



Grants & Regulations news

Protecting, expanding and improving England's woodlands

This month we remind customers about making sure they have an agreement approved before starting work or before applying for other grants. We also provide an update on payments and bank account changes.

Woodland management plan approvals

Get your woodland management plan approved in principle before making an application for CS.

If you are considering making an application for Countryside Stewardship (CS) Woodland Improvement (multi-annual and/or capital items under the CS Higher Tier), you will need to have a Woodland Management Plan at least approved in principle before you make your application. We cannot guarantee timeframes to approve woodland management plans but any drafts must be submitted to us (your Woodland Officer) before the end of December if we are to have a chance of providing approval in principle in time for any Higher Tier application next year.

If you don't have a woodland management plan and but are considering making an HT application in the future, or would simply like to document the long-term management for your woodland and secure the associated felling permission, you can apply for a grant to support the preparation of your plan. More information is available on [GOV.UK](#).

Rural Payments Agency winter update

Get information about the RPA's schemes, including Countryside Stewardship, Environmental Stewardship and the Basic Payment Scheme.

Recently the RPA sent out an update to customers which covered all of their schemes, it's available to read on [GOV.UK](#) and has lots of useful information about woodland management plans.

Woodland Creation Planning Grant eligibility

You need a signed Agreement offer from us before you start work.

For anyone applying to the Forestry Commission for a grant of any type, it's important to remember that any work in an application that begins before a signed Agreement is in place cannot be paid for through the claim process. If you carry out any work, including purchasing trees, before we have agreed to contribute towards the cost of that work then any claims you submit against a subsequent Agreement for that work will not be accepted.

This doesn't just apply to the [Woodland Carbon Fund](#) and the [HS2 Woodland Fund](#), but also to the [Woodland Creation Planning Grant](#) (WCPG). Applicants must not submit a completed WCPG Stage 1 checklist with their application for grant. The completion of a WCPG Stage 1 checklist is part of the work that Agreement Holders are expected to do for a fixed payment of £1,000. You must have received and accepted a WCPG Stage 1 grant Agreement offer from us before you begin work on a WCPG Stage 1 checklist.

Making our grant payments

Payments 2018

We'll start to make annual payments for FWPS, FWP and WMG from 1 December 2018. We will try and complete all payments as soon as we can; 80% of claims have already been sent for payment. Payments for FWS were completed on 26 November 2018. You will receive remittance advice from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) confirming the amount you've been paid. If you have a query about the amount you receive please call the RPA on 03000 200 301.

Bank account changes

If you've changed your bank account since we last paid you, please make sure you've told RPA about it. This will ensure any money you are due will be paid into the correct bank account.

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

How to protect yourself against 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.

If you have any questions, please contact us:

Email:
GRNationalTeam@forestrycommission.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.gov.uk/forestrycommission>

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