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Countryside Stewardship:

Annex 8 of Mid Tier and New CS Offers for Wildlife Manual

Applies to all Mid Tier multi-year (including Water Capital Items) agreements and New CS Offers for Wildlife agreements commencing on 1 January 2019

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List of revisions since first publication

Section	Page	Revision	Revision date
The Upland offer	6	1 st bullet, corrected to confirm that land use for the year of application must be recorded as permanent grassland.	March 2018
Simple guide to applying for a New CS Offers for Wildlife: Step 7.	8	Confirmation that the final date for submission of applications has changed from 31 July to 31 August.	June 2018

Annex 8

The New CS Offers for Wildlife

Introduction

Four New CS Offers for Wildlife are available to help farmers improve the wildlife on their farm, providing year round habitats and helping pollinators to thrive. The Offers have been designed to help farmers choose the right options for their land and make it quicker and easier to apply for a Mid Tier agreement. They are the:

- Arable Offer
- Lowland Grazing Offer
- Mixed Farming Offer
- Upland Offer

These Offers have been designed to deliver a sufficient level of environmental benefits so that scoring is not required. This means that, provided the applicant meets the minimum criteria, an agreement offer will be made.

The Arable Offer can be applied for through an online application or a paper application. The online application process will be quicker and easier to complete and is part of our plans to make CS a more simplified scheme.

Organic Farms: Provided they have eligible parcels, organic farmers can apply for any of the 4 New CS Offers. However it is strongly recommended that they apply through the standard Mid Tier route so they can make use of the full range of options suitable for organic farms.

For the 3 lowland Offers, applicants must be prepared to manage at least 3% of their farmed land, so 3ha in every 100 ha, using key land management options. There is no requirement to enter a minimum area of land into an Offer, as long as the land can accommodate the options chosen. Businesses are restricted to one New CS Offers for Wildlife application per Single Business Identifier (SBI) per year.

In all cases options applied for as part of the 4 New CS Offers for Wildlife cannot overlap with Ecological Focus Area (EFA) land.

As part of the 2018 pilot application round, the following SBIs are not eligible to apply for the New CS Offers for Wildlife, and potential applicants are advised to apply for Countryside Stewardship via Mid Tier or Higher Tier agreement:

- SBIs which contain Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or Scheduled Monuments (SMs);
- SBIs with an Environmental Stewardship agreement that is not due to expire before 1 January 2019; or
- SBIs subject to an Inheritance Tax Exemption agreement with HMRC

Note: As part of the 2018 pilot application round SBIs with more than 100 parcels will not be able to apply for the Arable Offer online. Potential applicants are advised to request a paper application form instead.

Mid Tier, Higher Tier or capital grants may be more appropriate for applicants who wish to:

- manage organic land;
- manage historic features or specialist habitats such as wetlands and orchards;
- address water quality issues in priority catchments; and
- apply for capital grants, such as woodland creation, hedgerow and boundaries grant, or for yard works to reduce water pollution.

The following tables detail the specific options and eligibility criteria under each of the Offers:

The Arable Offer: (applicants choose a minimum of 3 options from a total of 11)

- The applicant's land must be registered on the Rural Payments service to the SBI submitting the application. Land use for the year of application must be recorded as arable or temporary grassland. Permanent grassland can be included but only hedgerow options can be located on those fields. The 11 options are divided into 3 categories in the table below. Applicants must pick at least one option from each category.
- The minimum number of options in the 5 year agreement is therefore 3. Applicants can select as many options as they wish, but must enter a minimum of 3% of their land into the Offer.

Category 1. Nectar and pollen sources for insect pollinators and insect-rich foraging for birds (select at least one, minimum 1% or 1 ha per 100 ha of farmed land included in the agreement, no maximum)

Option	Option title	Payment rate
AB1	Nectar flower mix	£511
AB8	Flower-rich margins and plots	£539

Category 2. Winter food for seed-eating birds (applicants MUST select this option, minimum 2% or 2 ha per 100 ha farmed land included in the agreement, no maximum)

Option	Option title	Payment rate
AB9	Winter bird food	£640

Category 3. Additional resources & habitats (select at least one, no minimum or maximum, apart from individual option requirements)

Option	Option title	Payment rate
AB4	Skylark plots	£18 (£9 per plot, min. 2 plots per ha).
AB5	Nesting plots for lapwing and stone curlew	£524
AB6	Enhanced overwinter stubble	£436
AB11	Cultivated areas for arable plants	£532
AB12	Supplementary winter feeding for farmland birds	£632 per tonne for every 2 ha of AB9
SW1	4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land	£353
WT2	Buffering in-field ponds and ditches on arable land	£501
BE3	Management of hedgerows	£8/100m

The Lowland Grazing Offer: (applicants choose a minimum of 2 options from a total of 7)

- The applicant's land must be registered on the Rural Payments service to the SBI submitting the application. Land use for the year of application must be recorded as permanent grassland. Arable fields can be included but only hedgerow options can be located on those fields.
- The 7 options are divided into 3 categories in the table below. Applicants must pick at least one option from category 1 and 2, and may choose additional options from category 3 if they wish.
- The minimum number of options in the 5 year agreement is therefore 2. Applicants can select as many options as they wish, but must enter a minimum of 3% of their land into the Offer.

Category 1. Nectar and pollen sources for insect pollinators and insect-rich foraging for birds (select at least one, minimum 2% or 2 ha per 100 ha of farmed land included in the agreement, no maximum)

Option	Option title	Payment rate
GS2	Permanent grassland with very low inputs (outside SDA)	£95
GS4	Legume and herb-rich swards	£309

Category 2. Nesting and shelter for insect pollinators and birds (applicants MUST select this option, minimum 500m of BE3 / 1% or 1 ha of GS1 per 100 ha farmed land included in the agreement, no maximum)

Option	Option title	Payment rate
BE3	Management of hedgerows	£8/100m
GS1	Take field corners out of production (outside SDA)	£365

Category 3. Optional additional resources & habitats (no minimum or maximum, apart from individual option requirements)

Option	Option title	Payment rate
GS3	Ryegrass seed-set as winter/spring food for birds	£331
GS17	Lenient grazing supplement	£44
WT1	Buffering in-field ponds and ditches in improved grassland	£201

The Mixed Farming Offer: (applicants choose a minimum of 3 options from a total of 14)

- The applicant's land must be registered on the Rural Payments service to the SBI submitting the application. Land use for the year of application must be recorded as arable or grassland.
- The 14 options are divided into 3 categories in the table below. Applicants must pick at least one option from each category.
- The minimum number of options in the 5 year agreement is therefore 3. Applicants can select as many options as they wish, but must enter a minimum of 3% of their land into the Offer.

Category 1. Nectar and pollen sources for insect pollinators and insect-rich foraging for birds (select at least one, minimum 1% or 1 ha per 100 ha of farmed land included in the agreement for AB1 and AB8; 2% or 2ha per 100 ha for GS4. No maximum)

Option	Option title	Payment rate
AB1	Nectar flower mix	£511
AB8	Flower-rich margins and plots	£539
GS4	Legume and herb-rich swards	£309

Category 2. Winter food for seed-eating birds (select at least one, minimum 2% or 2 ha per 100 ha farmed land included in the agreement, no maximum)

Option	Option title	Payment rate
AB9	Winter bird food	£640

Category 3. Additional resources & habitats (select at least one, no minimum or maximum, apart from individual option requirements)

Option	Option title	Payment rate
AB5	Nesting plots for lapwing and stone curlew	£524
AB6	Enhanced overwinter stubble	£436
AB11	Cultivated areas for arable plants	£532
AB12	Supplementary winter feeding for farmland birds(per tonne for every 2 ha of AB9- Winter bird food)	£632
GS2	Permanent grassland with very low inputs (outside SDAs)	£95
GS17	Lenient grazing supplement	£44
SW1	4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land	£353
BE3	Management of hedgerows	£8/100m
WT1	Buffering in-field ponds and ditches in improved grassland	£201
WT2	Buffering in-field ponds and ditches on arable land	£501

**The Upland Offer:
(applicants choose from a total of 8 options / supplements)**

- The applicant's land must be registered on the Rural Payments service to the SBI submitting the application. Land use for the year of application must be recorded as permanent grassland.
- All land in the application must be within the Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA) (applicants who wish to include land outside the SDA will need to apply for a Mid Tier agreement).
- There are 4 options and 4 supplements to choose from. As a minimum, farmers can pick 1 base option and two supplements or two base options and one supplement or three base options.
- The supplements can only be used with the relevant base option. – see table below
- The minimum number of options/supplements in the 5 year agreement is therefore 3. Applicants can select as many options as they wish.

Base Options (select at least 1 base option and two supplements or two base options and one supplement or three base options)

Option	Option title	Payment rate
GS5	Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs	£16
UP1	Enclosed rough grazing	£39
UP2	Management of rough grazing for birds	£88
BE3	Management of hedgerows	£8/100m

Supplements

Option	Option title	Payment rate	Can be used with these base options...
GS15	Haymaking supplement	£85	GS5;
GS16	Rush control supplement	£73	GS5; UP2
GS17	Lenient grazing supplement	£44	GS5
SP6	Cattle grazing supplement	£45	GS5

Key Information:

Applicants who want to access a wider range of multi-year options or capital works will need to apply for Mid Tier, Higher Tier or capital grants schemes.

All the Terms & Conditions, rules and scheme requirements detailed in the Mid Tier Manual apply to the New CS Offers for Wildlife applicants and Agreement Holders. However, there are a number of distinct differences that apply. These are detailed below and in the relevant sections of this manual.

- if the applicant meets the eligibility requirements of the Offer they will secure a Mid Tier agreement. Scoring does not apply to the New CS Offers for Wildlife;
- capital works are not available as part of the New CS Offers for Wildlife;
- an Historic Environment Farm Environment Record (HEFER) is not required as part of the application, but a Farm Environment Record (FER) is required; and
- options applied for as part of the New CS Offers for Wildlife cannot overlap with Ecological Focus Area (EFA) land.

The application process

The Arable Offer is available via online applications from your Rural Payments account.

For those unable to apply for the Arable Offer on-line, a pre-populated paper application form can be requested from Natural England.


Applying for the other 3 New CS Offers for Wildlife is via a simplified paper application process.

- Lowland Grazing Offer
- Upland Offer
- Mixed Farming Offer


Contact Natural England's CS Delivery Service for a pre-populated application form.

Simple guide to applying for a New CS Offers for Wildlife:


Step 1 – Decide which Offer is most appropriate for your farm




Step 2 – Decide which parcels you wish to include




Step 3 – Request a pre-populated application form, or start the online application process (Arable Offer only)




Step 4 – The forms / online process will tell you what area of land you need to put into the relevant option categories. Choose your option locations and enter the correct areas into the forms. Make sure you meet the minimum requirements.



Step 5 – Complete your Farm Environment Record (FER) – see section 4.7.1 of the Mid Tier manual. (NO HEFER is required)



Step 6 – The forms will tell you what additional information / evidence you need to submit with your application. See sections 6.4.4 to 6.4.6 of the Mid Tier manual for information on how to submit photographic evidence (if required).



Step 7 – Check your application, sign the declarations and submit the forms, with all required evidence, by 31 August

Important additional information:

Applicants should note that when they accept their Agreement, Chapters 6 & 7 and Annex 1 (covering the Terms and Conditions) of the Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and New CS Offers for Wildlife Manual will apply to their Agreement.

Further sources of information on GOV.UK:

Specific information for each Offer, including relevant options and prescriptions, can be found at:

- Arable Offer - www.gov.uk/government/publications/arable-offer-countryside-stewardship
- Lowland Grazing Offer - www.gov.uk/government/publications/lowland-grazing-offer-countryside-stewardship
- Upland Offer - www.gov.uk/government/publications/upland-offer-countryside-stewardship
- Mixed Farming Offer - www.gov.uk/government/publications/mixed-farming-offer-countryside-stewardship



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