



Rural Payments  
Agency

# Our schemes are changing

Changes to Countryside Stewardship (CS) and the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) from 2021, and what you need to know.



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## Countryside Stewardship 2021

What is changing?	Details of the change	How does this affect me?
<b>Customer requirements</b>	We will reword some of the CS options to make it clear what you need to deliver. We will include a section that clearly describes what the habitat should look like throughout the year.	Overall aim of options is clearer and less prescriptive.
<b>Inspections</b>	We will focus more on assessing how the environmental aims are delivered. We will check the advice and guidance have been followed. Penalties will not be applied to new domestic agreements starting Jan 2021 (those agreements in place pre Jan 2021 will continue to be assessed against EU rules) however, in certain circumstances we may withhold payments or apply reductions. If we think there is an issue that can be fixed, we will offer advice and guidance.	There will be more focus on achieving the environmental aims of the options, with inspectors offering you advice and guidance where appropriate. Referrals to Natural England and the Forestry Commission, for technical advice, will continue.
<b>Capital Grants</b>	We are increasing the number of capital items that you can apply for using the Rural Payments service, covering water capital, hedgerows and boundaries and air quality.	You can apply for all Mid Tier capital options using the Rural Payments service, under a new Capital Grants offer.
<b>Woodland Capital Grants</b>	We are making improvements to woodland options, including bringing bracken control and stone wall options into woodland management and combining Woodland Creation and Woodland Maintenance grants.	Improvements to woodland options. One application covers Woodland Creation and Woodland Maintenance.
<b>Cross Compliance</b>	The cross compliance rules are not changing for 2021 and they continue to be a condition of all CS agreements. We're making improvements to inspections and simplifying the cross compliance guide. Penalties for non-compliance will be more proportionate, where possible, including more use of warning letters.	You should experience improvements to inspections. For example, before the visit you will receive a list of the records that the inspector needs to check. Penalties for non-compliance will be more proportionate, where possible.

You should read the relevant scheme guidance for more information on how these changes affect you. We will publish new CS guidance early in 2021.

# Basic Payment Scheme 2021

What is changing?	Details of the change	How does this affect me?
<b>Removal of greening requirement</b>	From the 2021 scheme year, all 3 greening requirements will be removed: crop diversification, Ecological Focus Areas and the greening permanent grassland rules. Removing the greening rules will not affect the overall payment received. The greening money will instead be added to your BPS entitlement payments.	You will still declare 'land use' on your application but you won't need to meet any greening scheme rules. The rules that apply to permanent grassland in Natura 2000 sites and the Environmental Impact Assessments rules that apply to some other permanent grassland will remain in place.
<b>Removal of cross border applications</b>	We will process and pay your English entitlements only. We won't need to provide information to, or receive it from, a devolved authority.	You won't need to tell us about land in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland. If you were eligible and claimed on land in England and another part of the UK in 2020 and in 2020 had less than 5 eligible hectares and/or 5 entitlements in England, you will be exempt from the minimum claim size in England from 2021.
<b>Removal of entitlement usage rules</b>	This removes the entitlement expiry usage rules from 2021 onwards.	You won't need to use entitlements once every 2 years to avoid losing them. This does not apply retrospectively. Entitlements will still be assessed for usage for 2020 and in previous years, including any claim re-calculation.
<b>Force majeure. Extended from 15 days to 8 weeks</b>	We will be extending the time period for you to inform us of force majeure or exceptional circumstances and supply evidence, from the existing 15 working days to 8 weeks. This applies from the BPS 2021 scheme year.	You will have 8 weeks to apply for force majeure or exceptional circumstances.
<b>Lengthen the amount of time to submit supporting documents</b>	We will accept supporting documents until 11 June, without reductions or penalties being applied to the application. Supporting documents will not be accepted after 11 June.	You could submit supporting documents until 11 June 2021, without reductions or penalties being applied to your application.
<b>Lengthen the amount of time to amend an application</b>	We will accept amendments to an application up to 11 June, without applying reductions or penalties.	You could amend your application until 11 June 2021, without reductions or penalties being applied to your application.
<b>From BPS 2021 scheme year, a reduction will be applied to all claims</b>	As you may be aware, over the next seven years, we will progressively reduce payments. Overall, the same amount of funding will be available to the farming sector during this Parliament, though the way it is distributed will change and be redirected straight back into Countryside Stewardship and our new schemes. The gradual approach is designed to help everyone manage the transition as smoothly as possible.	From 2021, we intend to reduce any BPS payments you receive, with higher percentage reductions applied to amounts in higher payment bands.
<b>Inspections</b>	As the greening rules are being removed, we will not carry out inspections for greening. We will continue to carry out BPS and cross compliance inspections.	You will no longer have to show that you meet greening rules.
<b>Cross Compliance</b>	The cross compliance rules you need to meet are not changing for 2021 and they continue to be a condition of BPS. We're making improvements to inspections and simplifying the cross compliance guide. Penalties for non-compliance will be more proportionate, where possible, including more use of warning letters.	You should experience improvements to inspections. For example, before the visit you will receive a list of the records that the inspector needs to check. Penalties for non-compliance will be more proportionate, where possible.