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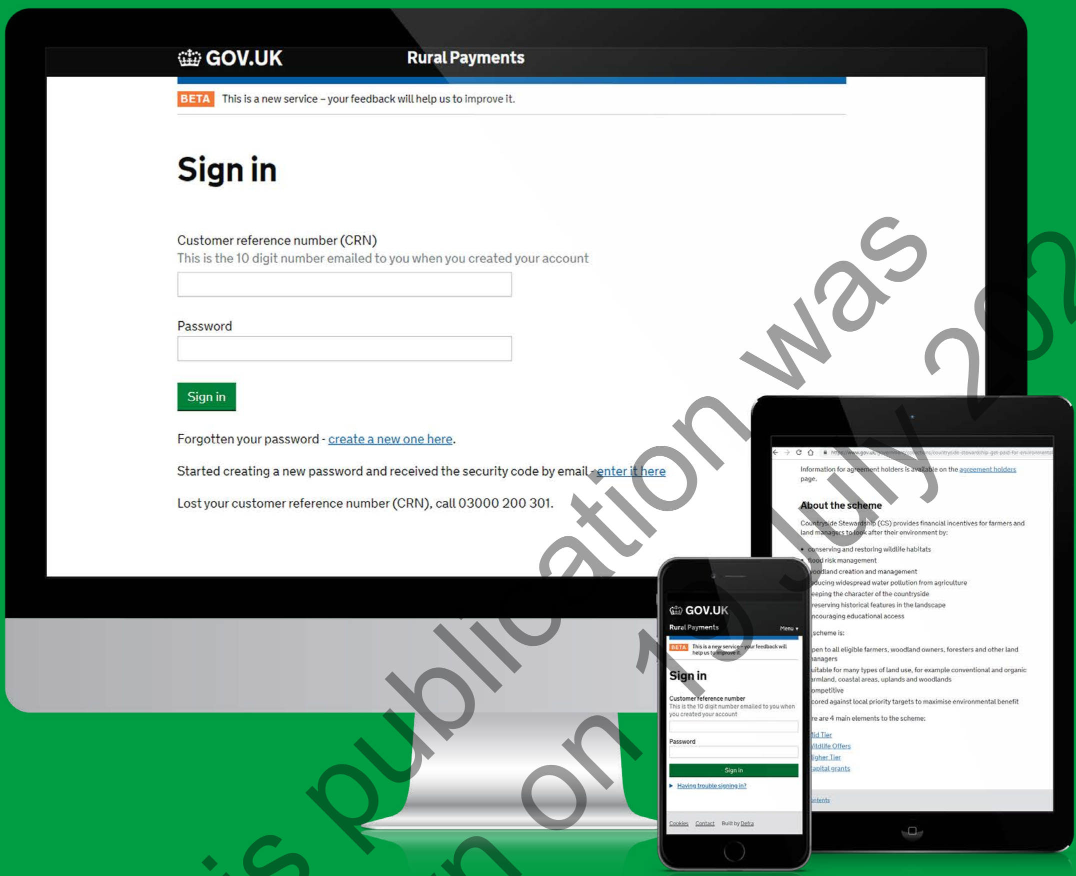
Countryside Stewardship 2019

How to complete your Wildlife Offer application pack

Countryside Stewardship
Protecting the natural environment for future generations

www.gov.uk/rpa/cs

Are you and your land registered?



Not registered: call us on 03000 200 301 and we can help you.

If you are registered: sign in now and check your information is up to date. Make sure that all the land parcels you want to include in your application are registered in the Rural Payments service, and linked to your Single Business Identifier (SBI).

www.gov.uk/claim-rural-payments

How to complete your Countryside Stewardship Wildlife Offer application pack

Introduction

Please read these notes carefully and use them to complete your Countryside Stewardship (CS) Wildlife Offer application accurately and fully, including all supporting documents and evidence.

The deadline for us to receive your application (with any required supporting information) is 31 July. We recommend that you **submit your application as early as possible** to allow time for any queries to be resolved. This will help us, the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) make a timely decision on your application.

For further advice please contact us. Contact details are in Annex 7 of MT Manual)

Before you start your application

Either read:

- the Countryside Stewardship (CS) Mid Tier (MT) manual available on GOV.UK
- information about options available using the CS online grants finder tool.

How to apply - application steps

Fill in the application form

Check you have answered all relevant questions and have provided all information required

Please put your SBI and Application ID number on everything you sent to us.

You need to make sure that:	**Check**
you have received the correct type of application form, the correct set of annexes, an Environmental Information Map (EIM) and the Farm Environment Record (FER) / Options map covering all of the land relating to your application.	☐
you, and the land that you are including in your application, are eligible for Countryside Stewardship (read Section 3 'Who can apply' of the MT manual).	☐
you have read and understood the Countryside Stewardship scheme rules and requirements. (You can read the CS terms and conditions at Annex 1 of the MT manual) **You must apply for CS Mid or Higher Tier if you have:** • an existing Environmental Stewardship (ES) Agreement that will be under Agreement at the planned start date of the Wildlife Offer agreement • land designated by HM Revenue & Customs as national heritage property under the conditional exemption tax incentive (heritage property relief) • any Scheduled Monuments (SM) or land parcels containing Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on your holding • common and/or shared grazing rights on the land included in your application or if you are applying under the Common SBI (apply for CS Higher Tier in this case).	☐
you have registered all of the land in your application on the Rural Land Register.	☐
you have a Single Business Identifier (SBI) number. Read the 'Register land with the Rural Land Register' guidance on GOV.UK. References in the above guidance to empowering agents do not apply to Countryside Stewardship. To authorise an agent to act on your behalf for this application, complete Question 2 of the CS application form and give the agent permission to act using the Rural Payments service (more information on setting permissions in Rural Payments can be found on GOV.UK).	☐
you have a County Parish Holding (CPH) number Read the 'Get a CPH number from the Rural Payments Agency' guidance on GOV.UK.	☐
you understand the evidence requirements of your application, dependent on your option choice. This may include a valid organic schedule and certificate or other permissions. Annex 3 will help you with this part of the application. Read Section 6.4 of the MT manual for further information on evidence and the 'Mid Tier options, supplements and capital items' part of the MT manual for full evidence requirements of each options and capital item.	☐
if someone else claims Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) on any land parcels you include, you have read Section 3.3.2 of the MT manual on dual use and send the required evidence with your application.	☐
If you are a tenant of a Public body landlord you send us a copy of your tenancy agreement with your application.	☐

On the application form:

Step 1 - Confirm which type of agreement you are applying for

Choose from Arable Offer, Lowland Grazing Offer, Mixed Farming Offer or Upland Offer

Then choose an Agreement title, this can be the farm name or what the land is commonly known as.

Step 2 - Complete Section 1: Application Details and Section 2: Farm Business Details

Fill in this section with your details.

Question 1.

The SBI will be pre-populated

Question 2.

(a) If you are:

- **not an agent** or a partnership representative (acting as an agent), acting on behalf of the applicant(s) tick **'No'** then go to Question 3.
- **an agent** or partnership representative (acting as an agent) acting on behalf of the applicant, tick **'Yes'**. The applicant must give you permission in the Rural Payments service before you submit the application. Anyone given 'Full permissions' can do this.

(b) Then confirm if you will also be acting as the agreement management agent.

Question 3.

Fill in (a) to (g) with details for the applicant / main contact(s). If pre-populated check the details are correct. For partnership agreements enter the names of all partners in the box at Question 5.

Please contact us immediately with any changes to your contact information.

Question 4.

Fill in the County Parish Holding (CPH) number of the land you are including in the application. If you have more than one holding please enter the CPH of your primary holding.

Question 5.

a) Confirm if the applicant is a Partnership, Charity or Public Sector Body or none of these.
b) Add the additional information specified, if required.

Question 6.

a) Confirm whether you currently have management control of all of the land in the application for the entire length of the proposed agreement and can meet the Declaration and Undertakings in Section 3. If **'Yes'** go to Question 7. If **'No'** complete Question 6 (b).

b) Fill in a 'Countryside Stewardship Land Ownership and Control' form with each person who would take over your responsibilities should you cease to have management control over any of the land. This would normally be the landlord or another person with management control. Confirm these are attached then go to Question 6 (c).
You can get the form online on GOV.UK. If you cannot get online, contact us to request a form.

c) Confirm if any of the counter signatories are a Public Body. If '**No**' go to Question 7. If '**Yes**' go to Question 6 (d)

d) Include a copy of your Tenancy Agreement with your application, so that we can make sure your application is valid. Tick to confirm you have done this.

Read Section 3.2 ‘Management control, eligibility and scheme rules’ of the MT manual. Go to Question 7.

Question 7.

a) If you have any obligations in your tenancy to carry out environmental management on the land in this application tick ‘**Yes**’, and go to Question 7 (b), otherwise tick ‘**No**’ and go to Question 8.
b) Obligations of your tenancy agreement cannot be funded by Countryside Stewardship. Tick '**Yes**' to confirm that this application is not seeking funding for these activities.

Question 8.

Confirm whether you have applied for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) on the land in this application in the current calendar year.

If **‘No’** you must provide compatible BPS land use codes in Annex 1, as described in Step 4 of this guidance. Once you have done this confirm by ticking the ‘**Yes**’ at Question 8.

Question 9.

If someone else claims BPS on any parcel in the application tick ‘**Yes**’ at (a) then state if you are the landlord or tenant at (b). Confirm at (c) that you have read Section 3.3.2 of the MT manual and that you have provided the required evidence.

Question 10.

If you receive funding other than from BPS, for the management of the land in the application tick ‘**Yes**’ otherwise tick ‘**No**’.

If **‘Yes’** enter the details of the other funding in the box below Question 10.

See Section 3.4 ‘Land receiving other funding’ of the MT manual.

Complete your maps

Step 3 - Complete your Farm Environment Record map(s)

You must record all environmental features and areas on the land parcels to be included in the application and mark parcels that are at moderate to high risk of run off or soil erosion.

The application does not have to cover the whole holding but it must include all land parcels including those that will support rotational options.

If you have any Scheduled Monuments (SM) or land parcels containing Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) you are not eligible to apply for a CS Wildlife Offer. If you have, please contact us to request a Mid Tier application pack. For contact details see Annex 7 of MT manual.

If you have a FER map from a previous Environmental Stewardship agreement and there has been little or no change to the environmental features on your land, you may be able to use that map (updated as necessary) rather than complete the CS FER map.

If you do not have a FER map from a previous Environmental Stewardship agreement and/or there have been changes to the environmental features on your land then complete the blank FER map included in the application pack.

Remember Basic Payment Scheme cross compliance requirements apply across the whole holding.

Identify and mark parcels identified with ‘moderate to high runoff and soil erosion risk’

Before you complete the FER, you should consider whether any of your land is at risk from surface runoff and soil erosion.

To do this use this ‘runoff and soil erosion risk assessment’ form on GOV.UK.

Using the risk assessment you must now mark on the FER, in brown hatching, all fields that have been identified as at moderate or higher risk of surface runoff and soil erosion.

Mark your environmental features and areas on your map

You will need to mark all of your FER features on the FER map(s). Walking your holding will help you see which parcels are suited to Countryside Stewardship options. This will allow you to mark the environmental features (as shown on your FER map’s key) within them on a copy of your FER map. Your Environmental Information map, included in your application pack, may also indicate features that you need to mark on your FER map(s).

Make sure your FER map(s) are clear and accurate.

If you wish to use a previous Environmental Stewardship (ES) FER map, consider the need for any updates (see below) and decide whether the updated map would be clear and understandable. For former ELS/HLS agreements the combined FER/FEP map may contain significant information not required for CS. If this is the case you may prefer to complete a new CS FER map.

Use the colours on the FER map’s key. Confirm that you have a feature by marking the corresponding blank symbol on the right side of the map with the coloured pencil you have used to mark that feature.

You must submit the completed map(s) as part of your application.

Please read the specific information below for the following features.

Marking 'boundaries with trees'

Only boundaries with, on average, one or more eligible trees for every 100 m need to be marked as 'boundaries with trees'.

For example, a hedgerow of 400 m would need to have at least four eligible trees along its length. Eligible trees are those that are native species, standing within 1 m of a hedgerow and over 30 cm diameter at breast height.

These boundaries should be marked with a green cross over the boundary line, as shown in the FER map's assigned colour key (in-field trees still need to be counted and marked as shown on the key).

If you are using a FER from an earlier ES agreement and it shows the number of hedgerow trees, you do not need to change it.

Marking hedges

On accepting a CS agreement you will be agreeing that you will not cut more than 50% of hedges in any one year. This is a scheme baseline requirement that covers all hedges in Mid Tier and Higher Tier agreements. It covers all hedges marked on the FER which meet the following CS hedge definition:

'any planted boundary lines of shrubs (a woody plant where the distance between the ground and the base of the leafy layer is less than 2 m) which are over 20 m long and less than 5 m wide (between major woody stems at the base) and are composed of at least 80% native shrubs'.

This does not apply to road and trackside hedges that need to be cut annually or more frequently for public safety.

To mark the cutting regime of the hedges on the FER map you will need to use two different types of marking as indicated in the FER map's assigned colour key, as detailed below:

i. Hedgerow (meets 50% cutting limitation). For those hedges that are managed as the baseline of the scheme and no more than 50% of these hedges are cut in any one year (this includes hedges that are to be included in CS capital or revenue options and will therefore have specific management prescriptions). If hedges are in specific CS hedge management options, these specific prescriptions should be followed by the Agreement Holder and checked on inspection, rather than the baseline requirement.

ii. Hedgerow (exempt from the cutting limitation). For hedges that are exempt from this as they need more regular cutting to maintain public safety.

Updating an Environmental Stewardship FER map

If you are using a FER map from an earlier ES agreement, you must check that it is up to date before submitting it with your CS application.

Please check and update it as follows:

1. On the ES FER map:
    a. strike out any land on the ES FER map that is not to be included in the CS application
    b. add in any new features not showing on the ES FER (for example, a new pond)
    c. identify any hedgerows that are to be exempt from the 50% annual cutting limitation, by marking them up using the symbols indicated on the CS FER base map key.
2. Compare the new CS FER base map key with your existing ES FER map key:

    If there are any features listed on the CS FER key that are not on the ES FER key mark them up on the ES FER map, using the symbols given in the CS FER base map key. (Some earlier ES FER maps did not include earth banks, scrub, bracken, boulders and rocky outcrops).

3. On the CS FER base map:

   Mark up the environmental features and soil erosion risk on any new land not included in the ES FER map.

4. Sign and date the updated ES FER map, to confirm it is complete and accurate. If you have made any annotations to the CS FER base map you will need to include both the ES FER and CS FER maps with the application.

The updated map must be clear and understandable. If we find that a FER map is not clear and understandable, we will not be able to accept it and shall ask you to complete a new FER map.

Step 4 - Complete your CS option map(s) and option annexes

Before you start

- Choose your options using the guidance given in Section 5 ‘The Wildlife Offers’ of the MT manual.
- If you have been sent a combined FER/CS Options map please complete separate FER and options maps. You will have to print two copies of the map, one for your FER and one for your options
- If you have requested a postal application and do not have enough space to add all of your options to the data sheet table in an annex, photocopy the relevant annex before you use it as a continuation sheet. Where you have used continuation sheet(s), please indicate this on the relevant data sheet and on the Confirmation of attached application form and supporting documents page at the end of the application form, attach them securely to your application.

If you cannot make a copy, please use your own continuation sheet(s), and make sure that you include all of the information required in the related data sheet.

Complete the CS options map for multi-annual options in your Mid Tier Offer application

For each CS non-rotational option you wish to include, complete the CS Options map(s) as follows:

- mark every instance of the option using the appropriate colour specified on the Options map key and
- write the appropriate option code, using a black pen, on or against the option in each place where you have marked it on your Options map(s).

Please take care to measure option lengths or areas and then calculate values accurately as errors may lead to the reduction of payments and to penalties being imposed.

For double sided hedges you will have to add the hedge twice, either side of the boundary.

This is only allowed where both sides of the boundary are registered on the Rural Land Register. If one side has not been registered you are only allowed a single sided hedge.

Now complete the application Annexes

On the ‘START HERE’ tab fill in name of lead applicant, SBI and application ID.

Annex 1: Land summary

This worksheet must be completed for all applications.

Please check that Annex 1 has been pre-populated with all of the land parcels relevant to your application.

You must complete the ‘Runoff/Soil erosion risk’ and ‘Land use of non-declared BPS land’, if these apply to your land.

Purpose: to provide details of land parcels included in the application.

Column heading	Action required
Field parcel/OS Map Sheet Ref/National Grid Ref.	Details of all of the land parcels relating to your application will be pre-populated in these columns. If you find that some of your eligible land parcels are not shown in Annex 1 check whether the parcels are visible on the map(s) provided with your application pack. If so, add the details of the parcel to this sheet, otherwise please contact us.
Parcel name	Fill in the parcel name if there is one. If you do not have a name for your parcel, repeat the field parcel reference
Total land parcel size	Pre-populated
LFA Status	Use the key at the top of the annex to choose the appropriate status.
Will Rotational options be included on this parcel	Confirm if the parcel will have rotational options applied to it at any point in the lifetime of the agreement.
Run-off/soil erosion risk?	For more information on run-off/soil erosion see Step 3 - Complete your Farm Environment Record Map(s)
Land use for land not declared or claimed for BPS	Enter compatible land use codes for these parcels as requested. For the latest list of land use codes go to the ‘BPS page on GOV.UK.

Annex 2: Options

This worksheet must be completed for all applications.

Purpose: to provide apply for multi-annual options

Column heading	Action required
Parcel name	Select from the drop down list
Rotational or Non-rotational option?	Select from the drop down list
Option	Select the option you wish to apply to that parcel from the drop down list. If the option you wish to use does not appear, make sure you have selected the right option in the 'Rotational or Non-rotational option' column.
Quantity	For ha and tonnes add the quantity to 4 decimal places. For metres use whole numbers.

You must also check the 'Application summary' tab to make sure you have met the option requirements for the Offer you are applying for. For each category in the assessment box it will state 'Passed' if the requirements have been met or will provide guidance as to the options you need to include to meet the requirements.

The 'Application summary' also provides a useful summary of the financial value of your application. This annex is automatically populated as you complete annexes 1 and 2.

Return to the application form

Step 5 - Complete remaining questions in Section 2

Question 11.

Confirm that you have completed your FER and CS options(s) map(s) following the guidance above.

Question 12

a) After following Step 3 of this guidance confirm whether or not any of the land is at moderate to high risk from run-off or soil erosion.
b) **If you tick 'Yes'** to 12 (a), answer question 12 (b) as '**Yes**' (once you have completed the FER map and Annex 1)

Step 6 – Complete Section 3: Checklist

Complete the checklist to confirm that you have fully completed your application and attached all required supporting documents, approvals, evidence and photographs.

Step 7 - Complete Section 4: Declaration and undertakings

Complete Section 4 to confirm that you have read and understood the requirements of the Countryside Stewardship scheme and the undertakings that you are making in submitting your application.

- Read the declaration, undertakings and warning carefully.
- Ignore references to the Evidence Annex
- Sign Section 4 and enter your name in block capital letters, your capacity (for example Company Director, Agent) and the date of your signature.

The party/parties that sign the application at Section 4 must have full authority and capacity to represent and bind the applicant.

If the applicant is a partnership and the partners have not appointed an Application Submission Agent, all partners must sign.

Step 8 - Submit your application

Please send all sections of the completed form together with annexes, maps and other supporting documents to us. If you received your application pack by email, reply to the email and attach your completed application to it.

You must sign your application and any supporting forms by hand. If you submit by email you must print out the relevant section(s)/form(s), sign them, scan them and attach them in the email. Put 'Application – CS – Wildlife Offers' in the email subject heading. You must also put your SBI and Application ID number in your email and check they're on everything you send to us.

If you want to return a paper application, post it to:

Rural Payments Agency (CS), PO Box 324, Worksop S95 1DF

Please put your SBI and Application ID number on everything you send to us.

We recommend that you get proof of postage for any documents you send to us by post. You should keep a copy of your completed application form and your FER and Options maps.

What happens next?

What happens once we receive your application?

We will check that:

- you meet the eligibility requirements
- all the necessary details have been entered on your application form and annexes
- all of your maps have been completed.

If your application fails any of these checks, we will contact you to explain what is wrong and how the failed check(s) can be corrected (if applicable).

What will happen if your application has been successful?

Subject to any changes agreed with your Rural Payments Agency adviser, we will offer you an agreement.

What will happen if your application has been unsuccessful?

We will tell you if your application has not been successful and explain why.

You can submit a written representation to us and we will review your case.

Follow us on social media

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YouTube: Rural Payments Agency

This document is also available on our website at www.gov.uk/rpa/cs

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