

# Government supported new planting of trees in England

Interim update for the half year  
April to September 2019

## Government supported new planting of trees in England: Interim update for the half year April to September 2019

This statistical update reports the number of trees newly planted in England with central government support, excluding replacement and restocking. This update covers the half-year period April to September 2019 enumerating tree planting for which data are available at the mid-year point.

- **Key findings** including the number of trees planted with central government support in first half of 2019-20, and the total number of trees newly planted during the two and a half years since April 2017, when reporting of this indicator started, are presented from page 3 onwards.
- **The methodology** showing what sources of government supported planting of trees were selected to be counted, and those excluded, and the reasons why are set out in Annex 1 from page 6 onwards.
- **Further information**, such as the availability of other statistics on new planting, including that *without* government support, and on the overall area of woodland in England is also provided on page 9.

This statistical series is a part of the Forestry Commission's key performance indicators, and is based on administrative data computed, collected and collated by the Forestry Commission.

Reports are published on our key performance indicators webpage on GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forestry-commission-corporate-plan-performance-indicators>

Reports of this key performance indicator have been successfully assured annually by the Government Internal Audit Agency.

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## Key findings

### Indicator: Government supported new planting of trees in England

**Interim update for the first half of the 2019-20 financial year: Between 1 April and 30 September 2019: 1,807,000 trees** were newly planted in England with support from central government, equating to about **1,112 hectares**. This is new planting of trees where data is available at the mid-year point.

This means that in the two and a half years April 2017 to September 2019 for which this indicator has been reported, **5,446,000 trees** were newly planted in England with support from central government, equating to about **3,430 hectares**.

Details are shown in Table 1, Figure 1, the Interpretation and Map 1.

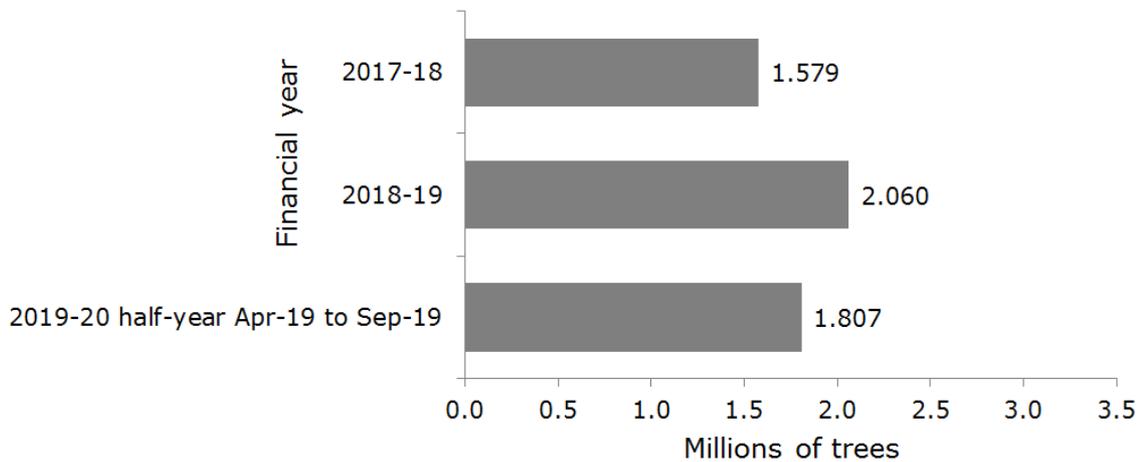
**Table 1: Government supported new planting of trees in England, by source; first half of 2019-20 and the two and half years April 2017 to September 2019**

Source of Government support for new planting of trees <sup>1,2</sup>		Apr-Sep 2019: Number of trees <sup>1,7,8</sup>	Apr-Sep 2019: Approximate equivalent in hectares <sup>8</sup>	Two and a half years Apr 2017 to Sep 2019: Number of trees <sup>1,7,8</sup>	Two and a half years Apr 2017 to Sep 2019: Approximate equivalent in hectares <sup>8</sup>
1	Rural Development Programme for England: CS and EWGS woodland creation <sup>3,4</sup>	1,489,000	885	4,511,000	2,799
2	Woodland Carbon Fund	130,000	120	154,000	129
3	High Speed 2 Woodland Fund	64,000	34	83,000	42
4	Forestry England	16,000	7	100,000	42
5	Countryside Stewardship: other tree planting options	107,000	66	212,000	131
6	Environment Agency <sup>5</sup>	Not available <sup>5</sup>	Not available <sup>5</sup>	204,000	162
7	Northern Forest	0	0	104,000	61
8	National Forest Company	0	0	78,000	64
9	Ministry of Defence	0	0	0	0
10	Highways England <sup>6</sup>	No data <sup>6</sup>	No data <sup>6</sup>	-	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,807,000</b>	<b>1,112</b>	<b>5,446,000</b>	<b>3,430</b>

**Notes to Table 1:**

1. Statistics for the half-year Apr-Sep-2019 enumerate tree planting with central government support for which data is available at the mid-year point.
2. Includes trees in areas counting as woodland, and some tree cover outside woodland.
3. CS: Countryside Stewardship and EWGS: English Woodland Grant Scheme.
4. The Forestry Commission's Key Performance Indicators Headline Updates include detailed quarterly reports on new planting of trees supported by the Rural Development Programme for England (source 1 in Table 1). These are available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forestry-commission-corporate-plan-performance-indicators>
5. Data for this source of tree planting are only available for each full financial year, after year-end.
6. No data so far for Highways England tree planting of the counted type.
7. Figures are to the nearest 1,000 trees. Figures may not sum due to rounding.
8. The density of tree planting, in terms of numbers of trees planted per hectare of land, varies between planting schemes.

**Figure 1: Government supported new planting of trees in England in the 2.5 years from 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2019**

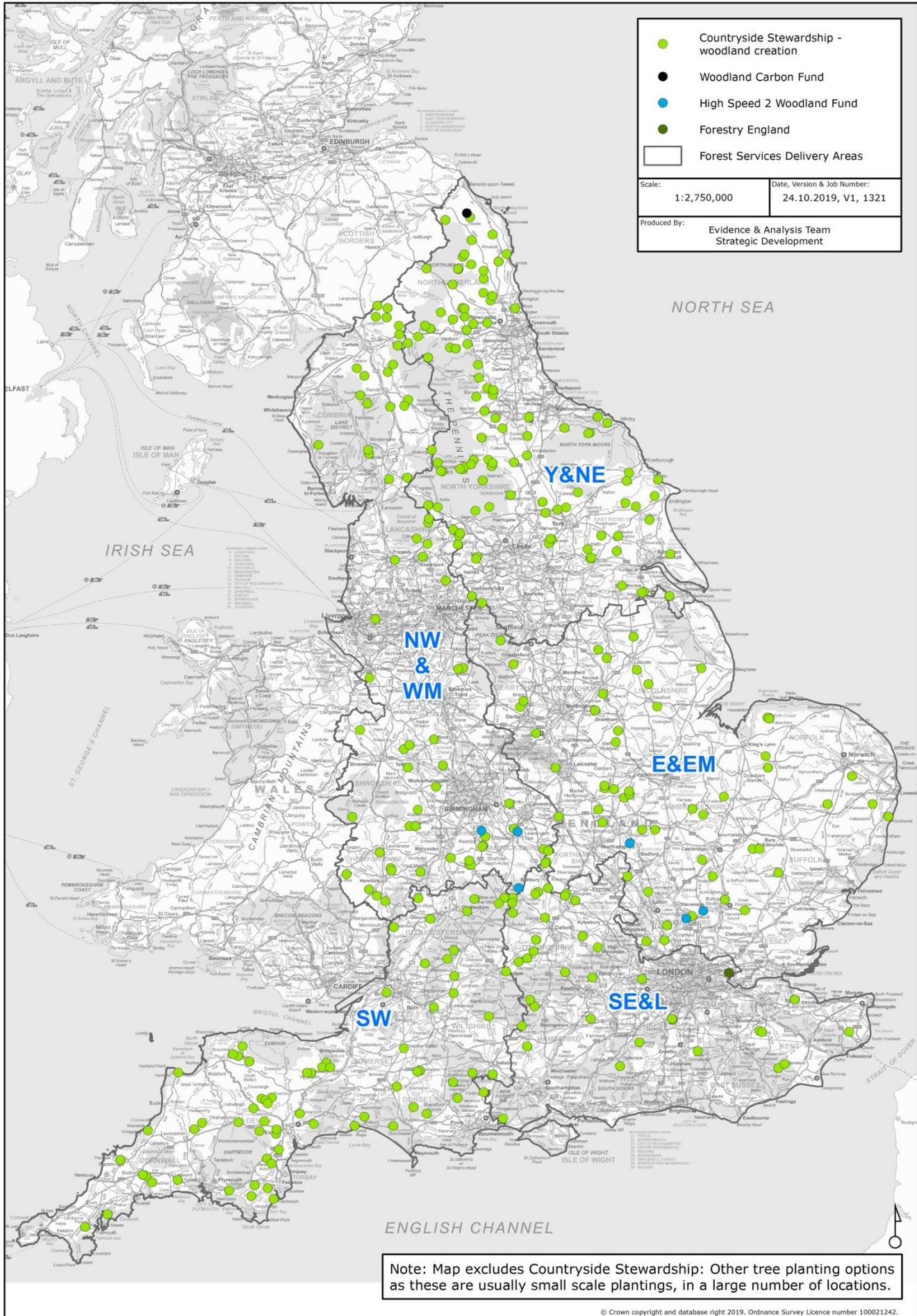


*Note:* Statistics for the half-year Apr-19 to Sep-19 enumerate tree planting with central Government support for which data are available at the mid-year point.

*Sources:* Data from the Forestry Commission, Natural England, the Environment Agency, the National Forest Company and the Woodland Trust.

### **Interpretation**

Government funding supported the new planting of 1.8 million trees in the first six months of 2019-20, close to the total for the whole of 2018-19. This brings the total number of trees newly planted with this support in the 2.5 years from April 2017 to September 2019 to 5.4 million trees.



## Annex 1: Methodology

This annex lists the types of government support for new planting of trees in England selected to be counted by this indicator, and those excluded, and the reasons for the decisions made on this.

### Scope of this indicator

1. There was previously no indicator that reported all government supported tree planting. Previously only tree planting funded by Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant (CS WCG), and its predecessor the English Woodland Grant Scheme Woodland Creation Grant (EWGS WCG), was reported as a Forestry Commission England Headline Indicator. In defining what else to include in this indicator, we worked to ensure that only appropriate new planting will be counted.

### Principles of what new planting to count

2. The following principles have been applied. This indicator will count government supported new planting of trees in England that is:
  - a. New planting only, not replanting or replacement.
  - b. Largely and directly funded by government, recognising there may be match funding; for example, CS WCG applicants are expected to contribute 20% of planting and establishment costs.
  - c. Reporting should exclude:
    - i. Double counting; for example, National Forest Company new planting figures must exclude any funded by CS WCG and therefore already counted; or that identified for counting as a part of any wholly separate government new planting commitment;
    - ii. direct compensation for trees lost to development, illegal felling or open habitat restoration;
    - iii. trees planted as an integral component of schemes likely to have resulted in tree felling and woodland loss; and
    - iv. planting of types that the public would not recognise as trees or woodland.

### New planting that is or will be counted

3. In line with these principles, **all** new tree planting through the following initiatives are counted as part of this government supported new planting of trees indicator:
  - a. **Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant** and **English Woodland Grant Scheme Woodland Creation Grant**; each part of the Rural Development Programme for England;
  - b. **Woodland Carbon Fund**;
  - c. **High Speed 2 Woodland Fund** woodland creation option;

- d. **Forestry England**-funded planting in the nation's forests managed by them.

### **New planting that is counted when conditions are met**

4. **Some** tree planting through the following initiatives is also counted, subject to the relevant conditions described being met:
- a. **Countryside Stewardship other tree planting options**, administered by Natural England, and excluding where possible high density planting of trees to establish new hedgerows, which the public would not recognise as trees or woodland<sup>1</sup>.
  - b. **Environment Agency (EA)**. Tree planting included:
    - EA only funded tree planting in some catchment flood risk management schemes to help achieve Biodiversity 2020 targets.
    - EA only funded Water Environment Grant.
    - Woodland creation directly funded by the Natural Flood Management (NFM) scheme.
  - c. **Northern Forest**. Some £5.7m government funding has been allocated to support the development of the Northern Forest. We will count this new planting of trees in this indicator, excluding those identified for counting as a part of any wholly separate government new planting commitment.
  - d. **National Forest Company (NFC)**. The NFC and its Changing Landscape Scheme are sponsored by Defra. This delivers woodland and parkland trees. Discussions with the NFC's Head of Forestry concluded that all NFC planting is supported by government and should be counted towards this indicator. Trees funded by any other initiative listed here, or those identified for counting as a part of any wholly separate government new planting commitment, are excluded.
  - e. **Ministry of Defence (MoD)**. Any tree planting on MoD land funded largely and directly by government will be counted in this indicator, ensuring there is no double-counting with other sources counted. Trees planted on MoD land through the tree-planting partnership with The Woodland Trust, through which The Woodland Trust sponsors tree planting on MoD land are excluded.
  - f. **Highways England (HE)**. HE plant significant numbers of trees associated with road-building and road widening schemes, many of which are likely to be associated with areas of woodland being felled. Most HE funded planting therefore falls outside the principles outlined above that define this indicator and are therefore excluded. However, trees planted outside the curtilage of road widening schemes and new planting planned to manage highway flood risk will be included.

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<sup>1</sup> *Additional note (November 2019):* Some high density planting of trees for hedging is necessarily included until such time that reporting systems enable us to report without this.

## New planting that is not counted

5. Further in line with these principles, the following trees are **not** counted as part of this indicator:

- a. **Trees for Schools.** This is a Defra initiative delivered by The Woodland Trust and Community Forests. The government said that trees planted through this initiative are identified for counting as a part of any wholly separate government new planting commitment. They are therefore excluded from this indicator.
- b. **High Speed 2 compensatory tree planting.** HS2 Ltd has allocated significant funds to tree planting over HS 2 Phase One (London to the West Midlands), to 2024. These are excluded from the counting towards this indicator, because they are to compensate for trees lost to development. This is different from trees planted through the separate HS2 Woodland Fund, which are counted.
- c. **Local Authorities.** New planting of trees on Local Authority owned or managed land can be funded through partnerships, which may sometimes include central government funding, such as the Woodland Carbon Fund. Thus new planting of trees by Local Authorities is included where a part of this or other schemes listed above in sections 3 and 4; as new planting that is or will be counted, or is counted when conditions are met.

However, Local Authorities act largely independently of central government and there is no national reporting structure for their other tree planting. Until there is an agreement that it would be feasible, reasonable and cost-effective to provide reliable reporting it is not possible to count any other Local Authority new planting towards this indicator, and so those sources of tree planting will not be included.

## Definition of a tree

6. This indicator counts the new planting of a) individual trees, b) trees in groups and c) trees in woodlands, each in plantings comprising predominantly 'tree' species.
7. The definition of a 'tree' used is that required to meet eligibility criteria for government support for woodland creation/tree planting, which vary slightly from scheme to scheme.
8. Typically, the definition is equivalent to the eligibility for Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant<sup>2</sup> (CS WCG), in which 'trees' means plants with at least one woody stem capable of achieving a total height of five metres or more. All of the ca. 130 species listed in the CS WCG documentation Annex 2 list are therefore included.
9. This definition is comparable to that of 'trees' used in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN FAO, 2012) *'Forest Resources Assessment Working Paper 180: FRA 2015 Terms and Definitions'*, Rome: UN FAO, page 27, available from here: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/ap862e/ap862e00.pdf>
10. It is recognised that planting schemes sometimes include a proportion of shrubs. These are counted when planted as a proportion of tree planting schemes.

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<sup>2</sup> Natural England (2017) *Countryside Stewardship Manual: Woodland Creation Grant 2018*, at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-woodland-creation-grant-manual-2018>

## Further information

### Media enquiries

For media enquiries about these statistics the contact is 0330 041 6560.

### Other statistics on new planting of trees and woodland area

The Forestry Commission's Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Headline Indicator Updates, include detailed quarterly reports on new planting of trees supported by the Rural Development Programme for England (source 1 in Table 1). These are available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/forestry-commission-corporate-plan-performance-indicators>

Forestry Commission statistics on **all** new planting of woodland including that supported in other ways, and the total woodland area in England (each updated annually), are available from:

- a. Provisional Woodland Statistics (each June) at <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/statistics-by-topic/woodland-statistics/>
- b. Confirmed statistics in Forestry Statistics and Forestry Facts and Figures (each September) at <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/>

### Release schedule for these statistics

Reports of this *Government supported new planting of woodland in England* statistical series are released twice per year. The next anticipated release, a full report covering new planting for all of the 2019-20 year is scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

### Official Statistics

This key performance indicator update provides statistical data that are part of an Official Statistics series.

This indicator has been developed to meet the standards set out in the new Code of Practice for Statistics (Office for Statistics Regulation and UK Statistics Authority, 2018) available from <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/>

For more information about Official Statistics and the UK Statistics Authority visit [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk).

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