

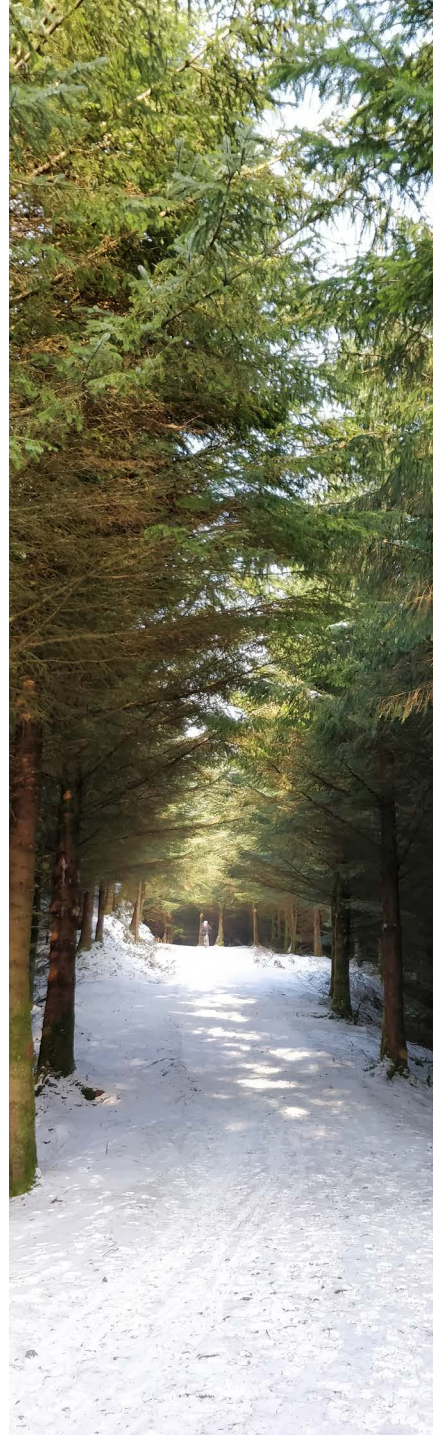


Rural Payments
Agency

An update from the Rural Payments Agency

Including:

- Environmental Stewardship (ES) and Countryside Stewardship (CS) schemes
- Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2018 payments
- Prepare for 2019 applications and claims



For scheme information go to www.gov.uk/rpa

Payments

A number of different payments will be made in December, for example BPS 2018 and payment query claims. If you've already sent us a payment query form, you don't need to send us another one. You will receive a remittance advice for every payment that is made and this will show the amount and what the payment is for.

BPS 2018 payments

We'll make payments from 1 December and we'll try to make payments as soon as we can.

Shortly after we make your BPS payment, we'll post a remittance advice to you confirming the amount we've paid. We'll also send you a Claim Statement, by post, explaining how we've calculated the final value of your claim.

If you do not recognise the amount we've paid you, wait until you receive your Claim Statement. You should also check your land parcel information in the Rural Payments service as we may have made changes, for example using remote sensing and Ordnance Survey updates.

If you still do not agree with the amount you've been paid, fill in a payment query form and return it to us by email or post. The form is on GOV.UK, search for '[BPS payment query form](#)' at www.gov.uk.

If you do not receive a BPS payment in December

If we cannot pay you by the end of the year, we'll contact you later in December to explain that we are unable to make a payment and what will happen next.





If you do not receive a payment by the end of December, it does not necessarily mean that there is anything wrong with your claim. Some types of claim typically take longer to complete, these tend to include 'Cross border' claims, claims from businesses that have had an inspection, either in person or by remote sensing; and claims that include common land. Some claims are also more complex and can take more time to complete.

If we find that you are not due a payment, we'll contact you to explain why. We expect this to happen in only a small number of cases.

For scheme information go to www.gov.uk/rpa

Track the progress of your BPS claim

You can do this on the Rural Payments service even if you applied on paper. Go to the 'Apply for BPS' screen, the 'status' box will show the progress of your claim.

-  **Submitted:** we've received your application and it's ready for our initial checks.
-  **Claim validation:** we're making our main checks on your claim.
-  **Final checking:** we're making final checks to confirm the claim value.
-  **Preparing for payment:** our checks are complete and the claim is being prepared for payment.

Sometimes, it may seem that your claim has been at one stage for a while. This is because there can be multiple checks to make. In some instances your claim may also move back a stage as we may identify a query which needs to be resolved.

How BPS payments are calculated

You can read more about how payments are calculated on GOV.UK. Search '[BPS 2018](#)' at www.gov.uk.

Entitlement values and the exchange rate for 2018		
Payment region	Entitlement value*	Greening payment rate*
Non-SDA (Severely Disadvantaged area)	€181.39	€78.13
SDA	€180.00	€77.53
SDA moorland	€49.09	€21.14

*The 2018 exchange rate is €1 = £ 0.89281. The Financial Discipline Mechanism (FDM) reduction rate for payments over €2,000 is 1.411917%.

For scheme information go to www.gov.uk/rpa

What's new in the Rural Payments service for 2019?

Easier to use password reset screens ✓

Improved onscreen help ✓

Request an application pack for CS Mid Tier ✓

Apply online for 4 CS Wildlife Offers: Arable, Lowland, Mixed, Upland ✓

Print maps for your CS Wildlife Offer application: Options/Farm Environment Record (FER) and Environmental Information Map (EIM) ✓

You can also use Rural Payments to:

Apply for CS Hedgerows and Boundaries ✓

Apply for CS Woodland Management Plan ✓

Apply for the Basic Payment Scheme: if you haven't applied online before call us on 03000 200 301 and we'll set up an online application for you ✓

Complete CS annual revenue claims and capital claims – for existing CS agreement holders ✓

Did you know that you can apply for CS Wildlife Offers and CS Hedgerows and Boundaries Capital Grants on the same land parcels? For more information, search 'Countryside Stewardship' on GOV.UK. !

If you intend to apply using a paper form, you should still register in the Rural Payments service to make sure we have your most up to date personal and business contact details, and to check your digital maps. If you need help to register for the service, call us on 03000 200 301.

Prepare for 2019

Applications for a number of different schemes will open during the first quarter in 2019, including the second round of the Countryside Productivity Small Grant, BPS, and CS agreements starting on 1 January 2020. Annual revenue claims for CS and ES also open during the first quarter of 2019.

We'll give you more details about the opening dates for applications and claims early in the New Year.

For BPS, if you applied online in 2018 we'll send you an email, and if you applied on paper, we'll send you a paper application form. If you have an agent, your application may be sent to them if they hold the correct permission level of BPS 'Submit'.

For CS, we'll announce the opening of applications at www.gov.uk, through social media and in the farming press. We'll do the same for CS and ES claims.

We'll publish all the information you need on GOV.UK by the date that applications open. For BPS, search for '[BPS 2019](#)' and for CS, search for '[Countryside Stewardship](#)', at www.gov.uk.

Get ready on the Rural Payments service

If you're a farmer, land manager, animal keeper or rural trader or business, use the Rural Payments service to register your details. You can also use it to view and update digital maps of your land and make online applications and claims for certain rural grants and payments. It can also be used by any person or firm representing a farmer or farming business – such as a firm of agricultural agents as long as they have the correct level of permissions for that business.

Whether you're a farmer, land manager or agent and intend to apply or claim online or use a paper form, make sure you're ready to apply for BPS or CS by following the steps below.

- 1. Sign in to the Rural Payments service:** if you're a new customer, you need to verify your identity before you can register on the service. You can do this by calling us on 03000 200 301 but we can only give you access to the Rural Payments service, or by using [GOV.UK Verify](#) and you'll have access to more online government services.

If you're an existing customer, make sure you can sign in to the Rural Payments service at www.ruralpayments.service.gov.uk. If you have not signed in for a while, or you get a message to say that your Customer Reference Number (CRN) is incorrect, you may need to reset your password. The onscreen help will guide you through this step by step. If you still have difficulties, call us.

- 2. Check your personal and business details are up to date:** make sure that your details are correct. This is important because if you request an application pack online for CS Mid Tier, we'll email it to your personal address. For BPS, if applications are made online we'll send emails to the business address registered in the service.
- 3. Check your permission levels:** check that you, and your agent if you have one, have the correct level of permissions for your business for each of the schemes that you intend to apply for, and claim against. For CS, you will need to check 'Countryside Stewardship (Applications)', and 'Countryside Stewardship (Agreements)' for submitting annual revenue claims.

You can read more information about permissions in the appropriate CS and BPS guidance available at www.gov.uk/rpa.

- 4. Check your digital maps:** we regularly update maps using the latest data sources such as aerial photography and Ordnance Survey. We'll continue to update digital maps, however these updates will be completed before applications open in 2019. If we update information in your land parcels, we'll send a notification to you in the Rural Payments service. You can read them in the 'messages' tab. For more information including what to do if you do not agree with any updates, search '[Digital maps](#)' at www.gov.uk.

We'll have also updated your digital maps if you've sent us an RLE1 form. If we're still completing updates to your maps you'll see an exclamation mark next to the relevant land parcel. You don't need to send us another RLE1 form. You won't receive a notification in the service when RLE1 requests have been completed.

It's important that you check your digital land maps before you start an application to make sure that your information is up to date. If you need to tell us about any changes to your land, send us an RLE1 form as soon as you can so that we can complete your request before you submit your application or claim.

Cross compliance 2019

There are no confirmed policy changes to the cross compliance rules for 2019. Cross compliance rules apply from 1 January 2019.

'The guide to cross compliance in England 2019' will be published soon on GOV.UK, search for '[cross compliance 2019](#)' at www.gov.uk.

SMR 1 - Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs)

For land that was in an NVZ for the first time in 2017, transitional arrangements have been in place to not meet some of the NVZ rules. These arrangements come to an end in July 2019, when the requirement to meet all the NVZ rules starts on 31 July 2019.

For more information read SMR1: Nitrate Vulnerable Zones in the Guide to cross compliance in England or '[Nutrient management: Nitrate Vulnerable Zones](#)', both are on GOV.UK.

BPS 2019 will run as normal on the same basis as 2018, with no changes to the greening requirements. All the information you need to help you apply, including the scheme rules for 2019, will be published on GOV.UK at the same time that applications open in Spring 2019 - search 'BPS 2019' at www.gov.uk. !

Fraud

As fraudsters may target farmers who receive subsidy payments, remember:

- Your bank, the police or RPA will never ask you to reveal your online password, PIN or bank account details or ask you to make a payment over the telephone.
- Never discuss your bank account details with someone you don't know, or open unknown or unexpected computer links or emails. If in doubt, call the organisation back, ideally on a different telephone, using a number you know to be official. You can usually find this on the organisation's website.
- Be cautious about what you share externally. Fraudsters use information such as social media posts to gain knowledge of a person's circumstances that will help them to scam victims.

If you suspect an attempted fraud or feel you have been the subject of fraud, you can contact:

- **RPA's Fraud Referral Team** on **0800 347 347** or **FraudInConfidence@rpa.gov.uk**
- **Action Fraud** (the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cyber-crime) on **0300 123 2040**

Bank accounts

If you've changed your bank account since we last paid you, please make sure you've told us about it. This means we'll be able to pay any money you're due into the correct account.

If you need to tell us about any changes, please call us on 03000 200 301 but you must have the correct level of permissions in Rural Payments to change bank account details. We cannot accept changes by letter or email.

For scheme information go to www.gov.uk/rpa