



Rural Payments  
Agency

January 2020

# An update from the Rural Payments Agency

## Including:

- Information on payments
- Flooding advice
- Woodland support grants
- How to update your information and avoid fraud



Go to [www.gov.uk/rpa](http://www.gov.uk/rpa) for scheme information



# Payments

**Payments for a number of different schemes started in early December, for example for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Environmental Stewardship (ES) revenue claims.**

## CS and ES annual revenue payments

In August, we wrote to CS and ES customers to explain that as part of our approach to improving payment performance, from 2019 onwards we would only make one full system payment for CS and ES annual revenue claims. This replaces the existing pattern of separate advance and final payments.

This means if you submitted an eligible CS or ES revenue claim in 2019, you should expect to receive your payment between December 2019 and the end of June 2020, once processing of your claim has been completed.

We have not made any changes to the way that capital payments are made.

## Remittance advice

Shortly after we make your BPS, CS or ES payment, we'll post a remittance advice to you confirming the amount that we've paid.

CS customers will find their remittance advice contains some extra information. For example, it will list a maximum of 3 agreement references, followed by 'additional agreements' if you have more than 3 agreements. You can find more information about the changes in the [RPA Remittance Advice Guidance](#) on GOV.UK.

If you claimed for BPS, we'll post a Claim Statement to you explaining how we've calculated the final value of your claim.

## Tell us if your bank account details have changed

It's important that your bank account details are up to date so that we can pay you as quickly as possible once your claim is ready for payment.

If these are not up to date, you will not receive any payments we make to you. If you've changed your bank account since we last paid you, call us on 03000 200 301 to update them. We cannot accept changes by letter or email.

You must also have the correct level of permissions in the Rural Payments service to change back account details.

## Track the progress of your BPS and CS claim

You can do this in the Rural Payments service even if you applied on paper.

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 have identified a query which needs to be resolved.

## How BPS payments are calculated

You can read more about how BPS payments are calculated on the [BPS 2019 page](#) on GOV.UK.

Entitlement values, greening rate and the exchange rate for 2019		
Payment region	Entitlement value*	Greening payment rate*
Non-SDA (Severely Disadvantaged area)	€182.70	€78.69
SDA	€181.34	€78.11
SDA moorland	€49.76	€21.43

\*The 2019 exchange rate is €1 = £ 0.89092. The Financial Discipline Mechanism (FDM) reduction rate for payments over €2,000 is 1.432635%.

## Reminder for CS capital claims

Mid Tier and Higher Tier	Hedgerows and Boundaries, Water capital-only grants, Woodland Creation, Woodland Management Plan, Woodland Tree Health
<p>You must complete all capital works by the capital works programme end date.</p> <p>We must receive all claims for payment, supporting documents and evidence no later than three months after the capital works programme end date.</p> <p><b>Claims after this date will not be accepted.</b></p>	<p>You must complete all capital works (and plans) within 2 years of the agreement start date.</p> <p>We must receive all claims for payment, supporting documents and evidence no later than 3 months after the agreement end date.</p> <p><b>Claims after this date will not be accepted.</b></p>
<p>Depending on the items you're claiming for, supporting documents and evidence you must send to us may vary. Read about each item in 'Countryside Stewardship grants' at <a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a>.</p>	



### The following grants are open for applications throughout the year.

- **Woodland Management Plan Grant** - a one-off payment to support the production of a UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) compliant 10 year plan to manage woodland.
- **Woodland Creation Grant** - a 2 year capital grant to plant and protect young trees.
- **Woodland Tree Health** - a one-off payment to restock or improve woodland due to tree health problems.

**Are you thinking of creating a new woodland or extending an existing woodland?**

If so, apply for a Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant. Apply at any time during the year but allow at least 5 months for your application to be processed.

### Applying for the CS Woodland Improvement Grant?

If you apply for the CS Woodland Improvement Grant (part of Higher Tier) this year, you will need a Forestry Commission approved Woodland Management Plan in place.

This should have been submitted to the Forestry Commission by 31 December 2019 to be approved in time. If you didn't submit your Woodland Management Plan in time for this year, you can submit it at any time of the year to apply for the CS Woodland Improvement Grant next year.

Read more information about [Woodland Support Grants](#) on GOV.UK.

### Tree felling

If you have a CS agreement which involves tree felling, you must check if you need a felling licence.

To help protect Britain's trees and woodland, a felling licence from the Forestry Commission is required to fell most trees. It's an offence to fell trees without a felling licence where it is required.

If you have a Mid-Tier agreement or a Hedgerows and Boundaries Grant, it does not give you permission to fell trees. If there's no felling licence or other valid permission in place, or if the wrong trees are felled, anyone involved (the owner, agent and timber merchant or contractor) may be prosecuted.

In these circumstances, when the Forestry Commission (FC) serves a Restocking Notice (RN) to a landowner who claims BPS, they will also refer the case to the RPA's Cross Compliance unit. This may lead to an inspection, penalty or reduction in BPS payments.

For more information about felling licences and how to apply for a licence, read ['Tree Felling: getting permission'](#) on GOV.UK.

## Flooding advice for farmers and land managers

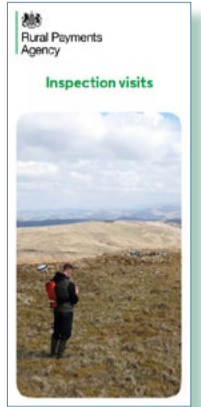
Following flooding during summer 2019, we published general advice for any farmer and land manager whose land had been flooded. It is also relevant for any flooding that may occur in the future and is not specific to any individual flooding event. You can read the full [Flooding Advice for Farmers and Land Managers](#) on GOV.UK.

The [Farming Recovery Fund](#) gives further information about the help that may be available following flooding in specific areas of the country.

## Inspections

We recognise that inspections can be a stressful time for our customers. It may have been some time since your last inspection or you may not have been inspected before, so you may be unsure about it.

We want your inspection to be a positive experience. We have listened to feedback and produced a leaflet to help you prepare if you are chosen for an inspection, which includes what you can expect. The leaflet will be emailed to you or given to you by an inspector before your inspection.



## Cross compliance 2020

There are no confirmed policy changes to the cross compliance rules for 2020. Cross compliance rules apply from 1 January 2020 for the whole of the calendar year. The ['Guide to cross compliance in England 2020'](#) is on GOV.UK.

### Help us to help you

Sign in to the Rural Payments Service regularly. We will use our new pop up alerts to share important information with you.

## Update your email address

We will use this to contact you about important issues. Go to 'Your businesses' and click 'View and amend personal details' and check we have your correct email address.

## Update your mobile number

We will use this to text you about important issues. Go to 'Your businesses' and click 'View and amend personal details' to check your mobile number.

## Update your permissions

It's important you control who can access your information and submit applications and claims. Go to The 'Business overview' screen and click 'Give access to this business' to check them.

### Help us to direct your email to the right place

To avoid delay, make sure you include the following in the email subject box:

- relevant scheme title in full, for example, Countryside Stewardship
- document type, for example, Application-CS-Mid Tier
- scheme year
- Single Business Identifier (SBI) number

## Contact us



### Email us

[ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk)



### Call us

03000 200 301

(Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm, except bank holidays)



### Write to us

(CS customers)

Rural Payments Agency

PO Box 324

Worksop

S95 1DF

(BPS customers)

Rural Payments Agency

PO box 352

Worksop

S80 9FG

For ES customers, address details are split by county – for more information, go to [www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-stewardship](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-stewardship).

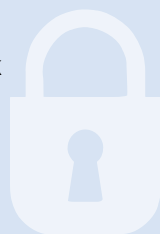
## Be aware of fraud

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

- never discuss your bank account details with someone you don't know
- don't send your bank details by email
- we will not ask you to make a payment over the phone
- delete any emails or texts you don't believe are genuine and do not open any links - our main email addresses are:
  - [ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk)
  - [rpa@notifications.service.gov.uk](mailto:rpa@notifications.service.gov.uk)
  - [ruralpayments@rpa.emails.com](mailto:ruralpayments@rpa.emails.com)
  - [rdpenetwork@defra.gov.uk](mailto:rdpenetwork@defra.gov.uk)
- Be cautious about what information you share externally, particularly on social media.

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](mailto:FraudInConfidence@rpa.gov.uk)
- **Action Fraud** (the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cyber-crime) on 0300 123 2040.



For scheme information go to [www.gov.uk/rpa](http://www.gov.uk/rpa)