals for 2022-23 compared to totals for 2017-18	Deteriorating

Measure of what is happening to the number and variety of species that live in woodland; using Woodland Birds data

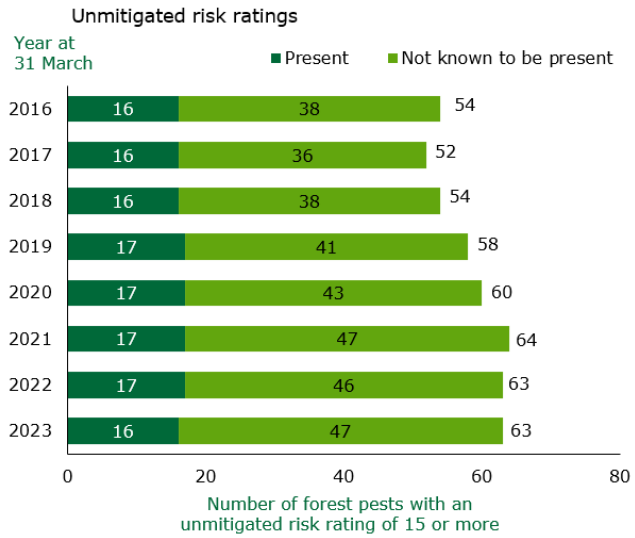


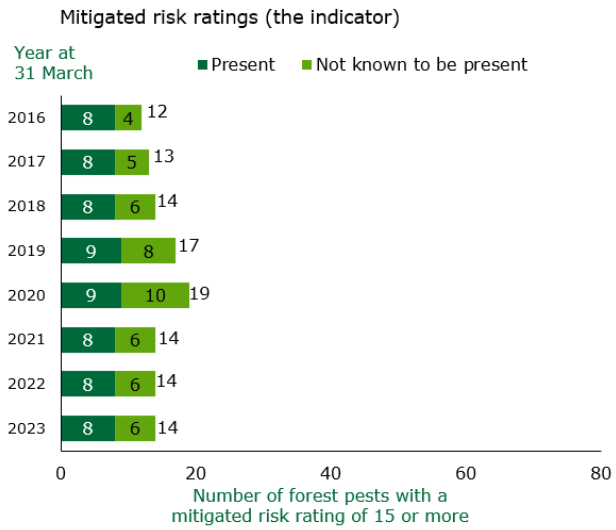
Source: Data for England related to the report: Wild bird populations in the UK, 1970 to 2021 (Defra, 2023).
Note: Each of the three graphs shows a smoothed, unstandardised woodland bird index for England and its 95% confidence interval.

In 2021 the 'all woodland bird index' for England was 33.0% lower than in 1970 (smoothed data). The greatest decline occurred between the early 1980s and the mid-1990s. All three indexes show some slight variation compared to the 2019 figures (decrease for all woodland birds, specialist birds and generalist birds), but none of those are statistically significant.

Assessment of change in: Measure of what is happening to the number and variety of species that live in woodland; using Woodland Birds data	
All woodland birds index (England), fifteen year trend, 2021 compared to 2006	Deteriorating

Number of high priority forest pests in the UK Plant Health Risk Register (UKPHRR).





Source: UK Plant Health Risk Register (UKPHRR) data.

Report at end March 2023: There are now 402 pests identified as tree on the UK Plant Health Risk Register (UKPHRR), **14 (3%) of which have been assessed and are considered high priority**. Pests are ranked as high priority if they are assessed as having a mitigated relative risk rating of 15 or more (see Table 2 and Note A below). These high priority pests require actions, in addition to current mitigation measures, to help prevent them having a potentially substantial negative impact on England's woodland.

The position remains static with no change in overall number of forest pests and diseases of concern from last year – 402.

Of those 402 fourteen are considered high-risk pests. Eight of the fourteen are currently present in England, three being classed as widespread - *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus (*ash dieback*), Phytophthora alni* (affects all alder species), and *Pseudomonas syringae pv. Aesculi (*Horse chestnut bleeding canker).

Table 6: The 14 high priority forest pests in the UK Plant Health Risk Register with a relative risk rating (mitigated) of 15 or more at end March 2023.

Pest or disease: common name	Pest or disease: Latin name	Type of pest or disease	Present in the UK?	Mitigated likelihood score	Mitigated impact rating	Mitigated likelihood multiplied by impact risk rating
Bleeding canker of horse chestnut	*Pseudomonas syringae pv. aesculi*	Bacterium	Present: widespread	5	4	**20**
Shoot blight on cedar/Tip blight on eastern hemlocks	*Sirococcus tsugae*	Fungus	Present: unknown distribution	5	4	**20**
Two-lined chestnut borer	*Agrilus bilineatus*	Insect	Absent	4	5	**20**
Sudden oak death; *ramorum* dieback	*Phytophthora ramorum*	Oomycete[6]	Present: limited	4	4	**16**
Chalara ash dieback	*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*	Fungus	Present: widespread	4	4	**16**
Phytophthora disease of alder	*Phytophthora alni*	Oomycete[6]	Present: widespread	4	4	**16**
	Lonsdalea populi	Bacterium	Absent	4	4	**16**
Zigzag elm sawfly	*Aproceros leucopoda*	Insect	Present: unknown distribution	5	3	**15**
Emerald ash borer	*Agrilus planipennis*	Insect	Absent	3	5	**15**
Acute oak decline	*n/a*	Other	Present: limited	3	5	**15**
Two spotted oak buprestid	*Agrilus biguttatus*	Insect	Present: limited	3	5	**15**
Sachalin fir bark beetle	*Polygraphus proximus*	Insect	Absent	3	5	**15**
Cypress jewel beetle or juniper buprestid	*Lamprodila festiva*	Insect	Absent	5	3	**15**
Fan-leaf virus nematode[7]	*Xiphinema* index	Nematodes	Absent	5	3	**15**

Source: UK Plant Health Risk Register (UKPHRR) data.

[6] An oomycete is an algae-like fungus.

[7] A nematode is a very small elongated roundworm.

Unmitigated risk ratings

The number of forest pests assessed as having an unmitigated risk rating of 15 or more at the end of March 2021 is 63 (16%) of pests identified as forest pests on the UKPHRR.

Notes

A) **Definition, source and summary:** This indicator seeks to report trends in forest pests from the UK Plant Health Risk Register (UKPHRR) that records and rates risks to UK crops, trees, gardens and ecosystems from plant pests and pathogens. 'High priority' pests and diseases are defined for the purposes of this indicator as those with a mitigated relative risk rating (the mitigated likelihood score multiplied by the mitigated impact score) of 15 or more. The individual ratings for likelihood and impact are each on a scale from 1 to 5. Relative risk ratings therefore can have values from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 25. Taking into account the economic, environmental and social importance of the host species, these risk scores are used to help prioritise additional actions to combat the threats posed by the pests. It should be noted that the data are for the UK. Nearly all listed forest pests present in the UK will also be present in England and listed forest pests absent from the UK are very likely to pose a threat to England.

B) **Pests included in the scope of this indicator:** This indicator only includes pests listed on the UK Plant Health Risk Register that have been professionally assessed and where the assessment provides the information needed to identify which are forest pests, and of those which are high priority according to the indicator definition.

C) **Likelihood** provides an assessment of the probability of entry and establishment of a pest for those pests that are absent from the UK which, when combined, can result in the introduction of the threat to a new area. Some pests on the UKPHRR are already present in the UK. In these cases the risk is that of the pest spreading to its maximum extent in the UK. The likelihood scale has a minimum value of 1 (lowest risk) through to 5 (highest risk). There is more information on the factors taken into account in the Phase 1 UK Plant Health Risk Register – Summary Guide[8] (page 6).

D) **Impact** is an indication of the relative consequence of the pest for the host plant or sector, should the risk materialise. It does not take account of the size or value of the host or sector. Where the pest is already present, the impact is that caused by further spread, against a baseline of damage already occurring. Thus for a pest which is already widespread, the additional impact of it spreading to its full potential distribution may be limited, even if the pest itself is very damaging or expensive to control. The impact scale has a minimum value of 1 (lowest risk) through to 5 (highest risk). There is more on the factors taken into account in the Phase 1 UK Plant Health Risk Register – Summary Guide (page 6-7).

E) **Value at risk:** Value at risk is not taken into account in this indicator.

F) **Mitigations:** can reduce likelihood, impact or both and the risks remaining after mitigation provide the basis for this indicator. Mitigations may reduce risk by enhancing regulation, surveillance, awareness and research, or by providing an industry scheme or a contingency plan. The difference between unmitigated and mitigated risk represents an expert judgement of the effectiveness of the current mitigations. See Phase 1 UK Plant Health Risk Register – Summary Guide (page 4) for details.

[8] https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/phiw/riskRegister/Summary-of-Guidance-for-phase-1-Public-Ver2.pdf

G) **Possible relative risk ratings:** Relative risk ratings can take values from a minimum of 1 (lowest risk) through to 25 (highest risk). For the purposes of this indicator 'high priority' pests have been defined as those with a relative risk rating of 15 or more.

Table 7: Possible Relative Risk Ratings

Impact

5	5 Green	10 Yellow	15 Amber	20 Red	25 Red
4	4 Blue	8 Green	12 Yellow	16 Amber	20 Red
3	3 Blue	6 Green	9 Green	12 Yellow	15 Amber
2	2 Blue	4 Green	6 Green	8 Green	10 Yellow
1	1 Blue	2 Blue	3 Blue	4 Blue	5 Green
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Likelihood

H) **Other forest pests and diseases affecting English woodland.** The indicator is only based on the pests included in the UKPHRR. In so doing it effectively captures the major non-native pests threatening UK forestry together with a limited selection of native pests that are the subject of major Government campaigns of action. There are many native and non-native forest pests that are not included in the UKPHRR.

I) **Precise end of year report dates are:** 9 April 2014, 30 March 2015, 29 December 2015, 30 December 2016, 30 March 2017, 31 March 2018, 31 March 2019, 31 March 2020, 6 April 2021, 31 March 2022 and 31 March 2023.

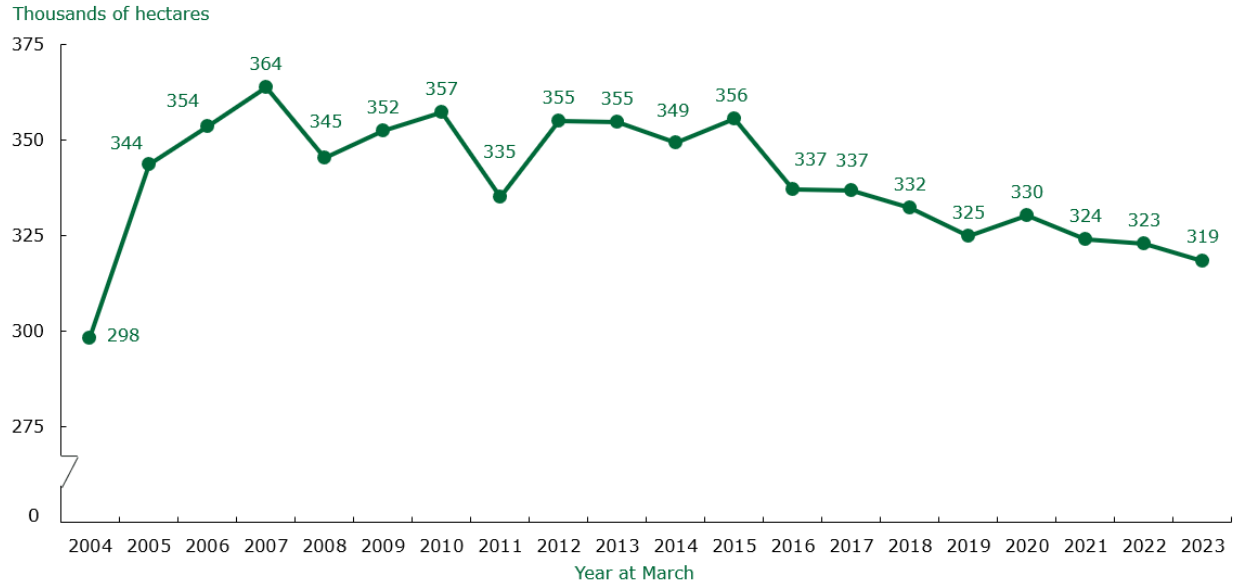
Source: UK Plant Health Risk Register (UKPHRR)[9] data.

Open Data: Source spreadsheet data is available from the UK Plant Health Risk Register (UKPHRR).

Assessment of change in: Number of high priority forest pests in the UK Plant Health Risk Register (UKPHRR)	
Five-year trend, Mar-23 compared to Mar-18	Little or no overall change

[9] https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/phiw/riskRegister/

Area of woodland in England that is certified as sustainably managed

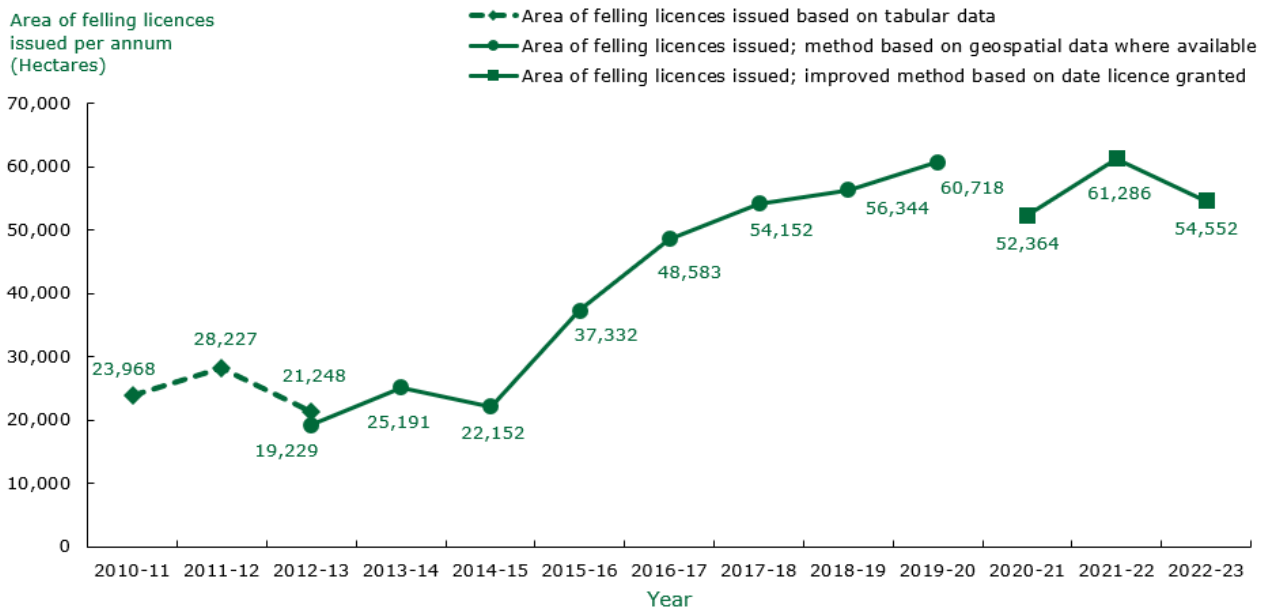


Source: Provisional Woodland Statistics 2023 (Forest Research).

Demand for wood products from woodlands managed in accordance with voluntary certification schemes remains high. Many owners of larger (typically, softwood) woodlands and other businesses in the supply chain respond to this demand by joining internationally recognised schemes such as Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) or domestic schemes such as Grown in Britain (GIB). Local supply chains may not receive sufficient economic or environmental benefit to make joining voluntary schemes worthwhile. This may limit the area of woodland certified by international schemes in England. The downward trend may reflect a decline in softwood production from private woodland over the last four years.

Assessment of change in: Area of woodland in England that is certified as sustainably managed	
Five-year trend, 31-Mar-23 compared to 31-Mar-18	Deteriorating

Area of felling licenses issued



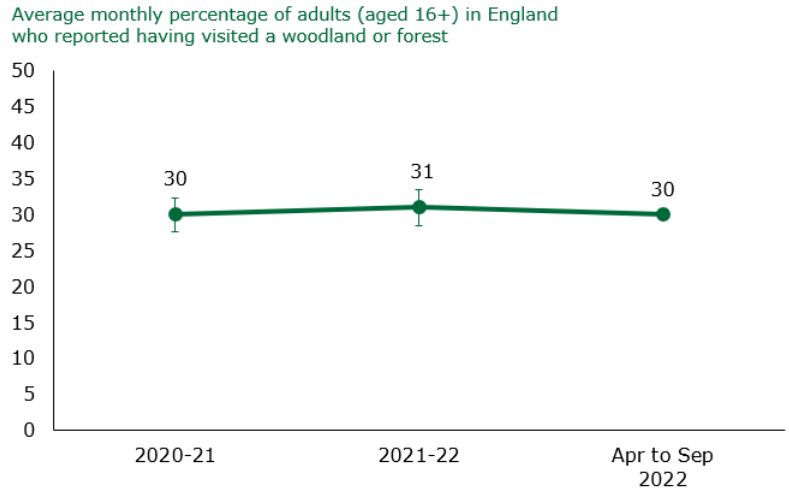
Source: Forestry Commission administrative data.

The area of woodland under felling licence remains at a high level. We continue to see a modest trend over the last eight recent years towards an increase in annual numbers area of felling licences issued, which has remained broadly stable over the past six years.

Assessment of change in: Area of felling licenses issued	
Five-year trend, 2022-23 compared to 2017-18	Little or no overall change

Connecting people with trees and woodlands

Percentage of adults in England who visited a woodland or forest

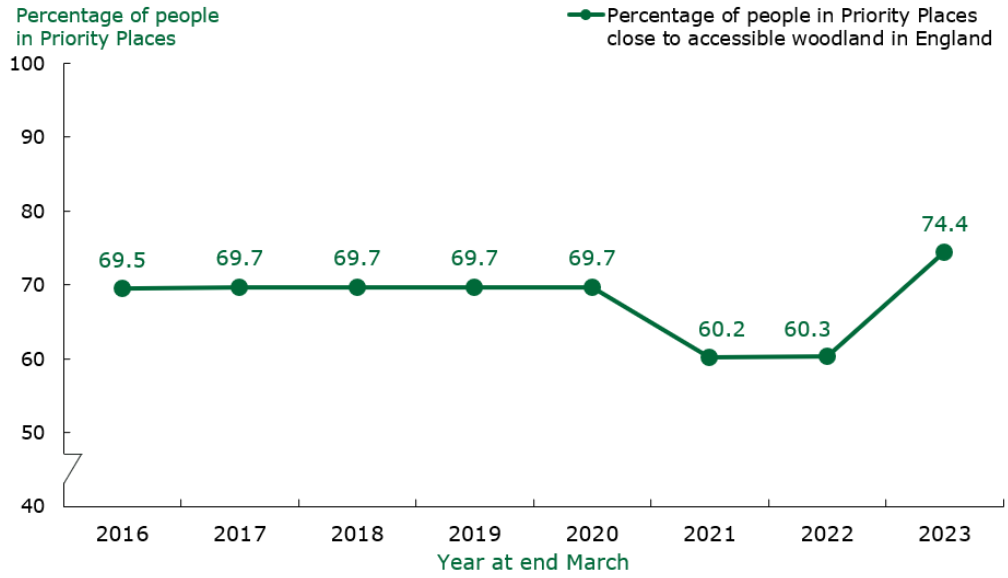


Source: People and Nature Survey for England (Natural England).
Note: The indicator is an average of the monthly survey findings and shown with approximate confidence limits where available.

Previous years' figures from the People and Nature Survey (PANS) indicated a 30% visit rate. This early analysis from this year's PANs shows a similar pattern to the previous analysis. This is further supported by Forestry England survey results which show an increase in visitor numbers and the Public Opinion Survey of Forestry which also shows a statistically significant increase in the number of people visiting woodlands over similar time periods. We can confidently demonstrate that visitor numbers are maintaining, if not increasing.

Assessment of change in: Percentage of adults in England who visited a woodland or forest	
Two-year trend only, Apr-Sep 2022 compared to 2020-21	Little or no overall change

Percentage of people in Priority Places close to accessible woodland in England



Source: Based on the Woods for People dataset (variously the Woodland Trust/ and Forestry Commission), Census of Population (Office for National Statistics) and the Index of Multiple Deprivation (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government).

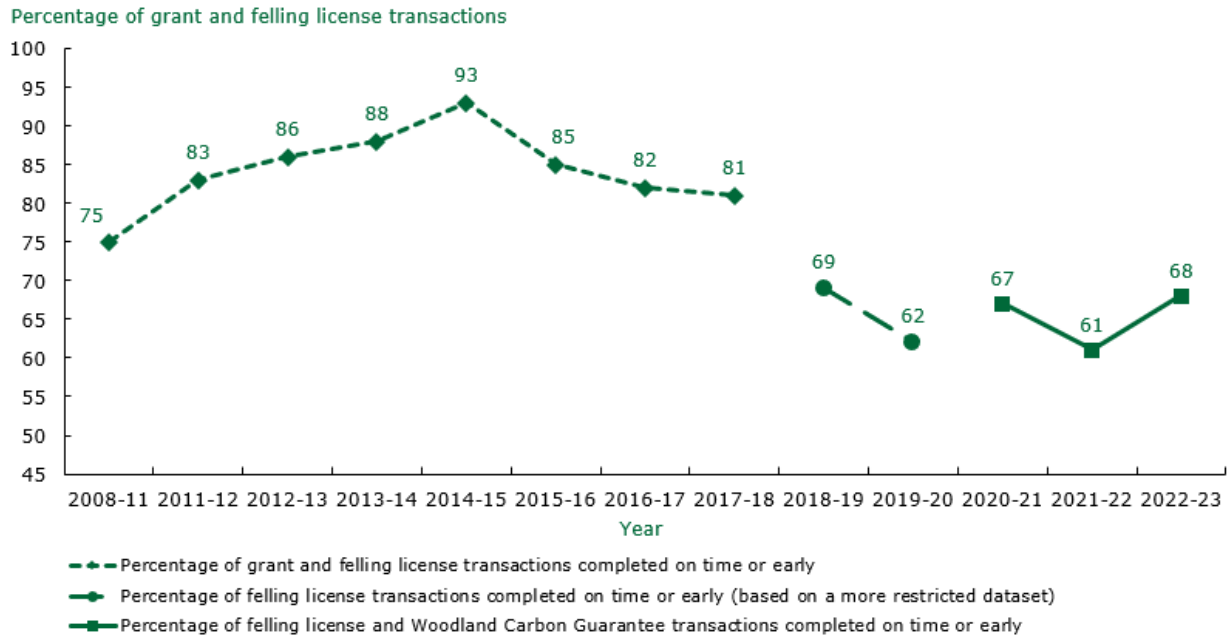
Note: Priority Places are defined as those within the most deprived 40% of places on the Index of Multiple Deprivation also in built up areas of >10,000 population. Access is defined as residence within 4 kilometres (2.5 miles) of one or more accessible woodlands >20 hectares in size.

This figure has increased since the last reporting period. Whilst the methodology is the same, the data sets have been updated and this may account for some of the change. However, some new woodland creation projects offer public access and are likely to help increase the proportion of people having increased opportunities. Work is currently underway through the Woodland Access Implementation Plan (England Trees Action Plan action 4.3 and EIP deliverable) to analyse where and how this access is provided; and how we can improve the equality of access to woodland.

Assessment of change in: Percentage of people in Priority Places close to accessible woodland other than that in the nation's forests	
Five-year trend, Mar-23 compared to Mar-18	Improving

Organisational health

Percentage of grant and felling licence transactions completed on time or early



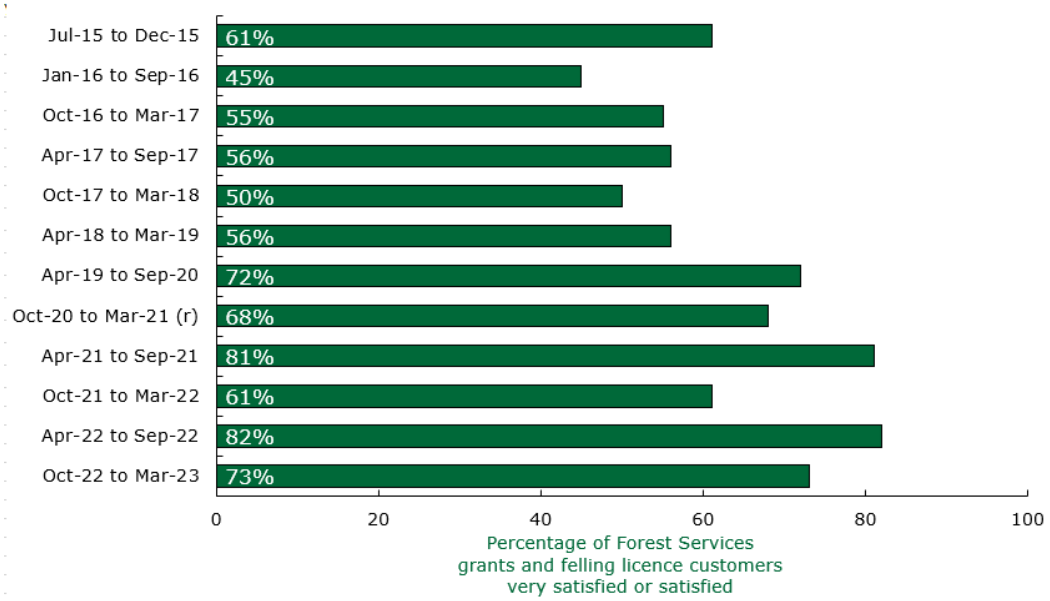
Source: Forestry Commission administrative data.

Note the indicator is based in the overall percentage of felling licenses 'granted' in 77 days or less and the percentage of Woodland Carbon Guarantee decisions issued within 14 days of the close of the auction.

With felling licence transactions we continue to struggle to meet the Charter target of 85%; however there has been an improvement since 2021-22. Significant turnover of Delivery Area team field staff involved in processing applications, and delays in training new recruits continue to hamper efforts in this area. We continue to seek to improve our processes and performance.

Assessment of change in: Percentage of grant and felling license transactions completed on time or early	
Five-year trend, 2022-23 compared to 2017-18	Deteriorating

Percentage of Forest Services grants and felling license customers who report their customer satisfaction as either very satisfied or satisfied

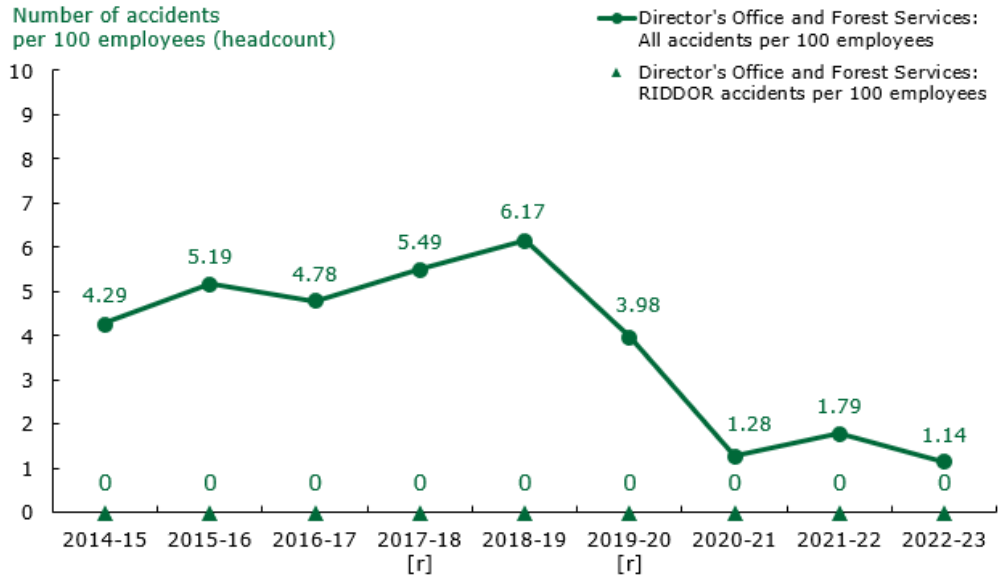


Source: Forestry Commission customer survey conducted with the help of the Rural Payments Agency Customer Insight team. Figures shown are sample based estimates.
Note 1: The indicator figure for October 2020 to March 2021 has been revised to 68% since first release.
Note 2: Estimates for the October 2020 to March 2021 survey are based on a relatively small number of respondents in that survey wave.

The overall trend is positive. We are improving our processes and are introducing new systems to support delivery of our grants but are still in a period of significant change with a lot of new staff and organisational change.

Assessment of change in: Percentage of Forest Services grants and felling license customers who report their customer satisfaction as either very satisfied or satisfied.	
Trend for five years: Oct-22/Mar-23 compared to Oct-17/Mar-18	Improving

Number of work-related accidents per 100 employees in Forest Services



Source: Forestry Commission administrative data.

Note: 'RIDDOR accidents' are incidents of a type that must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

The total number of injury incidents has fallen slightly since last year, even though the number of staff in Forest Services has continued to grow over this period. The incident rate therefore remains low, reflecting positive health and safety practices and also changing working practices following the COVID-19 pandemic (with staff working in a blended way - at home and in the office).

Assessment of change in: Number of work-related accidents per 100 employees (headcount) in Forest Services	
Five-year trend: 2022-23 compared to 2017-18 (all accidents element)	Improving

Annex 1: Internal Audit Certificate of Assurance

Government Internal Audit Agency

Forestry Commission

INTERNAL AUDIT CERTIFICATE OF ASSURANCE

Forestry Commission (FC) Performance Indicators for the year ended 31 March 2023 have been subject to independent audit by the Government Internal Audit Agency.

We have reviewed the overall governance, risk and control framework for the preparation of the indicators. For each headline indicator, and a sample of other indicators, we have:

- conducted interviews to obtain an understanding of the systems and controls used to generate, aggregate and report on the key data; and
- reviewed the completeness and accuracy of the key data by:
  - assessing relevant supporting documentation used to report the indicators;
  - assessing significant assumptions and judgements where used;
  - testing the documentation which supports the measurement, calculation and estimation; and
  - assessing and testing the source data used to generate the indicators where available.

For the indicators based on information from outside of the FC, we relied on information supplied by other organisations such as Defra and the Environment Agency. We did not carry out any independent verification procedures on the information provided to the FC other than conducting interviews to obtain an understanding of the external information used and the level of information available to support the indicators.

As a result of the procedures carried out and evidence provided, we have obtained reasonable assurance that the indicators are free from material misstatement, and we consider the overall arrangements for the production of the Performance Indicators in the year ended 31 March 2023, to be appropriate.

Sally Flett

Sally Flett FCPFA, ACFS, IIA(Aff)
Head of Internal Audit, Forestry Commission
Government Internal Audit Agency
2 June 2023

Official Statistics

This is an Official Statistics publication, produced with a view to meeting the standards of the *Code of Practice for Statistics* edition 2.1 (Office for Statistics Regulation and UK Statistics Authority, 2022) available from https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/. More information about Official Statistics is available from www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk.

Forestry Commission

Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Report for 2022-23

Published by the Forestry Commission