



Rural Payments
Agency

Full options prescriptions and descriptions 2021

Contents

AB1: Nectar flower mix.....	14
AB2: Basic overwinter stubble.....	19
AB3: Beetle banks.....	22
AB4: Skylark plots.....	26
AB5: Nesting plots for lapwing (and in Higher Tier, stone curlew).....	30
AB6: Enhanced overwinter stubble.....	34
AB7: Whole crop cereals.....	38
AB8: Flower-rich margins and plots.....	42
AB9: Winter bird food.....	47
AB10: Unharvested cereal headland.....	53
AB11: Cultivated areas for arable plants.....	57
AB12: Supplementary winter feeding for farmland birds.....	61
AB13: Brassica fodder crop.....	67
AB14: Harvested low input cereal.....	70
AB15: Two year sown legume fallow.....	74
AB16: Autumn sown bumblebird mix.....	78
AC1: Access capital items.....	83
AC2: Countryside educational access visits accreditation.....	85
AQ1: Automatic slurry scraper.....	86
AQ2: Low ammonia emission flooring for livestock buildings.....	89
BE1: Protection of in-field trees on arable land.....	92
BE2: Protection of in-field trees on intensive grassland.....	96

BE3: Management of hedgerows	100
BE4: Management of traditional orchards.....	104
BE5: Creation of traditional orchards	108
BE6: Veteran tree surgery.....	112
BE7: Supplement for restorative pruning of fruit trees	116
BN1: Stone-faced bank repair.....	119
BN2: Stone-faced bank restoration	122
BN3: Earth bank creation	125
BN4: Earth bank restoration	127
BN5: Hedgerow laying.....	129
BN6: Hedgerow coppicing.....	133
BN7: Hedgerow gapping-up.....	137
BN8: Hedgerow supplement - casting up.....	141
BN9: Hedgerow supplement - substantial pre-work.....	143
BN10: Hedgerow supplement - top binding and staking	146
BN11: Planting new hedges	148
BN12: Stone wall restoration.....	152
BN13: Top wiring - stone wall	156
BN14: Stone wall supplement - stone from quarry.....	159
BN15: Stone wall supplement - difficult sites	162
CT1: Management of coastal sand dunes and vegetated shingle	164
CT2: Creation of coastal sand dunes and vegetated shingle on arable land and improved grassland.....	168

CT3: Management of coastal saltmarsh	172
CT4: Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on arable land	176
CT5: Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat by non-intervention	181
CT6: Coastal vegetation management supplement	186
CT7: Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on intensive grassland	188
ED1: Educational access	193
FG1: Fencing.....	196
FG2: Sheep netting	199
FG3: Permanent electric fencing.....	202
FG4: Rabbit fencing supplement.....	205
FG5: Fencing supplement - difficult sites	207
FG7: Anti-predator combination fencing	209
FG8: Anti-predator temporary electric fencing	213
FG9: Deer fencing	217
FG10: Temporary deer fencing	220
FG11: Deer exclosure plot	223
FG12: Wooden field gate	226
FG13: Stone gate post	230
FG14: Badger gate.....	232
FG15: Water gates	235
FG16: Deer pedestrian gate.....	238
FG17: Deer vehicle gate	240
FM1: Management of geodiversity features.....	243

FM2: Major preparatory works for priority habitats (creation and restoration) and priority species	245
FY1: Deer high seat	248
FY2: Woodland infrastructure	250
GS1: Take small areas out of management.....	253
GS2: Permanent grassland with very low inputs (outside SDAs)	256
GS3: Ryegrass seed-set as winter food for birds.....	262
GS4: Legume and herb-rich swards	266
GS5: Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs.....	270
GS6: Management of species-rich grassland	276
GS7: Restoration towards species-rich grassland	282
GS8: Creation of species-rich grassland.....	286
GS9: Management of wet grassland for breeding waders	290
GS10: Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl.....	296
GS11: Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders	302
GS12: Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl	306
GS13: Management of grassland for target features	310
GS14: Creation of grassland for target features	315
GS15: Haymaking supplement	319
GS16: Rush infestation control supplement.....	322
GS17: Lenient grazing supplement.....	326
HE1: Historic and archaeological feature protection	330
HE2: Historic building restoration.....	333

HE3: Removal of eyesore	337
HS1: Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings.....	339
HS2: Take historic and archaeological features out of cultivation.....	344
HS3: Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on historic and archaeological features	347
HS4: Scrub control on historic and archaeological features	351
HS5: Management of historic and archaeological features on grassland	355
HS6: Maintenance of designed/engineered water bodies.....	358
HS7: Management of historic water meadows through traditional irrigation	362
HS8: Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings in remote areas	367
HS9: Restricted depth crop establishment to protect archaeology under an arable rotation	372
LH1: Management of lowland heathland.....	378
LH2: Restoration of forestry and woodland to lowland heathland.....	382
LH3: Creation of heathland from arable or improved grassland	387
LV1: Cattle grid.....	391
LV2: Livestock handling facilities	393
LV3: Hard bases for livestock drinkers.....	396
LV4: Hard bases for livestock feeders	399
LV5: Pasture pumps and associated pipework	401
LV6: Ram pumps and associated pipework.....	404
LV7: Livestock troughs	407

LV8: Pipework associated with livestock troughs.....	410
OP1: Overwintered stubble	413
OP2: Wild bird seed mixture.....	416
OP3: Supplementary feeding for farmland birds	423
OP4: Multi species ley.....	427
OP5: Undersown cereal	430
OR1: Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland	433
OR2: Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland	436
OR3: Organic conversion – rotational land	439
OR4: Organic conversion - horticulture	442
OR5: Organic conversion - top fruit.....	445
OT1: Organic land management - improved permanent grassland	448
OT2: Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland....	451
OT3: Organic land management - rotational land	454
OT4: Organic land management - horticulture	457
OT5: Organic land management - top fruit.....	460
OT6: Organic land management - enclosed rough grazing	463
PA1: Implementation plan	466
PA2: Feasibility study	468
PA3: Woodland management plan	470
RP1: Resurfacing of gateways.....	472
RP2: Gateway relocation.....	475
RP3: Watercourse crossings.....	478

RP4: Livestock and machinery hardcore tracks.....	481
RP5: Cross drains	486
RP6: Installation of piped culverts in ditches.....	490
RP7: Sediment ponds and traps	494
RP8: Constructed wetlands for the treatment of pollution.....	498
RP9: Earth banks and soil bunds	502
RP10: Silt filtration dams or seepage barriers.....	506
RP11: Swales.....	510
RP12: Check dams	514
RP13: Yard - underground drainage pipework.....	518
RP14: Yard inspection pit.....	521
RP15: Concrete yard renewal	525
RP16: Rainwater goods	529
RP17: Storage tanks underground.....	532
RP18: Above ground tanks	536
RP19: First flush rainwater diverters and downpipe filters.....	540
RP20: Relocation of sheep dips and pens	543
RP21: Relocation of sheep pens only	547
RP22: Sheep dip drainage aprons and sumps	551
RP23: Installation of livestock drinking troughs (in draining pens for freshly dipped sheep).....	555
RP24: Lined biobed plus pesticide loading and washdown area	558
RP25: Lined biobed with existing washdown area.....	565

RP26: Biofilters.....	569
RP27: Sprayer or applicator load and washdown area.....	573
RP28: Roofing (sprayer washdown area, manure storage area, livestock gathering area, slurry stores, silage stores).....	577
RP29: Self-supporting covers for slurry and anaerobic digestate stores	582
RP30: Floating covers for slurry and anaerobic digestate stores and lagoons.....	585
RP31: Equipment to disrupt tramlines in arable areas.....	588
RP32: Small leaky woody dams.....	591
RP33: Large leaky woody dams	594
SB1: Scrub control and felling diseased trees	597
SB2: Scrub control - difficult sites	601
SB3: Tree removal	604
SB4: Chemical bracken control.....	606
SB5: Mechanical bracken control.....	610
SB6: Rhododendron control.....	614
SP1: Difficult sites supplement.....	618
SP2: Raised water level supplement	621
SP3: Bracken control supplement.....	625
SP4: Control of invasive plant species supplement	628
SP5: Shepherding supplement	632
SP6: Cattle grazing supplement.....	635
SP7: Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly	638
SP8: Native breeds at risk supplement.....	640

SP9: Threatened species supplement	643
SP10: Administration of group managed agreements supplement.....	652
SW1: 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land	655
SW2: 4m to 6m buffer strip on intensive grassland.....	659
SW3: In-field grass strips	663
SW4: 12m to 24m watercourse buffer strip on cultivated land.....	667
SW5: Enhanced management of maize crops	670
SW6: Winter cover crops.....	673
SW7: Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input	677
SW8: Management of intensive grassland adjacent to a watercourse ...	682
SW9: Seasonal livestock removal on intensive grassland	687
SW10: Seasonal livestock removal on grassland in SDAs next to streams, rivers and lakes	690
SW11: Riparian management strip	693
SW12: Making space for water	697
SW13: Very low nitrogen inputs to groundwaters	702
SW14: Nil fertiliser supplement	705
SW15: Flood mitigation on arable reversion to grassland.....	708
SW16: Flood mitigation on permanent grassland	712
TE1: Planting standard hedgerow tree.....	716
TE2: Planting standard parkland tree.....	719
TE3: Planting fruit trees.....	721
TE4: Supply and plant tree.....	724

TE5: Supplement for use of individual tree-shelters	732
TE6: Tree guard (tube and mesh).....	734
TE7: Tree guard (wood post and rail)	737
TE8: Tree guard (wood post and wire).....	740
TE9: Parkland tree guard - welded steel.....	743
TE10: Coppicing bankside trees	745
TE11: Tree surgery	748
TE12: Stump grinding.....	752
TE13: Creation of dead wood habitat on trees.....	754
TE14: Identification of orchard fruit tree varieties.....	759
UP1: Enclosed rough grazing	761
UP2: Management of rough grazing for birds	766
UP3: Management of moorland	772
UP4: Management of moorland vegetation supplement.....	776
UP5: Moorland re-wetting supplement.....	780
UP6: Upland livestock exclusion supplement	783
WB1: Small wildlife box.....	786
WB2: Medium wildlife box	790
WB3: Large wildlife box.....	793
WD1: Woodland creation - maintenance payments.....	796
WD2: Woodland improvement	798
WD3: Woodland edges on arable land	801
WD4: Management of wood pasture and parkland.....	804

WD5: Restoration of wood pasture and parkland	811
WD6: Creation of wood pasture	817
WD7: Management of successional areas and scrub	821
WD8: Creation of successional areas and scrub	825
WD9: Livestock exclusion supplement - scrub and successional areas .	829
WN1: Grip blocking drainage channels	832
WN2: Creation of scrapes and gutters	836
WN3: Ditch, dyke and rhine restoration	840
WN4: Ditch, dyke and rhine creation.....	844
WN5: Pond management (less than 100 square metres)	847
WN6: Pond management (more than 100 square metres)	851
WN7: Restoration of large water bodies	854
WN8: Timber sluice	856
WN9: Brick, stone or concrete sluice	859
WN10: Construction of water penning structures.....	862
WT1: Buffering in-field ponds and ditches in improved grassland	865
WT2: Buffering in-field ponds and ditches on arable land.....	868
WT3: Management of ditches of high environmental value	871
WT4: Pond management (less than 100 square metres)	876
WT5: Pond management (more than 100 square metres).....	879
WT6: Management of reedbed	882
WT7: Creation of reedbed	885
WT8: Management of fen.....	889

WT9: Creation of fen	893
WT10: Management of lowland raised bog.....	897
WT11: Wetland cutting supplement	901
WT12: Wetland grazing supplement	903

AB1: Nectar flower mix

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the nectar flower mix option.

How much will be paid

£511 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier

- Whole or part parcel
- Rotational
- Only on:
 - arable land
 - temporary grass
 - bush orchards

Where this option cannot be used

- On organic land or on land in conversion to organic status

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides areas of flowering plants to boost essential food sources for beneficial pollinators such as bumble bees, solitary bees, butterflies and hoverflies.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Establish in blocks or strips between 1 March and 15 September by sowing a grass-free seed mix which contains a minimum of 6 flower species. At least 2 of these must be from the following list.

- Common knapweed

- Musk mallow
- Oxeye daisy
- Wild carrot
- Yarrow

Once established in the first year, the seed mix, will provide a supply of pollen and nectar rich flowers.

Management will ensure there is sustained flowering throughout the spring and summer.

In the winter the whole plot of flowering plants will be cut or grazed, and the dead material removed, in preparation for regrowth during the spring.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- graze between 15 March and 31 August
- allow a single species to exceed 50% of the total seed mix by weight.

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

In the first 12 months after sowing you can regularly cut, to help the sown species to establish.

You then manage established nectar flower mix plots as follows.

Rotationally cut half (50%) of the plot area each year between 15 May and 15 June – do not cut the same area in successive years

Cut the whole plot (100%) each year between 15 September and 30 March

Remove or shred cuttings to prevent weed ingress and patches of dead material developing.

Keeping records

Where there's uncertainty about whether or not the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept to demonstrate delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Seed invoices
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Stock records to show grazing activity on parcels in particular to cover the period where grazing is prohibited.
- Photographs of the established mixture

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

Use lower-yielding areas with a sunny aspect, facing south or south-southwest.

Avoid planting under overhanging trees, next to tall hedges or on land facing north or east. Leave access to surrounding crops to allow for management.

Block and plot sizes

Use wide margins and big blocks between 0.25ha and 0.5ha. This lets insects move to safety when fields are being sprayed.

Spacing five 0.5ha patches evenly within 100ha meets the food needs of many pollinators.

What to sow

A seed mix which contains both shorter-lived legumes and longer-lived wild flower species delivers an extended supply of pollen and nectar from late spring through to the autumn for beneficial insects such as bees, butterflies, hoverflies and moths.

You can sow the following example mix on a range of soil types.

Flower species	% inclusion rate
Alsike clover	10
Bird's-foot trefoil	10
Black medick	5
Common vetch	40
Early flowering red clover	10
Late flowering red clover	10
Lucerne	5
Sweet clover	5
Common knapweed	1.5
Musk mallow	1
Oxeye daisy	1
Wild carrot	1
Yarrow	0.5
Total	100

Sow the seed mix at 15 kg/ha.

On light free draining soils you can replace common vetch with sainfoin.

Avoid short-term mixes that do not include knapweed or mallow as they will not supply pollinators with long-term food sources for years 4 and 5 of the agreement.

How to sow

Sow by broadcasting seeds rather than drilling, when the soil is warm and moist. Use a ring roll before and after sowing. Check regularly for slug damage.

Management

Cut emerging flowers and weeds at least twice in year 1, and up to 4 times if necessary where the soil is particularly fertile. Regular cutting prevents weeds smothering the slow-growing flowers so all sown species can establish successfully.

Plots may be grazed between 1 September and 14 March, but make sure that no poaching or soil compaction by livestock takes place.

Supplementary feeding could result in poaching and soil compaction, so should be avoided.

Remember you must keep nectar plots until at least 31 December in year 5 of the agreement.

Further information

Order the 'Growing farm wildlife' DVD from Natural England which gives a step-by-step approach to sowing nectar flower mixtures.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) including how to apply.

AB2: Basic overwinter stubble

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the basic overwinter stubble option.

How much will be paid

£84 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part parcels in rotation on stubble that follows the harvest of:

- cereals (not maize)
- oilseed rape
- linseed

Where this option cannot be used

- Parcels at risk of soil erosion or runoff, as identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER)
- Organic land or land in conversion to organic status

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides a winter food source for seed-eating birds, which feed on spilt grain and the seeds of broad-leaved weeds. It also provides a foraging habitat for brown hare.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

After the harvest there will be stubble until mid-February.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, do not carry out any of the following activities:

- apply pre-harvest desiccants
- apply post-harvest herbicides
- apply any fertilisers, manures or lime to the stubble
- top or graze

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option we recommend that you use best practice.

- Keep the stubble from harvest to 15 February each year.

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- An annual record of the location of the rotational options
- Field operation records at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Photographs of the stubble area

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

This option suits most soil types but works best when arable plants in the soil seedbank create a range of natural habitats that can support different wildlife.

The best overwinter stubbles come from spring sown crops, especially barley.

Blocks or plot sizes

Spread basic stubbles widely across the farm to help connect farmland wildlife with other farm habitats.

This option delivers most of its benefits at a larger scale, which provides the best opportunities for foraging and feeding. Very small areas of stubble at the edge of fields (or in areas of poor soil condition) are not suitable.

This option is designed to rotate around the farm so it:

- fits in with the crop rotations
- gives the most benefit for biodiversity

Enhance basic stubble

Enhance the stubble by broadcasting beneficial seed and nectar-producing plants, such as mustard and fodder radish. Do this after harvest on a maximum of 10% of the stubble area.

Use the stubble as areas for supplementary feeding when they are next to winter bird food plots.

Rotational management

Stubbles should be in place from harvest until at least 31 December in year 5 of the agreement, after which time you can then return it to the rotation.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB3: Beetle banks

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the beetle banks option

How much will be paid

£573 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier

Whole or part parcel

Only on:

- arable land
- temporary grassland

Where this option cannot be used

- On historic or archaeological features identified in your HEFER or FER

Related Mid Tier options

The following options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option:

- [OR3 – Organic conversion – rotational land](#)
- [OR4 – Organic conversion - horticulture](#)
- [OT3 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)
- [OT4 – Organic land management – horticulture](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides nesting and foraging habitats for:

- bumblebees
- small mammals
- some farmland birds

- beneficial insects which feed on crop pests

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be a raised bank, measuring between 3m to 5m wide and at least 0.4m high, with a dense grass cover. This will be established during the first year and maintained for the duration of the agreement.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- apply any fertilisers, manures or lime
- use any pesticides, except for herbicides to weed-wipe or spot-treat for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles or bracken

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- create or maintain an earth ridge, measuring between 3m to 5m wide and at least 0.4m high
- leave gaps no more than 25m wide at each end of the ridge to allow access for machinery
- establish or maintain a tussocky grass mixture in year 1 of the agreement
- cut the established mixture to control woody growth and suckering species - cut after 1 August to protect nesting invertebrates

Keeping records

Where there's uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operation records at parcel level, including associated invoices

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

This option is suitable for most soil types but especially where it is possible to form a free-draining raised bank. This will leave the upper bank area dry for insects to hibernate securely. It works best on larger fields as it is designed to provide the most benefit in more open landscapes. It can also help to slow down or stop soil erosion.

Blocks and plot sizes

Spread beetle banks widely across the farm to help connect farmland wildlife with other farm habitats.

What to sow

Sow a mixture of fine-leaved grasses such as red fescue together with some tussock-forming varieties like tall fescue, timothy and cocksfoot.

Establish the bank

Plough in 2 directions towards each furrow to create the required size, followed by shallow cultivation of the bank to produce a firm, fine seedbed if needed.

Broadcast the grass seed mixture on to the seedbed and roll. This will keep moisture in the soil. Do not overwork the bank, as this can cause a loss in overall height.

When to cut

Cut the grass several times during the first summer to help it establish, but avoid cutting when the bank is wet to stop the soil compacting.

After year 1 only cut:

- after 1 August to protect any nesting invertebrates and beneficial insects
- to control parts of the bank where woody species or invasive perennial weeds such as creeping or spear thistle are growing

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB4: Skylark plots

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the skylark plots option

How much will be paid

£18 (£9 per plot, minimum 2 plots per hectare (ha)).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier

Rotational

Only:

- on arable land
- on temporary grassland
- in winter cereal fields with an open aspect of more than 5ha

Where this option cannot be used

- In parcels bounded by tree lines or adjacent to woods, unless the parcel is larger than 10ha

Related Mid Tier options

The following options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option:

- [HS3 – Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on historic and archaeological features](#)
- [HS9 – Restricted depth crop establishment to protect archaeology under an arable rotation](#)
- [OR3 – Organic conversion – rotational land](#)
- [OT3 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides skylarks with suitable access to nesting habitats in winter cereal crops throughout their breeding season.

If successful there will be:

- plots providing access into the growing cereal during the spring and summer
- skylarks holding territory and singing over the fields of winter cereals where the plots are located and, ideally, landing in the plots themselves
- increased numbers of singing skylarks across the farm

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the autumn/winter fallow plots will be created within the winter cereal crop. There will be a minimum of 2 plots per ha and each plot will be at least 3 metres (m) wide and will have a minimum area of 16 square metres. These plots will be retained until the crop is harvested.

Prohibited Activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- locate plots in tramlines, boundaries and margins (as this increases nest predation)

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- create fallow plots at least 3m wide and with a minimum area of 16 square metres in winter cereal fields
- space plots across the field at a minimum density of 2 plots per ha

Keeping records

Where there's uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Photographs of the plots

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

This option works best in large, open winter cereal fields, preferably where skylarks are present or have been in the past. Avoid fields that are bordered by trees or next to woods as this increases the risks of predator attack.

Minimise attacks on nests from predators by placing plots:

- away from tramlines (choosing a middle spot between two sets of tramlines works best)
- at least 50m from field boundaries and margins

How to establish skylark plots

Create plots by **one** of the following.

- Turning off the drill during sowing to leave an unsown plot
- Sowing the crop as normal and spraying with herbicide to create the plot by 31 December

Managing the plots

After drilling, the plots can be managed with the same treatments as the remainder of the field.

There is no need to keep the plots weed-free but spot-treating with herbicide in April will help skylarks to access their nesting sites.

Mechanical weeding of crops containing skylark plots will destroy any nests present and is not recommended.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB5: Nesting plots for lapwing (and in Higher Tier, stone curlew)

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the nesting plots for lapwing and stone curlew option.

How much will be paid

£524 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier

Whole or part parcel

Rotational

Only on:

- arable land
- temporary grassland

Where this option cannot be used

- On parcels that are at risk of soil erosion or runoff as identified in the Farm Environment Record (FER)
- On historic or archaeological features identified in your HEFER or FER

Related Mid Tier options

The following options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 – Organic conversion – rotational land](#)
- [OR4 – Organic conversion - horticulture](#)
- [OT3 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)
- [OT4 – Organic land management – horticulture](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides nesting sites for lapwing (and where applicable, stone curlew) on arable land. The plots can also benefit other declining farmland birds, brown hare and some important arable plants.

If successful there will be:

- lapwing using plots for nesting and raising their young
- other farmland birds, brown hare and arable plants on the plot areas

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

By early spring, the uncropped fallow plot (a minimum of 1ha and a maximum of 5ha in size) will be established within the crop. The fallow plot will have enough bare ground (at least 30%) for nesting birds. Where natural regeneration covers more than 70% of the plot, suitable bare-ground habitat will be restored by late April, making sure first that no nesting birds are present on the plots.

Retain the plot until the crop is harvested from late July.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Locate plots within 100 metres (m) of woods, in-field and hedgerow trees, buildings, overhead power lines, main roads and public rights of way, or within 200m of wind turbines

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you have not carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you employ best practice.

We recommend that you:

- create individual plots in fields which must be a minimum of 5ha (or 10ha if woodland forms at least a quarter of the field boundary)
- plots may be in a fixed location in or rotated around eligible fields
- create the cultivated plots by 20 March
- where natural regeneration covers more than 70% of the plot by 30 April, restore suitable bare-ground nesting habitat making sure first that no nesting birds are present on the plots
- retain cultivated areas until 31 July.

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Photographs of the plot

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

Research shows that plots should be located:

- on level or slightly sloping ground
- next to extensively managed grassland where lapwings can feed their chicks
- on arable fields of at least 5ha, or 10ha if woodland forms at least a quarter of the field boundary
- away from waterlogged areas or land with weeds such as black-grass, wild oats or sterile brome
- at least 100m away from woods, in-field and hedgerow trees, buildings, overhead power-lines, main roads and public rights of way
- at least 200m away from wind turbines

This option can be used in a sequence with basic overwinter stubble to provide a continuity of habitat for species such as skylark and corn bunting.

How to establish the plots

Plots can be established by cultivation or spraying to create the fallow.

On heavier soils, plots can be ploughed the previous autumn and allowed to weather down to provide suitable nesting conditions in early spring.

Managing the plots

Machinery carrying out day to day farm operations such as spraying and fertilising can travel over these plots provided that the machinery keeps to the tramlines and is switched off when doing so.

Plots and plot tramlines should be checked for signs of nests prior to such travel taking place.

Nesting plots for stone curlews

There are specific areas in England where stone curlews are the target farmland bird for nesting plots. These plots and their specific management requirements will be available under Higher Tier.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB6: Enhanced overwinter stubble

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the enhanced overwinter stubble option.

How much will be paid

£436 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier

Whole or part parcel

Rotational

Only on stubble that follows the harvest of:

- cereals (not maize)
- oilseed rape
- linseed

Where this option cannot be used

- On parcels at risk of soil erosion or runoff, as identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Related Mid Tier options

The following options can be located on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 – Organic conversion – rotational land](#)
- [OT3 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides important winter food sources for seed-eating birds, spring and summer foraging and nesting habitat for other farmland birds and undisturbed habitat for other farmland wildlife including many pollinators.

If successful there will be:

- naturally occurring arable plants providing seed and forage during winter, spring and summer
- farmland birds and pollinating insects using the winter stubble and spring fallow area
- only low populations of blackgrass plants in the late spring that need targeted spraying

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

After harvest, the stubble from the summer's crop will be left until the 31 July of the following year providing important seed and forage for farmland birds during the autumn and winter.

Prohibited Activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- use pre-harvest desiccants
- apply fertilisers, manures or lime to the stubble
- apply pesticides to the stubble, except herbicides to control problem grass weeds by spraying the affected area from 15 May
- top or graze

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- retain the stubble and any subsequent regeneration until 31 July of the following year after harvest
- return the stubble to the farm rotation from 1 August each year

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Location of option within your annual claim

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

This option can be used on most soil types but ideally choose a location with:

- low levels of blackgrass or without a thistle problem as this avoids the need to spray after 15 May and lets arable flora set seed in late spring to early summer
- arable plants in the soil seedbank, which provide natural insect-rich habitats for foraging farmland birds

Block sizes or plots

Spread enhanced stubble widely across the farm to help connect farmland wildlife with other farm habitats, and to provide some benefits for blackgrass control later in the season.

Make sure this option is planned into the farm rotation by selecting enough appropriately sized fields with a low blackgrass burden.

Rotational management

Remember that the stubble should be in place from harvest until at least 31 December in year 5 of the agreement, after which time it can be returned to the rotation.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB7: Whole crop cereals

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the whole crop cereals option.

How much will be paid

£495 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part parcels on a rotational basis on:

- arable land
- temporary grassland

Where this option cannot be used

- On parcels at risk of soil erosion or runoff, as identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Related Mid Tier options

You can locate the following options on the same area as this option.

- [HS3 – Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on historic and archaeological features](#)
- [HS9 – Restricted depth crop establishment to protect archaeology under an arable rotation](#)
- [OR3 – Organic conversion – rotational land](#)
- [OT3 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides a valuable seed source in grass-dominated areas, from any unripe spilt grain after harvest and from the stubble in winter. It also delivers resource protection benefits when compared to maize.

During the summer there will be foraging for declining and localised farmland birds, small mammals and pollinator species such as bees and other beneficial insects.

A weedy stubble will provide over-wintering habitat for insects and seed eating farmland birds.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Establish a spring cereal crop (not maize) and harvest as a whole crop. Leave the stubble until the following spring.

The stubble will provide a habitat throughout the autumn and winter, until the following spring.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- apply any herbicides except those on the list of [permitted active ingredients](#)
- apply any insecticides between 15 March and the following harvest
- apply any fertilisers, manures or lime to the stubble
- top or graze

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- establish a cereal crop (not maize) between February and April every year
- harvest as whole crop cereals - this means you must harvest the crop whole as grain and straw and remove from the field
- retain the stubble from harvest until 15 February

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Photographs of the stubble area

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful but they are not requirements for this item.

Stubbles in the rotation

The best overwinter stubbles come from spring-sown crops, especially barley and those that receive limited herbicide. Also, the spring crop following these stubbles can benefit farmland wildlife, especially if it is combined with another arable option.

For example, a low-input spring crop can provide habitats for spring-germinating arable plants, as well as nesting and feeding habitat for birds and brown hares.

Managing the whole crop option

You can enhance whole crop cereal stubbles by broadcasting beneficial seed and nectar-producing plants, such as mustard and fodder radish, on small areas during or after harvest up to a maximum of 10% of the total whole crop stubble area. This will provide additional feeding and foraging value.

You can also use the stubbles as areas for supplementary feeding when they are next to winter bird food plots.

Rotational management

Remember that stubbles should be in place from harvest to at least 31 December in year 5 of the agreement, after which you can return it to the rotation.

Managing AB7 for priority seed-eating farmland birds

The AB7 whole crop cereals option can be very successful in supporting priority seed-eating birds such as circl buntings. Delaying harvest as late as possible is beneficial but you must still harvest it as a whole crop cereal.

Permitted active ingredients

You can use the following herbicide active ingredients.

- Amidosulfuron
- Clodinafop-propargyl
- Fenoxaprop-P-ethyl
- Pinoxaden
- Tri-allate

The permitted active ingredients cannot necessarily be used on all eligible crops within options AB7, AB10 and AB14. It's your responsibility to confirm whether herbicides are approved for use on the affected crop. Always use pesticides in full accordance with the product label conditions of use.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB8: Flower-rich margins and plots

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the flower-rich margins and plots option.

How much will be paid

£539 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part parcels on:

- arable land
- temporary grassland
- bush orchards

Where this option cannot be used

- Adjacent to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or other botanically valuable sites as identified on the Environmental Information Map

Related Mid Tier options

You can locate the following options on the same area as these options.

- [OR3 – Organic conversion – rotational land](#)
- [OR4 – Organic conversion – horticulture](#)
- [OR5 – Organic conversion – top fruit](#)
- [OT3 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)
- [OT4 – Organic land management – horticulture](#)
- [OT5 – Organic land management – top fruit](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

Flower-rich grass margins or plots provide important habitat and foraging sites for invertebrates, including wild pollinators such as bumblebees, solitary bees, butterflies and hoverflies, and farmland birds like the yellowhammer.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

In year 1, a margin or plot will be established in the spring/summer/early autumn. The seed mix will contain a minimum of 4 grass species and 10 wildflower species. The grass component will not exceed 90% of the total seed mix by weight. No individual flower species will exceed 25% of the total wildflower species component by weight.

Once established, the margin/plot will flower throughout the summer to provide an abundant supply of pollen and nectar.

In the late summer / autumn, cutting or grazing the majority of the margin or plot allows for new growth in the spring whilst the remainder provides a refuge for wildlife. Dense cuttings will be removed.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- sow the seed mix between April/May and early September (mid to late summer is usually the best time to sow wildflowers)
- sow the wildflower species component at a minimum seed rate of 2 kilograms (kg) per hectare
- in the first 12 months after sowing, cut the margin or plot regularly to help the sown species to establish

- cuttings should be removed or shredded to prevent weed ingress and patches of dead material developing

When flower rich margins and plots are fully established (typically from the second spring after sowing) you should manage as follows.

- Cut in the spring (before April) if necessary to prevent grasses smothering the flowering species
- Cut or graze up to 90% of the margin/plot area each year between 15 August and 31 October to leave a plant height of between 10 centimetres (cm) and 20cm. Leave at least 10% of the area uncut or un-grazed

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Seed invoices
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- Photographs of the margin or plot

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

You cannot use this option adjacent to SSSIs or other botanically valuable sites, as there is potential for contamination of natural plant communities with the sown species. Avoid fields (or parts of fields) in such locations.

Use lower yielding areas if they have a sunny aspect, or face south or south-southwest. Avoid planting under overhanging trees, next to tall hedges or on land facing north or east. Leave access to surrounding crops to allow for management.

Avoid very fertile soils and areas infested with injurious weeds such as creeping thistle, docks, nettles and common ragwort.

This option **should not** be established in field locations known to support important groups of rare arable plants.

Block and plot sizes

Wide margins and big blocks let insects move to safety when you are spraying fields. Spacing 5 patches of 0.5ha evenly within 100ha meets the food needs of many pollinators.

What to sow

The seed mix should contain both grasses and perennial flowering plants, such as:

- slender red fescue
- sorrel
- sheep's fescue
- bird's-foot trefoil
- smooth-stalked meadow grass
- ribwort plantain
- smaller cat's-tail
- yellow rattle
- crested dog's-tail
- self heal
- common bent
- yarrow
- sweet vernal grass
- wild carrot
- black knapweed
- lady's bedstraw
- meadow buttercup
- ox-eye daisy

Sow at 20kg per ha to provide enough plants when the mixture is established.

Existing flower-rich plots and margins

Use existing suitable flower-rich plots or margins instead of re-sowing, provided they offer a variety of flowers that deliver a rich supply of pollen and nectar during the summer.

When to sow

To meet option requirements, establish the mix in spring or late summer / early autumn of year 1 of the agreement.

How to sow

Create a firm, consolidated, clean / sterile seed bed. Wildflower seed is very small so will not germinate if drilled too deeply. Broadcast or trickle the seed on top of the seedbed and roll or harrow to help ensure good seed to soil contact, retain moisture and reduce movement of slugs within the soil profile.

Check for slug damage and control using wildlife-friendly slug bait where necessary.

Controlling weeds

Top emerging flowers and weeds at least 3 times in year 1 for spring sowings and at least twice in year 2 for late summer / autumn sowings. Regular topping prevents weeds smothering the slow-growing flowers so that all sown species establish successfully and toppings can be left.

Before the beginning of April each year make sure vegetation is short enough to allow flower species to grow without competition from dominant grasses. Cut and remove summer growth between 15 August and 31 October to help reduce soil fertility and boost flower numbers in subsequent years.

Always leave 10% of the option area uncut or ungrazed to provide overwinter nesting and safe refuges for pollinators and other invertebrates.

Remember to retain flower-rich margins and plots until at least 31 December in year 5 of the agreement.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB9: Winter bird food

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the winter bird food option.

How much will be paid

£640 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier

Whole or part parcel

Rotational

Only on:

- arable land
- temporary grassland
- bush orchards

Where this option cannot be used

- On organic parcels or land in conversion

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides important food resources (small seeds) for farmland birds, especially in autumn and winter.

The flowering plants will benefit insects including bumblebees, solitary bees, butterflies and hoverflies.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the spring or summer, the seed mix, containing at least 6 small seed-bearing crops (not maize), will be established in blocks or strips of at least 6 metres (m) wide and between 0.4ha and 5ha in size. For 2 year mixes, during the second spring biennial plants, such as kale, will show continued growth and development.

Throughout the summer the plants will be growing and flowering.

By autumn the plants will have set seed, this will provide the much-needed supply of small seeds throughout the winter, until at least mid-February.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- allow an individual crop group to exceed 90% of the total mix by weight
- sow the following crops:
 - Artichokes
 - Canary grass
 - Giant and intermediate sorghum
 - Maize
 - Miscanthus
 - Sweet clover
 - Tic beans

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you have not carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- make sure blocks or strips are at least 6m wide and a minimum of 0.4ha in size (the maximum individual plot size is 5ha)
- establish by sowing a seed mix which contains at least 6 seed bearing crops between 15 February and 15 June. Seed mixes may contain a maximum of 3 of the following cereal crops - barley, oats, rye, triticale and wheat

- re-establish one-year mixes annually and two-year mixes every other year, to maintain seed production
- re-sow winter bird plots that fail to establish
- keep winter bird food plots until 15 February each year

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- seed invoices
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- photographs of the blocks or strips

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

Use this option on most areas of the farm but mixtures work best in sunny locations and on fertile sites.

Avoid planting underneath overhanging trees or next to shading woodland, as this leads to poorer establishment, growth and seed production.

You should place winter bird food mixes next to a field edge but they can extend into the field. Leave access to surrounding crops to allow for management.

Block and plot sizes

Creating wider and bigger areas of winter bird food allows more seeds to remain undiscovered for longer, which extends their value well into winter. It also reduces the edge effect from adjacent land, such as fertiliser or pesticide drift.

Smaller areas tend to suffer from birds eating all the food within a short time.

What to sow

Sow plants that will provide an extended supply of seeds for farmland birds from autumn into late winter.

Annual mixtures can include a range of cereal, brassica or other small-seeded crops such as:

- dwarf sunflower
- fodder radish
- gold of pleasure
- linseed
- mustard
- quinoa
- red millet
- spring barley
- spring oats
- spring triticale
- spring wheat
- white millet

Include biennial crops such as kale, stubble turnip or teasel in 2-year mixtures.

Make sure a single crop group, such as cereals or brassicas, is not more than 90% of the total seed mix by weight. The table below shows the crops most commonly sown in winter bird food seed mixes.

Crop group	Crops most commonly sown in winter bird food seed mixes
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Cereal	Barley
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Cereal	Oats
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Cereal	Red millet
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Cereal	Rye
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Cereal	Triticale
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Crop group	Crops most commonly sown in winter bird food seed mixes
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Cereal	Wheat
--------	-------

Cereal	White millet
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Brassica	Fodder radish
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Brassica	Forage rape
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Brassica	Gold of pleasure
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Brassica	Kale
----------	------

Brassica	Mustard
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Brassica	Oilseed rape
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Brassica	Stubble turnip
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Other	Buckwheat
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Other	Chicory
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Other	Dwarf sunflower
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Other	Linseed
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Other	Teasel
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To minimise the build-up of diseases, pests and weeds over time consider alternating between sowing cereal and brassica-based mixes on non-rotational plots every few years.

Structural crops

Structural crops that predominantly provide cover, and/or support for weaker stemmed crops such as barley and millet (which can be prone to lodging), can be included in the seed mix.

The following structural crops can be included:

- chicory
- dwarf sorghum
- Japanese reed millet
- sweet fennel

To ensure that these structural crops do not adversely compete with the main seed-bearing crops the following maximum seed rates are recommended:

- chicory - 0.3 kg/ha
- dwarf sorghum - 5 kg/ha
- Japanese reed millet - 2 kg/ha
- sweet fennel - 1 kg/ha

Where two or more structural crops are included in a seed mix reduce the maximum seed rate for each structural crop by 50%.

When and how to sow

Establish the plot between 1 March and 15 June, but ideally between mid-March and early June.

Create a fine and firm seedbed with seed sown at a depth between 1.5 centimetres (cm) and 2.5 cm. Moisture and warmth will help any brassicas establish quickly to protect against flea beetle damage.

Managing the option

Apply nitrogen at a minimum of 50 kilograms (kg) per ha to create sufficient growth to smother annual weeds and produce plenty of seed. You can use herbicides in some winter bird food mixes, check with a BASIS-qualified agronomist. Rotate this option to a new site of clean ground if weed problems start to build up.

Winter bird food should be in place until at least 31 December in year 5 of the agreement.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB10: Unharvested cereal headland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the unharvested cereal headland option.

How much will be paid

£640 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part parcels in rotation on:

- arable land
- temporary grassland

Related Mid Tier options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [HS3 – Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on historic and archaeological features](#)
- [HS9 – Restricted depth crop establishment to protect archaeology under an arable rotation](#)
- [OR3 – Organic conversion – rotational land](#)
- [OT3 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides an important food source for farmland birds throughout the year and insects in the summer, and provides both grain and seeding arable plants in winter.

It will enable a range of declining arable plants and other broad-leaved plants to establish.

There will be plants providing summer and winter foraging for declining and localised farmland birds (especially grey partridge), mammals and important farmland pollinator species, such as bees and other beneficial insects.

The weedy unharvested cereals will provide over-wintering habitat for insects and food for seed-eating farmland birds.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the spring the cereal crop (not maize), planted at a reduced density in plots or strips at least 6 metres (m) wide, will be establishing and growing.

During the summer, autumn and winter the crop and any naturally occurring arable plants will remain unharvested, until mid February in the following year.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- apply any herbicides except those on the list of permitted active ingredients – see 'Permitted active ingredients' on [AB7 - Whole crop cereals](#)
- apply any fertilisers, manures or lime
- apply any insecticides after 15 March

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- establish a cereal crop (not maize) between 1 February and 30 April
- manage as strips or plots at least 6m wide on a part or whole field basis
- create an open crop structure by managing the crop to deliver between 450 and 700 fertile tillers per square metre

- keep the unharvested cereal headland until 15 February

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Photographs of the option

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

This option can be successful on most soil types but ideally choose a location with low levels of thistles or problem weeds such as blackgrass. This will help the beneficial arable plants in the soil seedbank to grow without competition and provide a range of valuable habitats during the growing season. It will also allow the arable flora to set seed during the early summer period and retains the insect-rich habitat for foraging farmland birds.

Sowing the crop

It's important to make sure that the crop delivering the unharvested headland is not too dense, which restricts the foraging opportunities for farmland birds such as grey partridge. Managing the seed rate by considering drilling date, seed thousand grain weight, varietal tillering capacity and soil conditions will help achieve the required open crop structure.

Using herbicides

The aim for this option is to encourage the natural populations of arable plants that support both insects and farmland birds. Applying broad-spectrum herbicide during the cropping season and non-selective herbicides to help with harvest stops this from happening. Therefore, only a limited number of herbicide actives are permitted in this option.

Permitted active ingredients

The following herbicide active ingredients can be used.

- Amidosulfuron
- Clodinafop-propargyl
- Fenoxaprop-P-ethyl
- Pinoxaden
- Tri-allate

The permitted active ingredients cannot necessarily be used on all eligible crops within options AB7, AB10 and AB14. It's your responsibility to confirm whether herbicides are approved for use on the affected crop. Always use pesticides in full accordance with the product label conditions of use.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB11: Cultivated areas for arable plants

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the cultivated areas for arable plants option.

How much will be paid

£532 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier

Whole or part parcel

Rotational

Only on arable land:

- where evidence or records exist for important arable plants ([Plantlife IAPA](#) classification 4 and above – see Appendix II, page 19). These records can either be historic (within the last 40 years) or from recent arable plant survey results
- where arable plant records do not exist but the land is part of the Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package

Related Mid Tier options

The following options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option:

- [HS3 – Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on historic and archaeological features](#)
- [HS9 – Restricted depth crop establishment to protect archaeology under an arable rotation](#)
- [OR3 – Organic conversion – rotational land](#)
- [OR4 – Organic conversion - horticulture](#)
- [OT3 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)
- [OT4 – Organic land management – horticulture](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It creates uncropped, cultivated areas for a wide range of scarce and declining arable plants, allowing them to increase their populations over time. It will provide areas of less densely vegetated ground for insects such as bumblebees, solitary bees and hoverflies visiting flowers and the bare ground created. The option will also provide summer foraging habitats for declining farmland birds, such as grey partridge and turtle dove.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Fallow margins or plots, cultivated in the spring or autumn, with evidence of a fine surface suitable for wild plants to establish from the soil seedbank. Natural vegetative cover should be in place throughout the growing season until the 31 August.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- disturb cultivated areas before 31 August
- apply any fertilisers or manures
- apply any lime
- use any pesticides, except for herbicides to weed-wipe or spot-treat for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles or bracken

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- create the fallow margins or plots annually

- cultivate in the spring between February and April or in the autumn between September and November - work the soil sufficiently to produce a fine surface across the whole area

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Records at parcel level of your field operations, including any associated invoices
- Photographs of the option

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

Where sites have important arable plant species present or where they could be released from the seed bank (historic or local records will help identify them), this option can deliver tailored management for them. The Plantlife Important Arable Plant Areas (IAPA) handbook referenced above scores individual species, if there are records of plants which score 4 or above this option is available.

The richest areas for arable plants are at the edges of fields, adjacent to old farm tracks and boundary features, so margins up to 6m wide will work best here.

Fields with a long history of cultivation, together with old grass margins that were previously arable, should also be considered.

Some of the more common species of arable plants are good 'indicator' species and indicate the potential of an area to hold rich arable flora in the seed bank, so it is important to focus on these sites, as well as those containing the rarest species.

Managing your plots

Rotating the cultivated areas around the farm can help control and prevent a build-up of undesirable weed species.

Varying cultivation timing and depth can also help control undesirable species while providing suitable conditions for germinating arable plants in the spring and autumn.

Topping at a height of around 30cm to prevent seeding of undesirable weed species such as wild oats and creeping thistle is allowed during the growing season, as many of the desirable arable plant species are shorter than this. Where this weed burden develops on more than 40% of the area, targeted broad-spectrum herbicides can be used once annual species have set seed (normally in September).

If grass weeds become a problem, periodically (one year in 3) creating a stale autumn seedbed and cultivating in mid-March can help control them. This is particularly relevant on heavy clay sites. Ploughing can also be useful for controlling grass weeds.

Use this option as part of a sequence of arable options which can occupy the same area of land at different times of the year, such as overwinter stubbles.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB12: Supplementary winter feeding for farmland birds

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the supplementary winter feeding for farmland birds option.

How much will be paid

£632 per tonne for every 2 hectares (ha) of winter bird food.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part-parcels in rotation on:

- arable land
- temporary grassland
- bush orchards

Only where a qualifying area of [AB9 - Winter bird food](#) is included in the agreement (you can apply for 1 tonne of AB12 supplementary feeding for every 2ha of AB9 winter bird food).

Where this option cannot be used

- On organic parcels or land in conversion

Related Mid Tier options

You can locate the following option on the same area as this option.

- [SP9 Threatened species supplement](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

Winter supplementary feeding

It provides important food resources for farmland birds in late winter and early spring on arable and mixed farms, by supplementing crops of winter bird food with additional seed, such as cereal, oilseed and specialised grains. It gives the birds food through the late winter period when seed is in

short supply (known as the hungry gap) and as they enter the breeding season.

If successful there will be seed-eating farmland birds using the feeding areas from December to April, including:

- yellowhammer
- grey partridge
- tree sparrow
- corn bunting
- linnet
- turtle dove (seen during the spring and summer)

Target birds will be seen more frequently on the farm in the spring and there will be increased breeding success there.

Summer supplementary feeding

You can also use this option in combination with the [SP9 Threatened species supplement](#) to deliver summer supplementary feeding for turtle doves in priority areas.

You can find more information on how to carry out summer supplementary feeding for turtle doves in the [Where to use this option](#), [Recommended management](#) and [Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option](#) sections for [SP9](#).

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

From 1 December to 30 April, there will be about 25 kilograms (kg) of both cereals and other small seeds (see recommended management for details of the seed mix) scattered once a week in multiple locations. For every 1 tonne of supplementary feed, there will be two feeding stations supplying 500kg each (or if there is less than 1 tonne of supplementary feed, it will be split equally between 2 separate feeding stations).

The seed will be scattered in areas which are firm and free-draining, such as farm tracks or hard standing areas, and in close proximity to enhanced overwinter stubbles, game cover or wild bird seed mixtures.

Keep a feeding diary which includes details of mixture used (weight of components and cost), dates of feeding, method of feeding (hopper or spreading), amount of feed, and the location of feeding areas.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- use hoppers to supply more than 10% of the total amount of feed provided during the specified feeding period
- use tailings (small seeds and chaff removed from the harvested crop) as supplementary feed
- use a mix which contains more than 70% cereals
- use any one species to supply more than 50% of the non-cereal seed component by weight

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- make sure the winter supplementary feeding mix must include both cereals (not maize) and other small seeds.
- make sure the other small seeds component is a minimum of 30% of the total mix by weight and contain at least 3 of the following, with no individual species being more than 50% of the total small seed component by weight:
 - canary seed
 - linseed
 - oilseed rape
 - red millet

- sunflower hearts
- white millet
- spread the winter supplementary feeding mix at a rate of 25kg once a week for 20 weeks between 1 December until 30 April, at each of 2 separate feeding locations. You can vary the amount to be fed by up to 5kg per week to match demand as necessary
- select feeding areas that are firm and free-draining, such as farm tracks or hard standing areas, and in close proximity to enhanced overwinter stubbles, game cover or wild bird seed mixtures

For advice on what to feed, see the [Additional guidance and advice](#) section.

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Details of the mixture used (weight of components and cost)
- Dates of feeding
- Method of feeding (hopper or spreading)
- Amount of feed
- The location of the feeding areas

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

When planning which feeding sites to use, make sure they can be reached regularly. This is especially important if bad weather will cause problems travelling to them during the winter.

It's important for the health of the birds benefiting from the supplementary feeding that you maintain clean and healthy feeding areas. It's very important to rotate feeding sites around the farm, but each site should be near existing sown resources.

Manage how and when to supplementary feed

Having 2ha of [AB9 Winter bird food](#) in the agreement allows you to spread 1 tonne of supplementary feed each year, split equally between 2 feeding stations, so 500kg per year per feeding station.

Where less than 2ha of AB9 is put into the agreement, you can include a pro-rata amount of AB12. For example, the minimum area allowed of AB9 is 0.4ha. This would allow you to include 200kg of AB12, spread equally between two feeding stations, so 100kg per year per feeding station.

You should start supplementary feeding before the sown winter bird food runs out. This keeps farmland birds using the areas and prevents a dip in their winter condition.

Distribute enough supplementary food to match the birds' consumption, so that seed is not left uneaten. This will make sure that a fresh supply of food is maintained, which will keep birds healthy and reduce any rodent problems. This is particularly important when ground feeding, or if hoppers are left unprotected.

Where possible stagger feeding at different feeding stations to reduce the risk of seeds being left uneaten. Staggered feeding can also reduce non target species such as rodents, crows and pigeons from eating the supplementary feed. Do not leave the feed in piles, make sure it is well dispersed.

Prepare to be flexible, so that if the winter period is extended through bad weather, you can adjust the amount of feeding planned and extend for any additional days or weeks that are needed. This makes sure that birds are not left with a 'hungry gap' before the natural seed resources on the farm become available.

What seed mix to use

The following example mix will supply a range of seeds readily taken by most farmland birds.

- 70% wheat
- 10% white millet
- 10% oilseed rape
- 5% canary seed

- 5% sunflower hearts

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB13: Brassica fodder crop

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the brassica fodder crop option.

How much will be paid

£100 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier

Whole or part parcel

Rotational

Only on:

- arable land
- temporary grassland

Where this option cannot be used

- On parcels identified as being at medium to high erosion risk on the Farm Environment Record (FER)
- On parcels immediately adjacent to a watercourse
- On historic or archaeological features identified in your Historic Environment Farm Environmental Record (HEFER) or FER

Related Mid Tier options

The following options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 – Organic conversion – rotational land](#)
- [OT3 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)
- [OR3 – Organic conversion – rotational land](#)
- [OT3 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides foraging sites for seed-eating birds in pastoral areas where broad-leaved plants can persist in the crop and set seed.

In the winter it will provide cover and feeding areas for farmland birds.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the summer, there will be a brassica fodder crop or fodder root crop establishing.

During the winter this will be grazed and returned to the farm rotation the following spring

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- Apply any herbicides or insecticides

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#), and [Additional guidance and advice](#).

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out

above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Stock records to show grazing activity on parcels

You will need to send the following with your application.

- Map showing the location of watercourses - these can be marked on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful but they are not requirements for this item.

The following section gives advice on carrying out this option successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this option.

Managing livestock in the option area

As set out in the scheme requirements make sure that grazing on the option does not create poaching or soil erosion. The open structure of the fodder crop increases the risk of both occurring when it is being grazed. Supplementary feeding could also result in poaching and soil compaction, so should be avoided.

Rotational management

Remember that stubbles should be in place from harvest until at least 31 December in year 5 of the agreement, after which time it can be returned to the rotation.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB14: Harvested low input cereal

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the harvested low input cereal option.

How much will be paid

£266 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier, on whole or part parcels in rotation, on:

- arable land
- temporary grassland

Where this option cannot be used

After the following break crops:

- oilseed rape
- potatoes
- beans
- peas

Related Mid Tier options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [HS3 – Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on historic and archaeological features](#)
- [HS9 – Restricted depth crop establishment to protect archaeology under an arable rotation](#)
- [OR3 – Organic conversion – rotational land](#)
- [OT3 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

An open-structured cereal crop provides summer foraging sites for declining and localised farmland birds, such as yellowhammer and reed bunting, and habitat for skylarks, brown hare, rare arable plants and pollinator species, such as bumblebees, solitary bees, butterflies, hoverflies and beneficial insects.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the spring and summer, a low input cereal crop (not maize) will be growing, in strips and plots at least 6m wide. An open crop structure will enable wildflower species to grow amongst the crop.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- harvest the crop before 15 July
- apply any herbicides except those on the list of [permitted active ingredients](#)
- apply insecticides after 15 March

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- establish a cereal crop (not maize) each year between 1 October and 30 April. Manage as strips or plots at least 6m wide on a part or whole field basis

- create an open crop structure by managing the crop to deliver between 450 and 700 fertile tillers per square metre

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Records at parcel level of field operations, including any associated invoices

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

Sites with low levels of pernicious weeds such as couch, blackgrass, brome, ryegrass and wild oats are best, although you may need to use this option on sites with higher weed burdens if important populations of target plants or birds are present.

Managing the crop

Using lower seed rates between 50kg per ha and 100kg per ha will help make sure that the crop is not too dense. It will allow broadleaved plants to establish and provide foraging options for fledged farmland bird chicks.

There are a range of cereals that you can use for this option, including wheat, barley, triticale, oats and rye. Do not use maize, sorghum of any kind or millet as the cereal in this option – the herbicide and fertiliser management and dense ground-covering traits are not suitable to deliver the outcomes of this option.

Permitted active ingredients

The following herbicide active ingredients can be used.

- Amidosulfuron
- Clodinafop-propargyl

- Fenoxaprop-P-ethyl
- Pinoxaden
- Tri-allate

The permitted active ingredients cannot necessarily be used on all eligible crops within options AB7, AB10 and AB14. It's your responsibility to confirm whether herbicides are approved for use on the affected crop. Always use pesticides in full accordance with the product label conditions of use.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB15: Two year sown legume fallow

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the two year sown legume fallow option.

How much will be paid

£522 hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part parcels in rotation, but only on:

- arable land
- temporary grassland

Where this option cannot be used

- On organic parcels or land in conversion

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides food for farmland wildlife, such as pollen and nectar for pollinators including bumblebees, solitary bees, butterflies and hoverflies. As well as invertebrate chick food for farmland birds around the sown fallow between April and July. It can also be a useful part of a rotation aimed at reducing blackgrass populations.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

In the late summer/early autumn, as soon as possible after harvest, a seed mix of 6 flowering species will be establishing, in years 1 and re-established in year 3.

To prevent blackgrass heading, the mix will be cut at least twice during the first 12 months after sowing (between 1 March and 31 October)

The sown mix will be present until the end of the second summer after sowing (years 3 and 5).

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Graze or conserve forage

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- retain the sown legume fallow until 15 August in the second summer after sowing
- in the second year after establishment cut between 1 March and 15 May to control blackgrass

You can find advice on what to sow in the [Additional guidance and advice](#) section.

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Records of field operations at the parcel level, including any associated invoices
- Photographs of the option

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

It works best where some blackgrass germinates after cultivation in the autumn and more can grow from the seedbank during the winter and following spring. Mow the area as often as is needed to prevent the blackgrass from seeding.

Size of blocks or plots

Plan this option into the rotation, selecting fields on a part or whole-field scale. This will give most benefits for blackgrass reduction and biodiversity.

Spread the legume fallow areas widely across the farm to help connect insects with other farm habitats.

What to sow

In the autumn, sow a mixture (based on the suggestions below) and retain for 2 years before re-establishing.

Flower species	% inclusion rate
Alsike clover	10
Bird's-foot trefoil	7
Black medick	5
Common vetch	50
Lucerne	15
Red clover	15
Total	100

Sow the seed mix at 15 to 20 kilograms (kg) per hectare with the lower seed rate appropriate on light/medium soils and the higher seed rate appropriate on heavier soils.

You can also include grasses such as cocksfoot, perennial ryegrass or timothy in seed mix to help smother blackgrass and other competitive grass weeds.

When to sow

Establish the legume fallow as soon as possible after harvest in year 1 and year 3 of the agreement (ideally by the end of August).

When to cut

Cut at least twice in the first year following the autumn sowing to control emerging blackgrass. But be prepared for subsequent cuts to be as close as 3 weeks apart as blackgrass re-heads more rapidly after each cut.

Cutting before the end of March in year 2 controls any remaining blackgrass, before the legume fallow mixture grows away rapidly from April.

The aim of this option is to provide an abundant supply of pollen and nectar-rich flowers, and this cannot be achieved if the option area is grazed, or if fertilisers and sprays are used.

Return the option area to crop production

Spray the legume fallow mix with a non-selective herbicide if needed, before the area is cultivated for the next crop.

Return the area to the farm rotation from 15 August.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AB16: Autumn sown bumblebird mix

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the autumn sown bumblebird mix option.

How much will be paid

£550 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier, on whole or part parcels in rotation on:

- arable land
- temporary grassland
- bush orchards

Related Mid Tier options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 – Organic conversion – rotational land](#)
- [OR4 – Organic conversion – horticulture](#)
- [OR5 – Organic conversion – top fruit](#)
- [OT3 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)
- [OT4 – Organic land management – horticulture](#)
- [OT5 – Organic land management – top fruit](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides important food resources for farmland birds, such as tree sparrow and corn bunting, and a range of nectar feeding insects, including butterflies, solitary bees, hoverflies and bumblebees, on arable and mixed farms.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

In late summer, after harvest, a seed mix containing at least 6 flower species and 6 seed-bearing crops (with seed mixes containing a maximum of 3 cereal crops from barley, oats, rye, triticale and wheat) will be establishing. The blocks or strips will be at least 6 metres (m) wide and between 0.4ha and 5ha in size.

During the growing season there will be an abundant supply of pollen and nectar-rich flowers.

In the second spring after sowing, the plot will be topped before mid-March to promote further legume flowering. Retain the plot until mid-august in the second summer after sowing.

The mixture will be re-established every 2 years to maintain seed and flower provision

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- in year 1 and year 3 of your agreement, sow a seed mix containing a minimum of 6 flower species and 6 seed-bearing crops, as soon as possible after harvest and before 15 September
- re-sow autumn sown bumblebird mix plots that fail to establish

For advice on what to sow and re-sow refer to the [Additional guidance and advice](#) section.

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Photographs of the blocks or strips

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

This option works well on most soil types and, as with conventional crops, there will be more seeds and flowers produced where you locate it on better ground. Ideally, pick sheltered sites that face south or west for maximum benefits to pollinators.

It also works on heavier soils where spring-sowing of winter bird food plots is difficult.

Avoid sites with high weed burdens to reduce competition from aggressive weeds such as thistles, blackgrass and sterile brome.

Size of blocks or plots

Sow larger plots as they are easier to manage and provide food for seed-eating farmland birds longer into the winter. Creating wider, bigger blocks also helps insects to move to safety when neighbouring crops are treated.

What to sow

Sow a mixture in the autumn based on the suggestions below, at an overall seed rate of around 50kg per ha and keep for 2 years before re-establishment.

Crop	kg/ha	Flower species	kg/ha
Winter triticale	20	Alsike clover	0.6
Winter wheat	20	Bird's-foot trefoil	0.6
Fodder radish	1	Common vetch	4
Gold of pleasure	2	Crimson clover	3
Kale	2	Lucerne	0.6
Winter linseed	5	Phacelia	0.6
		Red clover	0.6
Total	50kg/ha	Total	10kg/ha

When to sow

Establish the mixture as soon as possible after harvest in year 1 and year 3 of the agreement (ideally by 1 September).

Plots can receive 50kg per ha of nitrogen in the first spring after establishment to help increase seed production in the following winter.

When to cut

Cut a few centimetres below the tops of the flowering plants in the spring of the second year to remove any overwinter seed plants. This allows flowering plants to develop with less competition.

The aim of this option is to provide an abundant supply of small seeds and an abundant supply of pollen and nectar-rich flowers, and this cannot be achieved if the option area is grazed.

Return the area to crop rotation

The option area returns to the farm rotation on 15 August, which allows time to incorporate any legume biomass for healthier soils before drilling the next crop.

If a following spring crop is planned, the legume mix can be left in the ground until January, February or March of the crop sowing year to maximise the nutrient and soil conditioning benefits of the sown bumblebird plants.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AC1: Access capital items

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the access capital items item.

How much will be paid

Up to 100% of actual cost.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier.

Only for new structures.

Where this item cannot be used

- when the agreement holder is obliged to offer structures for public access to the holding
- to maintain existing structures

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful there will be greater public accessibility of the countryside or enhanced educational visits.

Requirements

- agree with Natural England a detailed specification for the item
- get at least 3 written quotations for the work, making sure they identify associated costs
- have Natural England agree the quote
- create, install and complete the access capital item according to the specification agreed with Natural England

Do not:

- carry out any construction work related to the item unless it has been approved by Natural England

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- evidence of demand and need for the access capital item, eg documentation from supporters, potential users and partner organisations
- photographs of site before works start
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is not available
- photographs of the completed work
- detailed specification document
- copies of any planning or other permission

Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- quotes for completion of the work

If consent or permission is required, you will need to have this before you carry out any work. You will need to submit this consent with your payment claim. If you have already provided this with your application then you do not need to resubmit this with your claim.

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AC2: Countryside educational access visits accreditation

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the countryside educational access visits accreditation item.

How much will be paid

£175 once per agreement.

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on agreements that contain:

- [ED1 - Educational access](#)

How this item will benefit the environment

This allows one member from the agreement holding to go to a training course and become accredited at carrying out enhanced educational experiences.

Requirements

You must:

- send one person from the holding to a [CEVAS training course](#)

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and send a copy with your payment claim:

- a copy of the accreditation certificate

Further information

You can find more information on the [CEVAS website](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

AQ1: Automatic slurry scraper

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the Automatic slurry scraper option.

How much will be paid

£2,760 per passageway/channel

Aim

To reduce ammonia emissions from slurry produced by housed livestock by frequent removal of slurry.

Where to use this item (eligibility)

- On holdings targeted for the reduction of ammonia emissions from agriculture
- With support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer
- On solid or slatted floors where livestock are housed
- Within passageways where slurry is deposited and slurry channels in livestock housing systems

Where this item cannot be used

- In systems where the slurry scraper is unlikely to be effective due to the nature of manure (higher dry matter) produced or an uneven or cracked floor
- In systems where ammonia emissions are unlikely to be reduced by the scraper
- For repair or part replacement of existing automatic scraper system

How this item will benefit the environment

The frequent removal of slurry from livestock housing will reduce the levels of ammonia released into the air that impact air quality and the natural environment.

Requirements

- Install an automatic slurry scraping system in livestock housing. This includes a floor scraper that runs automatically using a hydraulic ram and ratchet drive system or a rope/chain and winch system with an electric motor
- Ensure that the scraper is fully operational and effectively scrapes slurry from the installed area so that the slurry can be collected and stored in a suitable store
- The scraper must be suitable for the amount of slurry produced, dimensions of area to be scraped (scraper width to fit passageway/channel width) and type of livestock housed
- Regular automatic scraping should take place a minimum of 4 times a day (more frequent scraping is more beneficial) when animals are housed that are producing slurry

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application.

- Written support from a CSF officer

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim.

- Contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the equipment and installation
- Photographs of the completed works in place and installed

You must keep the following records and supply them on request.

- Receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- Photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual ([Mid Tier](#) or [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#)) for more details

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Standard cost based on single passageway or channel. You can apply for automatic scraper system(s) for multiple passageways and channels if required.

The funding is for brand new or complete replacement of an existing automatic scraper system.

The more frequently slurry is removed from passageways and channels the greater the reduction in ammonia emissions. Increasing the number of automatic scrapings above 4 per days is encouraged.

There may be temporary (less than 3 months) periods where the livestock are fed on diets that produce higher dry matter manure, for example dry cows, where the scraping is less effective and the risk of ammonia volatilisation is lower. More frequent scraping is not required for this period.

Get more advice

More detailed information about using this item is available through Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF). You may also be able to request a farm infrastructure audit, a slurry and manure handling plan and a conserving nitrogen through reducing ammonia emissions visit.

AQ2: Low ammonia emission flooring for livestock buildings

Find out about eligibility and requirements for this option.

How much will be paid

£72 per m²

Aim

To reduce ammonia emissions from slurry produced by housed livestock.

Where to use this item (eligibility)

- On holdings targeted for the reduction of ammonia emissions from agriculture
- With support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer
- On solid or slatted floors where livestock are housed

Where this item cannot be used

- In livestock housing systems where urine and faeces would not separate effectively on the floor due to the nature of manure (high dry matter) produced
- In systems where the flooring is unlikely to reduce ammonia emissions
- Solid flooring must not be fitted over slatted flooring with underfloor slurry storage

How this item will benefit the environment

Reduce the mixing of urine and faeces on livestock housing floors. The rapid removal of the urine will reduce the chemical reactions that release ammonia. This will reduce ammonia emissions that impact air quality and the natural environment.

Requirements

- You purchase and install low ammonia emission flooring in livestock housing. This includes grooved rubber flooring and shaped, slotted, sloping and profiled floors
- Flooring must be fitted into the dimensions of the area covered (fit full passageway width) and to match the gaps and slats of slatted floors
- The flooring must be suitable for retro-fitting or replacement of solid concrete flooring or slatted floors
- The flooring product chosen must have ammonia emissions of under 9.5 kilograms (kg) ammonia (NH₃) per year per animal (equivalent to 25% reduction in ammonia emissions), which can be evidenced for example, by a RAV official test reference number to show the emission factor meets The Dutch Ammonia and Livestock Farming Regulation or manufacturer's product technical specification
- The flooring should be effective in separating urine from faeces. The urine should be directed away for storage or the floor must be scraped at least four times a day to remove faeces and urine.
- The flooring must be suitable for the amount of slurry produced, dimensions of area and type of livestock housed
- For rubber flooring (tiles or rolls) the concrete floor should be steam cleaned before installation and stretched to avoid bubbling.

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application.

- Written support from a CSF officer

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim.

- Photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- Photographs of the completed works in place and installed You must keep the following records and supply them on request.
- Product technical specification showing evidence of ammonia emission reduction/factor
- Receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable

- Photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual ([Mid Tier](#) or [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#)) for more details

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Typically for use in passageways in cattle cubicle sheds or for pig and poultry buildings. Can be used with a slurry scraper suitable for the type of floor installed, such as an automatic slurry scraper with a toothed rubber blade for grooved rubber flooring, or with robotic slurry scrapers/pushers or collectors that effectively remove faeces/slurry from the floor.

Get more advice

More detailed information about using this item is available through Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF). You may also be able to request a specialist visit from CSF such as a farm infrastructure audit, a slurry and manure handling plan, or a conserving nitrogen through reducing ammonia emissions visit.

BE1: Protection of in-field trees on arable land

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the protection of in-field trees on arable land option.

How much will be paid

£420 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on part parcels, only on:

- arable land
- temporary grassland
- trees (dead or alive) at least 30 centimetres (cm) diameter at breast height (DBH)

Where this option cannot be used

On a group or line of 4 or more trees whose canopies overlap.

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OR4 - Organic conversion - horticulture](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)
- [OT4 - Organic land management - horticulture](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

If successful, trees will be protected from agricultural operations and kept as important features in the local landscape. Tree roots will be protected from damage by cultivations with a fertiliser-free grass buffer. Undisturbed standing and fallen deadwood will provide habitat for invertebrates.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be trees surrounded by a naturally regenerated grass buffer, protected from damage by livestock and wild animals. Tree guards will be managed to prevent any damage to growing trees. The grass buffer radius will be determined by the tree diameter at breast height.

Tree diameter at breast height (DBH)	Sward radius	Area per tree
30cm to 99cm	10m	0.03ha
100cm to 199cm	20m	0.12ha
200cm or more	30m	0.28ha

Fallen branches will remain in the option area. Trees that die or fall will remain in their position.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Apply any fertilisers or manures
- Apply any lime
- Plough, cultivate or re-seed
- Use supplementary feed
- Harrow or roll
- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe to control nettles, bracken, injurious weeds or invasive non-natives
- Remove any tree limbs, including lower limbs, or mature ivy growth
- Carry out any drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without written permission before any work takes place

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- protect trees from damage by livestock and wild animals
- make sure tree guards do not damage growing trees

Once established, manage the sward:

- make sure that no more than 5% is covered in weeds or bare ground
- only cut to control woody growth

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- The diameter at breast height (DBH) for each tree
- Photographs of trees entered into the option
- Photographs of the sward buffer

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Storing fallen branches

Do not cut fallen branches into pieces, stack in piles:

- with one pile in a sunny spot and one in a shady spot
- not too high, to stop the timber drying out

- with as much timber as possible in contact with the ground

Setting tree guards

Do not attach tree guards to the trees as this can damage them.

Using pesticides

Avoid damaging the trees when spot-treating or weed-wiping. Use chemical as a last resort, as they can damage root fungi in the soil and trees depend on fungi for future good health.

Controlling livestock damage

To prevent livestock damage:

- provide a different shelter with water to attract animals away from trees
- fence off trees to stop animals rubbing and stripping bark or trampling the base

If you use fences, place them at the edge of the option area.

Further information

See the Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) or [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

BE2: Protection of in-field trees on intensive grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the protection of in-field trees on intensive grassland option.

How much will be paid

£190 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on part parcels, only on:

- grassland receiving more than 100 kilograms (kg) per hectare of nitrogen a year in fertilisers or manures
- trees (dead or alive) at least 30 centimetres (cm) diameter at breast height (DBH)

Where this option cannot be used

On a group or line of 4 or more trees whose canopies overlap.

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

If successful, trees will be protected from agricultural operations and kept as important features in the local landscape. Tree roots will be protected from damage by cultivations with a fertiliser-free grass buffer. Undisturbed standing and fallen deadwood will provide habitat for invertebrates.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be trees surrounded by a naturally regenerated grass buffer, protected from damage by livestock and wild animals. Tree guards will be managed to prevent any damage to growing trees. The grass buffer radius will be determined by the tree diameter at breast height.

Tree diameter at breast height (DBH)	Sward radius	Area per tree
30cm to 99cm	10m	0.03ha
100cm to 199cm	20m	0.12ha
200cm or more	30m	0.28ha

Fallen branches will remain in the option area. Trees that die or fall will remain in their position.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Apply any fertilisers or manures
- Apply any lime
- Plough, cultivate or re-seed
- Use supplementary feed
- Harrow or roll
- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe to control nettles, bracken, injurious weeds or invasive non-natives
- Remove any tree limbs, including lower limbs, or mature ivy growth
- Carry out any drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without written permission before any works take place

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- protect trees from damage by livestock and wild animals
- make sure tree guards do not damage growing trees
- keep all fallen branches within the option area
- leave trees in place if they die or fall and continue with the management requirements

In year 1 maintain or allow a grass sward to develop around each tree by natural regeneration.

Tree diameter at breast height (DBH)	Sward radius	Area per tree
30cm to 99cm	10m	0.03ha
100cm to 199cm	20m	0.12ha
200cm or more	30m	0.28ha

Once established, maintain the sward:

- make sure that no more than 5% is covered in weeds or bare ground
- only cut to control woody growth

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- The diameter at breast height (DBH) for each tree
- Photographs of trees entered into the option
- Photographs of the sward buffer

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Storing fallen branches

Do not cut fallen branches into pieces but stack in piles:

- with one pile in a sunny spot and one in a shady spot
- not too high, to stop the timber drying out
- with as much timber as possible in contact with the ground

Setting tree guards

Do not attach tree guards to the trees as this can damage them.

Using pesticides

Avoid damaging the trees when spot-treating or weed-wiping. Use chemicals as a last resort, as they can damage root fungi in the soil and trees depend on fungi for future good health.

Controlling livestock damage

To prevent livestock damage:

- provide different shelter with water to attract animals away from trees
- fence off trees to stop animals rubbing and stripping bark or trampling the base. If you use fences, place them at the edge of the option area.

Further information

See the manuals for Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

BE3: Management of hedgerows

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of hedgerows option.

How much will be paid

£8 per 100m for 1 side of a hedge.

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier.

On boundary lines of shrubs, which are:

- composed of woody plants with less than 2 metres (m) between the ground and the base of the leafy layer
- over 20m long
- less than 5m wide between major woody stems at the base

Where this option cannot be used

- On features that are trees for most of their length
- In Mid-Tier agreements, lengths of hedge managed under this option are not eligible for the capital item BN5 - Hedgerow laying, BN6 – Hedgerow coppicing and BN7 - Hedgerow gapping-up but may be eligible for other capital item payments
- In Higher Tier agreements, lengths of hedge managed under this option are not eligible for the capital item BN7 - Hedgerow gapping-up but may be eligible for other capital item payments.

How this option will benefit the environment

Managing hedges in this way increases the availability of blossom for invertebrates. By allowing fruit and berries to ripen it provides food for overwintering birds. It will also improve the structure and longevity of hedgerows, and maintains them as distinctive and historic landscape features.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

From year 2 onwards, hedges will be at least 2m tall and 1.5m wide (except for sections which are gapped up, layed or coppiced during the term of the agreement).

Where a length of hedge has significant gaps, these will be gapped up.

During the autumn and winter, the hedges in this option will be managed on a rotation so that one of the following applies:

- Up to a third of the hedges are cut between September and February (the hedges are cut no more than one year in 3)
- Up to half the hedges are cut between January and February (the hedges are cut no more than one year in 2)

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Supplementary feed livestock within 2m of the centre of the hedge
- Remove any tree limbs, including lower limbs, or mature ivy growth from hedgerow trees
- Remove any standing deadwood

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- cut hedgerows in **one** of the following ways:
 - no more than 1 year in 3 between 1 September and 28 February - leave at least two-thirds of hedges untrimmed each year

- no more than 1 year in 2 between 1 January and 28 February - leave at least one-half of hedges untrimmed each year
- gap up any length of hedge with more than 10% gaps within the first 2 years

There is no requirement to trim hedges at all during the agreement. Instead, leave them to grow and manage in a coppicing or laying rotation.

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Hedgerow management records
- Photographs of each hedge entered into the option

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right hedge

If you do not have management control of both sides of a hedge, then only enter one side into the option. If there is no parcel number listed under your SBI for the land on one side of the hedgerow, for example where it is a road or track verge, or the land belongs to a neighbour, that side of the hedgerow cannot be entered into BE3 on your application.

Select hedges that:

- are connected to other hedges or habitats (such as woodlands and ponds)
- have other components such as hedgerow trees, bases or banks rich in flowers, or an adjacent ditch or margin

Use the option to improve the condition and longevity of hedges which are of particular historic interest, such as parish boundaries, or are especially important in the landscape.

Managing the hedges

If the correct rotor and forward speeds are used, well-maintained flails are effective for cutting 2- to 3-year-old growth of most woody species.

Fast growing species, such as ash or willow, may need heavier duty flails or more powerful cutting heads. Or, use a circular saw or leave hedges uncut.

Cutting to different lengths, rather than trimming back to the same point, allows hedges to increase in height and width by several centimetres at each cut, encouraging a dense, healthy hedgerow.

Use native shrubs species that already occur in hedgerows in the local area to gap up. A gap is a complete break in the canopy. Where a tree canopy overlaps the hedgerow canopy it is not counted as a gap.

Further information

Read more on:

- [the hedgerow management cycle](#)
- [common questions on hedge cutting](#)

See the Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier manual](#) or [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

BE4: Management of traditional orchards

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of traditional orchards option.

How much will be paid

£212 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part-parcels on traditional orchards (apple, pear, cherry, plum, damson or cobnut plats) where at least one-third of the original stations are occupied by trees over 25 years old.

In Mid-Tier you can only use this option if it meets the relevant criteria and you have written approval from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). The orchard must also be mapped as a traditional orchard on the Priority Habitat Inventory (see the MAGIC website.)

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the parcel, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).

- Ditches
- Drains
- Dykes
- Rivers and streams (boundary or internal) The features must be less than 4 metres (m) wide for the majority of their length in the parcel.

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [BE6 - Veteran tree surgery \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [BE7 - Supplement for restorative pruning of fruit trees](#)
- [ED1 - Educational access \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [GS15 - Haymaking supplement](#)

- [OR2 - Organic conversion - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR5 - Organic conversion - top fruit](#)
- [OT2 - Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT5 - Organic land management - top fruit](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

If successful there will be a well-managed traditional orchard with a range of healthy young and old trees. This includes established grass, tall bushy hedges, scrub and tall herb vegetation abundant with invertebrates, birds and wildflowers.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Provide a range of healthy young and mature fruit trees. Restore tree numbers by planting fruit trees on vigorous root stock, as detailed in the capital works plan. New trees will be formatively pruned with the base kept free of vegetation for at least three years after planting. Protect all trees from livestock and wild animals. Keep all mature and over mature trees, standing deadwood and deadwood on living trees.

Manage the grass by grazing or cutting for hay. During the autumn and winter allow some of this grass to go to seed. Manage any scrub that's present to ensure there is a minimum present throughout the year. Control invasive species.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Plough, cultivate or re-seed
- Roll or harrow

- Apply any fertilisers or manures
- Apply lime
- Carry out supplementary feeding
- Carry out drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without RPA's written permission before work starts.
- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe to control nettles, bracken, injurious weeds or invasive non-natives
- Use fungicides to target specific pests and diseases, without prior approval from your Natural England adviser.

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- manage grassland by grazing or hay cutting
- maintain the characteristic tree form by pruning
- restore tree numbers
- protect trees from damage by livestock
- keep and protect all mature and over-mature standing trees
- keep standing deadwood and some deadwood on living trees
- control scrub and invasive species
- from 1 September to 28 February, inclusive, allow at least 5 to 10% of the total area covered by this option to support grasses that have been allowed to go to seed and with the seed heads left undisturbed
- keep a 1m diameter circle around the base of all newly planted trees clear of vegetation for at least 3 years after planting
- manage tree guards to prevent any damage to growing trees

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out

above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with any work
- Records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel
- Dates and locations of formative or maintenance pruning carried out for each parcel
- A base map or table showing the location, species, rootstock, variety and age class of trees present in each parcel
- A monthly record of stock numbers grazing each parcel
- Photographs of trees entered into the option and cut areas of scrub
- If managing by hay cutting, photographs of the areas cut and uncut in each parcel

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Traditional orchards

Traditional orchards are defined as groups of fruit and nut trees planted on vigorous rootstocks at low densities in permanent grassland, and managed in a low intensity way. This includes cobnut plats.

Preventing weeds

Prevent weeds from competing with newly planted trees for water and nutrients. Keep a 1m diameter circle clear of all vegetation for at least the first 3 years after planting.

Further information

See the manuals for Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier manual](#) or [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

BE5: Creation of traditional orchards

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of traditional orchards option.

How much will be paid

£281 per hectare (ha).

How long the option lasts

This option will last for 10 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole and part-parcels only on:

- traditional orchards (apple, pear, cherry, plum, damson or cobnut plots) where less than one-third of the original stations are occupied by trees over 25 years old
- sites with evidence (such as maps or photographs) that a traditional orchard was once there - this includes sites currently under arable cultivation
- sites where creation extends, links or buffers existing areas of a traditional orchard

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the parcel, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).

- ditches
- drains
- dykes
- rivers and streams (boundary or internal)

The features must be less than 4m wide for the majority of their length in the parcel.

How this option will benefit the environment

If successful there will be a well-managed traditional orchard with a range of healthy young and old trees. This includes established grass, tall bushy hedges, scrub and tall herb vegetation abundant with invertebrates, birds and wildflowers.

Requirements

You must:

- establish and then manage grassland by grazing or hay cutting
- maintain the characteristic tree form by pruning
- restore tree numbers
- protect trees from damage by livestock
- keep and protect all mature and over-mature standing trees
- keep some standing deadwood and some deadwood on living trees
- control scrub and invasive species

Do not:

- plough, cultivate or re-seed
- roll or harrow
- use any manures, fertilisers, pesticides or supplementary feed

Keeping records

On your annual claim must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel
- dates and locations of formative or maintenance pruning carried out for each parcel
- a base map or table showing the location, species, rootstock, variety and age class of trees present in each parcel
- a monthly record of stock numbers grazing each parcel

- if managing by hay cutting, photographs of the areas cut and uncut in each parcel
- photographs of cut areas of scrub
- photographs of each tree and all standing deadwood entered into the option

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate these options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [BE6 – Veteran tree surgery](#)
- [BE7 - Supplement for restorative pruning of fruit trees](#)
- [ED1 - Educational access](#)
- [GS15 - Haymaking supplement](#)
- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 - Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR5 - Organic conversion - top fruit](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 - Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT5 - Organic land management - top fruit](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Traditional orchards

Traditional orchards are defined as groups of fruit and nut trees planted on vigorous rootstocks at low densities in permanent grassland, and managed in a low intensity way. This includes cobnut plats.

Preventing weeds

Prevent weeds from competing with newly planted trees for water and nutrients. Keep a 1m diameter circle clear of all vegetation for at least the first 3 years after planting.

Further information

See the Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier manual][Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

BE6: Veteran tree surgery

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the veteran tree surgery option.

How much will be paid

£221 for each veteran tree, contained within the agreement management plan, that receives veteran tree surgery in the claim year.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier:

- on veteran open grown trees and trees in open canopy woodlands
- where specialist tree surgery is agreed by Natural England

Where this option cannot be used

On the same trees as the following capital items or supplements:

- [BE7 - Supplement for restorative pruning of fruit trees](#)
- [TE10 - Coppicing bankside trees](#)
- [TE11 - Tree surgery](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It reduces the rate of loss of veteran trees by carrying out specialist tree surgery to extend their lifespan.

If successful, veteran trees at risk of collapse will be stabilised, resulting in the continuation of:

- living trees with standing deadwood
- trees forming distinctive features in the landscape
- trees providing valuable habitat
- areas under tree canopies free from scrub, soil compaction, or anything which threatens the tree's longevity

Requirements

You must:

- carry out agreed tree surgery works within the agreed timetable and dates
- remove secondary growth from around veteran trees
- keep all material close to the tree (not stacked against the veteran tree) and leave undisturbed

Stack cut material in a shaded location. Do not cut it up any more than is necessary to allow safe movement. Do not burn cut material.

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- photographs of each tree
- photographs of the completed work

Related options

You can locate these options, supplements and capital items on the same area as this option:

- [BE1 - Protection of in-field trees on arable land](#)
- [BE2 - Protection of in-field trees on intensive grassland](#)
- [BE3 - Management of hedgerows](#)
- [BE4 – Management of traditional orchards](#)
- [BE5 – Creation of traditional orchards](#)
- [WD4 - Management of wood pasture and parkland](#)
- [WD5 - Restoration of wood pasture and parkland](#)
- [WD6 - Creation of wood pasture](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Tree surgery must be identified in a report by a professionally qualified arboriculturalist. Individual plans for each tree may be required. The timing of work should take account of the impact on the tree, bird breeding

season, presence of European Protected Species and so on. Permissions may be required.

Many veteran trees have only grown so old through active management, mostly long abandoned. Reinstating management would pose great risk but they can be at significant risk of catastrophic failure due to crown weight.

Do not prune a tree in general decline any more than necessary to prevent catastrophic failure.

As trees die back, the importance of lower canopy branches increases so avoid removing them.

Do not remove epicormic shoots (small side shoots) as they can take over if the main part of the stem is lost.

Keep dead and decaying branches, as well as any live material, you remove from the tree close to the source without cutting it up.

Previously open grown trees now surrounded by others may require opening up. Avoid sudden exposure of trees shaded for many years. Clear around the tree at least a year before any tree surgery, possibly in stages over a few years. Make sure any species of interest such as lichens, fungi and invertebrates, as well as hole-nesting birds and roosting bats, are known and the impact of any work assessed.

Burning damages dead wood and soil structure, killing living organisms and harming trees if too close.

Avoid activities which damage and compact tree roots, including those by stock.

Be aware that various consents and permissions may apply:

- the Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and Conservation Orders may apply to the trees on site
- veteran trees often host European Protected Species, such as bats

You can read more about tree management, safety information and felling licences on the [Forestry Commission](#) website.

Fruit trees in traditional orchards are not normally eligible. See instead [BE7 - Supplement for restorative pruning of fruit trees](#).

Further information

You can find more information on managing ancient or veteran trees in the following guidance booklets:

- [Ancient tree guides \(booklets 1 to 8\)](#)
- [Lonsdale, D \(ed\) 2013 Ancient and other veteran trees: further guidance on management](#) (Tree Council)
- [Read, H. 2000 Veteran trees: A guide to good management. Veteran Trees Initiative](#)

See the Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier manual to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

BE7: Supplement for restorative pruning of fruit trees

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the supplement for restorative pruning of fruit trees supplement.

How much will be paid

£62 per tree

Where to use this supplement

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier but only:

- for a maximum of 3 years on an individual tree
- on neglected fruit trees with options:
- BE3 - Management of hedgerows (Higher Tier only)
- BE4 - Management of traditional orchards
- BE5 - Creation of traditional orchards (Higher Tier only)

In Mid-Tier you can only use this option if it meets the relevant criteria, you have written approval from RPA, and you use it with BE4.

Related supplements

You can locate this supplement on the same tree as the following supplement.

- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

How this supplement will benefit the environment

If successful there will be restored mature fruit trees with undisturbed standing and fallen deadwood providing a habitat for a wide range of invertebrates.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

The specified neglected fruit trees will be restored by pruning. Standing deadwood and/or dead wood on living trees will be retained.

Pruning will be carried out between October and April for apples and pears, and May to September for stone fruits.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Prune more than one-third of the woody growth in the crown of each specified tree in the specified years
- Remove fallen or pruned wood from the orchard (unless diseased).

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- remove diseased wood from the site or burn on a site at least 10 metres (m) from the crowns of any fruit trees

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- Photographs of trees entered into the supplement and the management undertaken

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

- None

Further information

See the Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier manual](#) or [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

BN1: Stone-faced bank repair

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the stone-faced bank repair item.

How much will be paid

£31 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

- Only on lengths of stone-faced bank where less than 50% of the original height needs to be rebuilt.
- Can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful there will be a rebuilt length of stone-faced bank.

Requirements

- build the bank back to its original height and profile to reflect other banks found locally
- carefully strip any loose stone back by hand, without disturbing the basal courses, until there are firm stones to build on
- use the original facing stone if it is available
- only use imported stone that matches the type, size and style traditional to the area
- haul the stone only when ground conditions are firm enough to prevent damage to neighbouring fields
- build the stone up in courses, using progressively smaller stones nearer the top, and making sure that the stones sit firmly on the course below
- back-fill each course with earth and small stones, or closely packed small stones

- tamp each course down to form a solid core before continuing with the next course
- stagger joints and incorporate long stones at intervals so that they run lengthways into the middle of the bank as tie stones
- build each face of the bank so it has a slight 'batter' (slope)
- finish off the top with a row of large flat stones, vertical stones or a layer of turf, depending on local practice
- make sure the top line of the bank is level with the ground
- make sure that no healthy mature trees are disturbed
- finish the ends of the bank at gateways with turfing or stone-facing, and protect it from being damaged by livestock and machinery
- retain and restore old features such as creep holes, built granite troughs or stone around gateways
- restore any stiles or gates to their original construction
- remove any surplus earth-fill and stones from the site after completion of the work and restore the ground around it

Do not:

- block or restrict [access to open access land](#)
- carry out work between 1 March and 31 August if the bank is topped by a hedge
- take stone from other walls, banks or buildings
- remove soil from other banks, even if they are derelict
- damage the roots of mature trees growing on the banks with machinery
- place stone on features of archaeological, historic or wildlife value as identified on your FER, Environmental Information Map or HEFER (where applicable)

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of each length of stone-faced bank entered into the item

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs during and after work has been completed

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out the item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Determine the original height and profile of stone-faced banks by referring to other banks in good condition nearby. These are usually at least 1.3m wide at the base, 1.3m high, and 600mm to 800mm wide at the top.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) including how to apply

BN2: Stone-faced bank restoration

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the stone-faced bank restoration item.

How much will be paid

£86 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

- Only on lengths of stone-faced bank where more than 50% of the original height needs to be rebuilt.
- Can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful there will be a rebuilt length of stone-faced bank.

Requirements

- build the bank back to its original height and profile to reflect other banks found locally
- carefully strip any loose stone back by hand, without disturbing the basal courses, until there are firm stones to build on
- use the original facing stone if it is available
- only use imported stone that matches the type, size and style traditional to the area
- haul the stone only when ground conditions are firm enough to prevent damage to neighbouring fields
- build the stone up in courses, using progressively smaller stones nearer the top, and making sure that the stones sit firmly on the course below
- back-fill each course with earth and small stones, or closely packed small stones

- tamp each course down to form a solid core before continuing with the next course
- stagger joints and incorporate long stones at intervals so that they run lengthways into the middle of the bank as tie stones
- build each face of the bank so it has a slight 'batter' (slope)
- finish off the top with a row of large flat stones, vertical stones or a layer of turf, depending on local practice
- make sure the top line of the bank is level with the ground
- make sure that no healthy mature trees are disturbed
- finish the ends of the bank at gateways with turfing or stone facing, and protect it from being damaged by livestock and machinery
- retain and restore old features such as creep holes, built granite troughs or stone around gateways
- restore any stiles or gates to their original construction
- remove any surplus earth-fill and stones from the site after completion of the work and restore the ground around it

Do not:

- block or restrict [access to open access land](#)
- carry out work between 1 March and 31 August if the bank is topped by a hedge
- take stone from other walls, banks or buildings
- remove soil from other banks, even if they are derelict
- damage the roots of mature trees growing on the banks with machinery
- place stone on features of archaeological, historic or wildlife value as identified on your FER, Environmental Information Map or HEFER (where applicable)

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of each length of stone-faced bank entered into the item

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) manual for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs during and after work has been completed

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out the item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Determine the original height and profile of stone-faced banks by referring to other banks in good condition nearby. These are usually at least 1.3m wide at the base, 1.3m high, and 600mm to 800mm wide at the top.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) including how to apply.

BN3: Earth bank creation

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the earth bank creation item

How much will be paid

£13.50 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

- Only on sites of former earth banks, as evidenced by historic maps, or where other records show that earth banks are a feature of a specific location or landscape.
- Can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful there will be a new length of earth bank which will conserve and enhance landscape character and provide a valuable wildlife habitat.

Requirements

- build the bank to reflect the style and profile of other banks in a good condition nearby
- build up moist soil in consolidated layers, allowing it to settle at each stage to make sure it is stable
- build each face of the bank so that it slopes inwards (approximately 0.3m for every 1m in height), to create a ‘batter’ (slope)
- make the base of the bank wider than the top by roughly 45cm to 60cm on each side
- take turves up to the full height of the new bank in areas where existing banks are faced with turves
- finish off the top with loose soil or turf (unless a hedge is being planted)
- make sure the top line of the bank is level with the ground

- finish the ends of the bank at gateways with turfing or stone facing, and protect it from being damaged by livestock and machinery
- remove any surplus earth-fill and stones from the site after the work has been completed and restore the ground around it

Do not:

- block or restrict [access to open access land](#)
- remove soil from other banks, even if they are derelict

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs to show the planned location for each length of earth bank creation

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) manual for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs during and after work has been completed

Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- historic maps or other records to evidence that the proposed location of the bank creation is on an original footprint, or is a feature of a specific location or landscape - this can be marked on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) including how to apply.

BN4: Earth bank restoration

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the earth bank restoration item.

How much will be paid

£7 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

- Only on lengths of earth bank that need to be rebuilt to their original height.
- Can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful there will be a length of rebuilt earth bank which will conserve and enhance landscape character and provide a valuable wildlife habitat.

Requirements

- restore the bank to reflect the style and profile of other banks in a good condition nearby
- rebuild the bank using original soil that has slipped from it
- build up moist soil in consolidated layers, allowing it to settle at each stage to ensure stability
- use subsoil and small stones for the lower layers and topsoil with no stones for the upper layers
- build each face of the bank so that it slopes inwards (approximately 0.3m for every 1m in height), to create a ‘batter’ (slope)
- make the base of the bank wider than the top by roughly 45cm to 60cm on each side
- take turves up to the full height of the new bank in areas where existing banks are faced with turves

- finish off the top with loose soil or turf (unless a hedge is being planted)
- make sure the top line of the bank is level with the ground
- finish the ends of the bank at gateways with turfing or stone facing, and protect it from being damaged by livestock and machinery
- make sure that no healthy mature trees are disturbed
- restore any stiles and gates to their original construction
- remove any surplus earth-fill and stones from the site after the work has been completed and restore the ground around it

Do not:

- block or restrict [access to open access land](#)
- carry out work between 1 March and 31 August if the bank is topped by a hedge
- remove soil from other banks, even if they are derelict
- damage the roots of trees growing on the bank with machinery

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of each length of earth bank entered into the item

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) manual for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs during and after work has been completed

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) including how to apply.

BN5: Hedgerow laying

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the hedgerow laying item.

How much will be paid

£9.40 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants on planted boundary lines of shrubs that are:

- over 20m long
- less than 5m wide between major woody stems at the base
- formed of at least 80% native shrubs
- can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

Where this option cannot be used

- In Mid Tier agreements, lengths of hedge managed under this option are not eligible for the revenue option [BE3 – Management of hedgerows](#), or capital items [BN6 – Hedgerow coppicing](#) and [BN7 - Hedgerow gapping-up](#) but may be eligible for other capital item payments

How this item will benefit the environment

Lengths of hedgerow will rejuvenate with new growth to form a continuous hedge.

Requirement

You must:

- carry out work between 30 September and 31 March when the hedge is still dormant
- remove old fencing and wire

- cut and pull out bramble, clematis or other scrambling plants
- cut out elder plants and prevent re-growth of stumps
- partially cut through stems near ground level, laying the pleachers (cut stems) over at an angle from horizontal to form a stock-proof barrier
- remove the uncut heel from each pleacher
- keep pleachers in position by crooking, staking, or staking and binding
- keep all existing hedgerow trees
- remove all cut material from the immediate site after completion of the work
- control weeds during the first growing season after laying
- prevent livestock and grazing animals from damaging the hedge by setting fencing at least 1.2m from the centre of the hedge or, if there is a bank, as close to the base of the bank as possible
- trim the hedge for 3 years after laying, allowing the hedge to become taller and wider at each cut

If you need to fell trees, [check if you need a felling licence](#) from the Forestry Commission. If you do, make sure it is in place before you start to fell, otherwise you may be prosecuted.

Do not:

- lay hedges downhill
- obstruct or block [access to open access land](#)
- disturb breeding birds

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application:

- a map showing the location of existing hedgerow trees in each length of hedge (this can be the Farm Environment Record (FER))

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work

- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of each length of hedge entered into the item before work starts
- the date, location and method of any weed control undertaken
- the dates of preparation works and laying
- the dates of post-laying trimming

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) manual for more detail.

Related Mid Tier items

You can use this item on the same length as the following items and supplements:

- [BN8 - Hedgerow supplement - casting up](#)
- [BN9 - Hedgerow supplement - substantial pre-work](#)
- [BN10 - Hedgerow supplement - top binding and staking](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right hedge

Use the [hedgerow management cycle](#) to help decide what management is needed.

Choose a hedge which:

- has few gaps and enough stems to lay to achieve a continuous length of hedge
- has stems between 5 centimetres (cm) to 15cm in diameter - however, it is possible to cut larger stems with a chainsaw
- is tall enough to lay (at least 2.5m, and ideally 4m)

Hedge laying

To undertake hedge laying successfully:

- only cut using hand-tools (including chainsaws)
- lay the hedge in the regional style
- cut each stem as low as possible (no more than 10cm from the ground)
- choose stems which when laid do not leave large gaps
- protect the newly laid hedge from damage by grazing animals - rabbit fencing may be needed if local populations are high
- leave as much side growth on the branches as possible
- lay stems at an angle of about 35 to 45 degrees from horizontal
- keep any existing trees and leave the occasional 'standard' hawthorn or other species if this fits in with the local landscape
- keep deadwood where possible
- plant up gaps using native species to improve the continuity of the hedge

Fencing may only need to be temporary and in place for as long as it takes the hedge to grow sufficiently.

Hedge management

Control competitive weeds (including brambles, nettles and grasses) during the first growing season. These weeds reduce the re-growth rate of the laid stems by competing for soil moisture, nutrients and light.

Encourage dense bushy growth of the newly laid hedge by:

- trimming lightly for 3 years
- never cutting back to the same point, but allowing the hedge to gradually increase in height and width by several centimetres at each cut

In following years you can leave the hedge to grow unchecked until it requires laying or coppicing, or be managed by trimming.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) including how to apply.

BN6: Hedgerow coppicing

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the hedgerow coppicing item.

How much will be paid

£4 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants

Only on planted boundary lines of shrubs that are:

- over 20m long
- less than 5m wide between major woody stems at the base
- composed of at least 80% native shrubs
- can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful there will be lengths of hedgerow rejuvenated with new growth to form a continuous hedge.

Requirements

- carry out work between 30 September and 31 March when the hedge is still dormant
- remove old fencing and wire
- cut and pull out bramble, clematis or other scrambling plants
- cut out elder plants and prevent re-growth of stumps
- encourage vigorous re-growth from the base of the plant by cutting the stems down to ground level (less than 10cm)
- angle cuts so that water can easily run off
- keep all existing hedgerow trees

- cuttings can be placed over newly coppiced stools to prevent browsing by livestock or wild animals, or to leave dead wood for wildlife; however, they must not prevent new growth
- remove all unused cut branches from the immediate site after completion of the work
- control weeds during the first growing season after laying
- prevent livestock and grazing animals from damaging the hedge by setting fencing at least 1.2m from the centre of the hedge, or, if there is a bank, as close to the base of the bank as possible
- trim the hedge for 3 years after coppicing, allowing the hedge to become taller and wider at each cut

Do not:

- obstruct or block [access to open access land](#)
- disturb breeding birds

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- the date, location and method of any weed control undertaken
- the dates of preparation works and coppicing
- the dates of post-coppicing trimming
- a photograph of the each length of hedge entered into the item

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) manual for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- a map showing the location of existing hedgerow trees in each length of hedge (this can be the FER)

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants options

This item can be used on the same length as the following supplement:

- [BN8 - Hedgerow supplement - casting up](#)
- [BN9 - Hedgerow supplement - substantial pre-work](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out the item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Pick the right hedge

Use the [hedgerow management cycle](#) to help decide what management is needed.

Choose a hedge which:

- is gappy and has too few stems to lay
- has stems too large to lay (more than 15cm diameter)
- is too short to lay (less than 2.5m tall)

Most woody species coppice well, stimulating dense growth from the cut stems, apart from:

- holly
- mature beech
- mature hawthorn which is showing signs of rot

Hedge coppicing

To undertake hedge coppicing successfully:

- keep any existing trees and leave the occasional 'standard' hawthorn or other species when this fits in with the local landscape
- keep deadwood where possible
- plant up gaps at the same time as coppicing to improve the continuity of the hedge - plant native species that already occur in hedgerows in the local area

- protect the newly coppiced hedge from damage by grazing animals - rabbit fencing may be needed if local populations are high

Fencing may only need to be temporary and in place for as long as it takes the hedge to grow sufficiently.

Hedge management

Control competitive weeds (including brambles, nettles and grasses) during the first growing season. These weeds reduce the re-growth rate of the coppiced stems by competing for soil moisture, nutrients and light.

Encourage dense bushy growth of the newly coppiced hedge by:

- trimming lightly for 3 years
- never cutting back to the same point, instead allowing the hedge to gradually increase in height and width by several centimetres at each cut.

In following years the hedge can either be left to grow unchecked until it requires coppicing or laying, or be managed by trimming.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) including how to apply.

BN7: Hedgerow gapping-up

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the hedgerow gapping-up item.

How much will be paid

£9.50 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants on planted boundary lines of shrubs that are:

- over 20m long
- less than 5m wide between major woody stems at the base
- made up of at least 80% native shrubs
- can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

Where this item cannot be used

On lengths of hedge managed under the [BE3 - Management of hedgerows](#) option.

How this item will benefit the environment

Lengths of hedgerow with gaps planted up will create a continuous length of hedge.

Requirements

You must:

- carry out work between 1 November and 31 March when the hedge is still dormant
- prepare the ground along a 1.5m wide strip to provide good soil conditions and as little competition from other vegetation as possible

- apply any herbicide to the 1.5m strip in the August or September prior to planting
- make sure plants are:
 - 2-year-old transplants
 - at least 450 millimetres (mm) to 600mm high
 - native species, with no one species making up more than 70% of the total
 - planted in a staggered double row 40 centimetres (cm) apart with a minimum of 6 plants per metre
 - kept clear of weeds until they are established
- prevent livestock and grazing animals from damaging the hedge by setting fencing at least 1.2m from the centre of the hedge, or, if there is a bank, as close to the base of the bank as possible
- remove individual guards and tree shelters once the plants are established
- replace all failures in the following planting season

Do not:

- obstruct or block [access to open access land](#)

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs during and after work has been completed

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- the date, location and method of any weed control undertaken
- the dates of planting
- details of age, height and species planted
- a photograph of the each length of hedge entered into the item before work starts

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) manual for more detail.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

You can use this item on the same length as the following supplement:

- [BN9 - Hedgerow supplement - substantial pre-work](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

When to plant

November is generally the best time to plant; however, if planting into clay soils wait until March. Do not plant in freezing weather or on waterlogged ground. If planting into a newly restored earth bank, plant the following autumn.

Planting

To undertake hedge gapping-up successfully:

- prepare the ground so the soil becomes friable (has a crumbly texture) and is free of other growth
- plant native species that already grow in the local area
- take care of roots before planting by keeping them covered at all times, especially when it is sunny or windy
- avoid opening more than one bag of plants at a time

Consider planting new hedgerow trees if they are characteristic of the local landscape.

Control weeds

Control competitive weeds (including brambles, nettles and grasses) during the first growing season. These weeds reduce the growth rate of the new plants by competing for soil moisture, nutrients and light. Avoid using a strimmer as these can damage the plants.

Protect the plants

Fence off the plants if sheep, cattle or horses graze the land. Keep fences far enough away so the hedgerow can grow at least 1.5m in width.

If there is a known problem with rabbits or hares you may need rabbit netting, either on its own or with stock fencing.

Avoid using spiral guards as they limit the amount of dense growth at the base of each plant, are unsightly and difficult to remove.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) including how to apply.

BN8: Hedgerow supplement - casting up

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the hedgerow supplement - casting up item.

How much will be paid

£3 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only on hedgerows which are both:

- being restored using options [BN5 - Hedgerow laying](#) or [BN6 - Hedgerow coppicing](#)
- being cast-up by machine
- can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

How this supplement will benefit the environment

If successful there will be lengths of hedgerow which have been re-profiled and had slipped soil replaced.

Requirements

- cast up the bank to reflect the local style and build it back to its original profile (this must be established by reference to other banks in good condition nearby)
- rebuild the bank using the original soil that has slipped from it
- build each face of the bank so that it slopes inwards (approximately 0.3m for every 1m in height), to create a ‘batter’ (slope)
- make the base of the bank wider than the top by roughly 45cm to 60cm on each side
- ensure the top line of the bank is level with the ground
- make sure that no healthy mature trees are disturbed

- restore any stiles and gates to their original construction
- remove any surplus earth-fill and stones from the site after completion of the work and restore the ground around it

Do not:

- cast up between 1 March and 31 August
- remove soil from other banks, even if they are derelict
- bury newly laid or coppiced material in deep earth
- damage the roots of trees growing on the bank with machinery

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of each length of hedge entered into the supplement

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) manual for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This supplement can be used on the same length as the following items and supplements:

- [BN5 - Hedgerow laying](#)
- [BN6 - Hedgerow coppicing](#)
- [BN10 - Hedgerow supplement - top binding and staking](#)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) including how to apply.

BN9: Hedgerow supplement - substantial pre-work

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the hedgerow supplement - substantial pre-work item.

How much will be paid

£4.10 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier.

Only on:

hedgerows being restored using the following options:

- [BN5 - Hedgerow laying](#)
- [BN6 - Hedgerow coppicing](#)
- [BN7 - Hedgerow gapping-up](#)
- [BN11 - Planting new hedges](#)

hedgerows which:

- have extensive bramble, elder or brash that needs removing
- are more than 5m wide after the previous season's growth is removed
- are on a slope of more than 20 degrees

can only be used when the applicant has "management control" of both sides of the boundary.

Where this supplement cannot be used

To:

- remove old fences within hedgerows
- remove free-standing fences alongside hedgerows
- undertake weed control

- undertake routine preparation before gapping-up or planting

How this supplement will benefit the environment

If successful, lengths of restored hedgerow which required substantial pre-work or were located on difficult sites will be restored.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- carry out the work agreed with Natural England
- complete the associated hedge restoration item to the relevant specification

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of each length of hedge entered into the supplement
- supply item specification if required
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related items

This supplement can be used on the same length as the following items and supplements:

- [BN5 - Hedgerow laying](#)
- [BN6 - Hedgerow coppicing](#)
- [BN7 - Hedgerow gapping-up](#)
- [BN8 - Hedgerow supplement - casting up](#)
- [BN10 - Hedgerow supplement - top binding and staking](#)
- [BN11 - Planting new hedges](#)

Further information

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

BN10: Hedgerow supplement - top binding and staking

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the hedgerow supplement - top binding and staking item.

How much will be paid

£3.40 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

- Only on hedgerows being restored using [BN5 - Hedgerow laying](#).
- can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

How this supplement will benefit the environment

If successful there will be lengths of hedgerow rejuvenated with new growth to form a continuous hedge.

Requirements

- use stakes made of straight and clean lengths of hazel, ash or sweet chestnut
- use binders made of straight lengths of hazel, ash or willow, with no side shoots

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable

- photographs of each length of hedge entered into the supplement

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) manual for more detail.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This supplement can be used on the same length as the following items and supplements:

- [BN5 - Hedgerow laying](#)
- [BN8 - Hedgerow supplement - casting up](#)
- [BN9 - Hedgerow supplement - substantial pre-work](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

This item is to strengthen layed hedges. It should only be used where the [local style of hedge laying](#) includes top binding and staking. These include the Midland and South of England style and Welsh Border styles which include stakes (or crops) and binding. It is not typical of Lancashire/Westmorland styles of hedge laying in the north of England.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) including how to apply.

BN11: Planting new hedges

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the planting new hedges item.

How much will be paid

£11.60 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants only on one of the following:

- sites of former hedgerows - as shown on historic maps or other records
- sites where creation would extend or link existing lengths of hedgerow
- sites where creation will help reduce soil erosion and runoff
- sites close to slurry or digestate stores, livestock housing or free-range areas for poultry or pigs where creation will help capture ammonia emissions
- can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

How this item will benefit the environment

There will be new lengths of hedgerow planted with locally occurring native species.

Requirements

You must:

- carry out work between 1 November and 31 March
- prepare the ground along a 1.5m wide strip to provide good soil conditions and as little competition from other vegetation as possible
- apply any herbicide to the 1.5m strip in the August or September prior to planting only
- plants must be:
 - 2-year-old transplants

- at least 450 millimetres (mm) to 600mm high
- native species, with no one species making up more than 70% of the total
- planted in a staggered double row 40 centimetres (cm) apart with a minimum of 6 plants per metre
- kept clear of weeds until they are established
- remove individual guards and tree shelters once the plants are established
- replace all failures in the following planting season
- trim the newly planted hedge in at least the first 2 years to encourage bushy growth, allowing the hedge to become taller and wider at each cut
- prevent livestock and grazing animals from damaging the hedge by setting fencing at least 1.2m from the centre of the hedge, or, if there is a bank, as close to the base of the bank as possible

Do not:

- obstruct or block [access to open access land](#)

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application:

- historic map or other records to show that the proposed location of the hedge planting is on an original footprint or extends existing hedges or contributes to the reduction of soil erosion and run-off - this can be marked on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- the date, location and method of any weed control undertaken
- the dates of planting
- details of age, height and species planted

- photographs to show the planned location for each length of hedge planting

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) manual for more detail.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

You can use this item on the same length as the following supplement:

- [BN9 - Hedgerow supplement - substantial pre-work](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

When to plant

November is generally the best time to plant; however, if you are planting into clay soils wait until March. Do not plant in freezing weather or on waterlogged ground. If you are planting into a newly restored earth bank, plant the following autumn.

Planting

To plant a hedge successfully:

- prepare the ground so the soil becomes friable (has a crumbly texture) and is free of other growth
- plant native species that already grow in the local area
- take care of roots before planting by keeping them covered at all times, especially when it is sunny or windy
- avoid opening more than one bag of plants at a time

If the landscape is characterised by a single-species hedgerows then the planting mix should reflect this. If not, then one of the following species should make up at least 70% of the planting mix:

- hawthorn
- blackthorn
- hazel

Use other native shrub species intermixed randomly with the main species, rather than planted in a block or blocks.

Consider planting new hedgerow trees if they are characteristic of the local landscape.

Control weeds

Control competitive weeds (including brambles, nettles and grasses) during the first growing season. These weeds reduce the growth rate of the new plants by competing for soil moisture, nutrients and light. Avoid using a strimmer as these can damage the plants.

Protect the plants

Fence off the plants if sheep, cattle or horses graze the land. Keep fences far enough away so the hedgerow can grow at least 1.5m in width.

If there is a known problem with rabbits or hares you may need rabbit netting, either on its own or with stock fencing.

Avoid using spiral guards as they limit the amount of dense growth at the base of each plant, are unsightly and are difficult to remove.

Further information

New hedgerow planting can help control soil erosion and runoff. Hedgerows planted along contours will decrease slope length, reduce the force of surface flow, and encourage infiltration. Hedges planted alongside watercourses are also effective.

Look out for signs of soil damage and erosion such as capping, rilling and brown water runoff on long or steep slopes (particularly on sandy soils) and prioritise areas of high erosion risk, in particular areas adjacent to watercourses.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) including how to apply.

BN12: Stone wall restoration

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the stone wall restoration item.

How much will be paid

£25 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this item

It is available on walls where at least one-third of the original height has to be dismantled and rebuilt in order to complete the restoration as part of Countryside Stewardship:

- Mid Tier
- Higher Tier
- Capital Grants
- Woodland creation and maintenance
- Woodland tree health (restoration)
- Can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

Where this item cannot be used

On walls that are in receipt of stone wall protection and maintenance (EB11) or stone wall protection and maintenance on or above the moorland line (UB11) under live ELS or UELS agreements.

How this item will benefit the environment

There will be a rebuilt stone wall which will help to control livestock and conserve traditional landscapes.

Requirements

You must:

- rebuild walls to their original height in the local style - refer to the height and style of other stone walls nearby that are in good condition
- dismantle (by hand) the existing structure back to a sound construction
- rebuild the wall so there is an even top line, a consistent batter (slope), and no bulges or depressions along the face of the wall
- add a filling of solid rocks with each course where it is part of the traditional construction
- keep all existing wall-side trees and saplings. A wall-side tree is one that forms part of the boundary feature or is attached to it such that livestock do not pass between it and the wall
- make stockproof (with wooden rails) any gaps left in the wall to allow for tree growth
- rebuild stone features into the wall such as sheep creeps, troughs and stiles
- use original stone where it is available
- make sure imported stone matches the ones traditional to the area in type, size and style
- haul stone only when ground conditions are firm enough to prevent damage to the fields next to the wall
- remove any leftover materials used to complete the wall from the site, and restore the ground where you have carried out the work

Do not:

- disturb foundation stones unless it is necessary to create a firm base
- use topsoil, earth, sand or fine gravel as filling between courses
- use concrete or mortar
- take stone from other walls, banks or buildings on the holding
- place stone on features of archaeological, historic or wildlife value as identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), Environmental Information Map or Historic Environment Farm Environmental Record (HEFER) (where applicable)

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application:

- a map showing the location of any wall-side trees, saplings and stone features (this can be the FER)

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of each length of wall to be restored before work starts

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#), [Woodland creation and maintenance](#) or [Woodland tree health](#) manual for more detail.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

You can use this item on the same length as the following items:

- [BN13 - Top wiring – stone walls](#)
- [BN14 - Stone wall supplement - stone from quarry](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Choose the right style for the wall

Restore the wall so that it matches the stone types and wall styles in the immediate area. There can be distinctive local variations, often in relatively small areas. The style is determined by the composition, shape and size of the stone used and the way it can be split and shaped. Using the right type of stone will make sure that you can match the required style.

Restoring the wall

You should:

- dismantle the existing structure by hand, separating and sorting copings (covering stones), through stones and building stones for reuse
- lay stones level and pack under each one so that it will not move

- if using filling, always bring up the level of the middle of the wall for each course before going to the next one - it should not be possible to see daylight through the wall
- place through stones where the wall is double-faced (they cannot stick out more than 15 centimetres (cm), so weight and stresses are spread evenly
- place stones next to each other so they touch as much as possible, covering joints below as you build (for example 1 stone on 2, then 2 stones on 1)
- place each stone with its length reaching well into the wall, not along the outside
- pack coping stones (stones placed along the top of the wall, 'capping' it) as firmly as possible to tie the whole wall together
- finish the entrances and wall ends with a well-built cheek end

The sides of the wall should slant evenly on both sides, creating an even 'batter' from a wide base to a narrower top of the wall. Avoid creating bulges as it weakens the wall and may cause collapse.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#), [Woodland creation and maintenance](#) or [Woodland tree health](#) including how to apply.

BN13: Top wiring - stone wall

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the top wiring - stone wall item.

How much will be paid

£3.60 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship:

- Mid Tier
- Higher Tier
- Capital Grants
- Woodland tree health (restoration)
- Can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

but only:

- on walls being rebuilt with the [BN12 - Stone wall restoration](#) item
- to keep stock out of new woodland planting or other land management options

How it benefits the environment

There will be a rebuilt stone wall with top-wiring which will help to control livestock and conserve traditional landscapes.

Requirements

You must:

- use round timber posts with a top diameter of 75 millimetres (mm)
- set the posts at centres no wider than 3m (for mild steel wire) or 10m (for high-tensile wire)

- use posts long enough so that the top wire can be fixed at no more than 300mm above the top of the wall
- use timber that is fully peeled and tanalised or treated with an appropriate preservative
- knock the posts into the ground and either set them leaning against the wall or set them alternately on opposite sides of the wall
- secure the posts
- staple either half height sheep netting or 2 lines of steel wire 200mm apart to the upright posts
- use 4mm diameter mild steel or 3.15mm diameter high tensile steel line wire
- make sure the wire is properly strained and fastened with galvanised staples

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the lengths of wall you plan to be top-wired before work starts

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#), or [Woodland tree health](#) manual for more detail.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

You can use this supplement on the same length as the following items and supplements:

- [BN12 - Stone wall restoration](#)
- [BN14 - Stone wall supplement - stone from quarry](#)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#), or [Woodland tree health](#) including how to apply.

BN14: Stone wall supplement - stone from quarry

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the stone wall supplement - stone from quarry item.

How much will be paid

£44 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship:

- Mid Tier
- Higher Tier
- Capital Grants
- Woodland tree health
- Can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

Only on walls being rebuilt using the [BN12 - Stone wall restoration](#) item.

How this supplement will benefit the environment

If successful there will be a rebuilt stone wall on sites where there was insufficient re-usable stone on the farm.

Requirements

- use imported stone that matches the type, size and style of the wall being restored
- restore the wall as specified by the [BN12 - Stone wall restoration](#) item
- remove all surplus stone from the site after work has been completed

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of each length of wall to be restored

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#), or [Woodland tree health](#) manual for more detail.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This supplement can be used on the same length as the following items:

- [BN12 - Stone wall restoration](#)
- [BN13 - Top wiring – stone walls](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this supplement

The following advice is to help you successfully carry out this supplement, but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Choose the right style for the wall

Restore the wall so that it matches the stone types and wall styles in the immediate area. There can be distinctive local variations, often in relatively small areas. The style is determined by the composition, shape and size of the stone used and the way it can be split and shaped. Using the right type of stone will ensure that the required style can be matched.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#) or [Woodland tree health](#) including how to apply.

BN15: Stone wall supplement - difficult sites

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the stone wall supplement - difficult sites item.

How much will be paid

£7.90 per metre (m). The payment rate is for the total length of boundary under the option (not for each side of the boundary).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier.

Only on walls being rebuilt using the [BN12 - Stone wall restoration](#).

The walls must be one of the following:

- on a slope with an incline of more than 30 degrees
- greater than 1.6m in height
- in an inaccessible or remote location, such as a considerable distance from a track or situated on boggy ground
- can only be used when the applicant has “management control” of both sides of the boundary.

How this supplement will benefit the environment

If successful there will be a rebuilt stone wall which will help to control livestock and conserve traditional landscapes.

Requirements

- restore the wall as specified by the [BN12 - Stone wall restoration](#)

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of each length of wall to be restored
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related items

This supplement can be used on the same length as the following items and supplements:

- [BN12 - Stone wall restoration](#)
- [BN13 - Stone wall supplement - top wiring](#)
- [BN14 - Stone wall supplement - stone from quarry](#)

Further information

See the Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

CT1: Management of coastal sand dunes and vegetated shingle

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of coastal sand dunes and vegetated shingle option.

How much will be paid

£217 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part parcels, on a non-rotational basis only on:

- coastal sand dune priority habitat
- vegetated shingle priority habitat

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- scrub
- open water
- bare ground

How this option will benefit the environment

It is designed to make sure that existing coastal sand dunes and vegetated shingle sites are managed appropriately. This includes both sites in good condition or those that need restoration, such as where management has stopped or scrub has invaded.

If successful there will be:

- sand dunes and shingle areas in favourable condition on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), meaning they are adequately conserved and are meeting conservation objectives

- sand dunes and shingle areas in improving condition if not on SSSIs, meaning measures are in place that if maintained will make them favourable over time
- a mosaic of open habitats and bare ground with typical sand dune and shingle plant species, such as sand couch, marram grass and sand sedge, although the exact species will depend on the habitat's location
- a gradual change from less stable and seasonal habitats near the beach (including drift line vegetation) to more stable landward habitats, connected by moving sand or shingle

Requirements

You must:

- provide or maintain areas of bare ground
- carry out extensive grazing (or cutting if grazing is not possible) to encourage vegetation mosaics
- allow natural and dynamic coastal changes, such as changes due to storms or windblow (deposits of windblown sand)
- control scrub or other invasive plant species

The agreement will set out what you cannot do. It's likely you'll not be allowed to

- use fertilisers or manures
- use supplementary feed
- apply any lime
- plough, cultivate or re-seed

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application:

- a map of permitted access routes - you can mark these on any map, including your Farm Environment Record (FER)

On your annual claim must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [OR2 – Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 – Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement.](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [SP10 - Administration of group managed agreements supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Dunes and shingle are important elements of coastal landscapes, with active processes creating variation in their structure. These coastal systems also act as an important form of natural sea defence, so play a significant part in adaptation to climate change. The history of management is important to understand: sites that have a tradition of low-intensity grazing should maintain this, while in other areas, such as shingle, the habitat would be damaged if grazing was introduced for the first time.

So while grazing is encouraged on many dune sites, it is not mandatory in all cases; where dune grazing is not possible, you can use a selective cutting regime as an alternative. On many shingle sites, grazing and cutting is not appropriate, but you can still use this option where the shingle forms part of a wider coastal system (see below). You should keep any seaweed or driftwood accumulations.

Where invasion of tall coarse grasses and scrub such as blackthorn, bramble and sea buckthorn has occurred due to under-grazing, carry out capital works to keep the scrub within agreed limits and adjust your grazing or cutting regimes to prevent re-invasion.

Consider option [CT2 - Creation of coastal sand dunes and vegetated shingle on arable land and improved grassland](#), if the habitat is expanding through rollback onto nearby arable or grassland. Rollback is the movement of dunes inland due to coastal processes and wind blow.

Further information

You can find more information on the Buglife habitat management pages for:

- [coastal sand dunes](#)
- [coastal vegetated shingle](#)

See the Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

CT2: Creation of coastal sand dunes and vegetated shingle on arable land and improved grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of coastal sand dunes and vegetated shingle on arable land and improved grassland option.

How much will be paid

£314 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option runs for 10 years, not the standard 5 years for the scheme, in recognition of the level of management change involved.

Where to use this option

It is available for Higher Tier on whole or part parcels which are non-rotational, on land next to existing sand dunes or shingle that is either:

- arable land
- improved grassland

Where this option cannot be used

To create sand dunes and coastal vegetated shingle in the following situations:

- as compensation, planning consent condition or other [Habitat Regulations](#) requirement
- if the work is necessary as part of a planning permission condition
- on land that has previously received 20 years' agri-environment funding for coastal habitat creation

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- scrub
- open water
- bare ground

How this option will benefit the environment

It creates sand dunes and coastal vegetated shingle on arable land or improved grassland locations that were:

- once part of sand dune or shingle systems
- next to active sand dune or shingle systems

If successful, developing features will include:

- sand dunes and vegetated shingle
- transition areas (transitions between shingle and dune and nearby habitats)
- the specialised and local species that sand dunes and vegetated shingle in the area support

Requirements

You must:

- provide or maintain areas of bare ground
- carry out extensive grazing (or cutting if grazing is not possible) to encourage vegetation mosaics
- allow natural and dynamic coastal changes, such as changes due to storms or windblow (deposits of windblown sand)
- control scrub or other invasive plant species
- agree all drainage works, including modification to existing drainage, in writing with Natural England before you carry out any works

The agreement will set out what you must not do but it's likely that you will not be allowed to:

- use fertilisers or manures
- use supplementary feed
- apply any lime
- plough, cultivate or re-seed

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application:

- a map of permitted access routes – you can mark these on any map, including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

On your annual payment claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- stock records to show grazing activity on parcels

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement.](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [SP10 - Administration of group managed agreements supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Dunes and shingle are important elements of coastal landscapes, with active processes creating variation in their structure. These coastal systems also act as an important form of natural sea defence, so play a significant part in adaptation to climate change. Allow sand and shingle to accumulate or migrate inland following storms and other coastal processes.

While dune vegetation is establishing on the rollback areas some light grazing or cutting may be appropriate, but you should monitor this very carefully to avoid damage. Once dune vegetation is established grazing is encouraged on most sites, but is not mandatory in all cases. Where dune grazing is not possible, a selective cutting regime is an acceptable alternative. On many shingle sites, neither grazing nor cutting is appropriate, but this option may still be used where the shingle forms part of a wider coastal system (see below). You should keep any seaweed or driftwood accumulations.

Further information

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

CT3: Management of coastal saltmarsh

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of coastal saltmarsh option.

How much will be paid

£77 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part parcels, on a non-rotational basis, only on saltmarsh and transitional areas (transitions to adjacent shingle or dune habitats) that are both:

- above mean high water neap tide level (the average throughout the year of the heights of two successive high waters when the tidal range is at its smallest)
- covered by seawater between 25 and 600 times a year (1 to 24 times a year for transitional areas)

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the saltmarsh area, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- open water (such as small lagoons and creeks)
- bare mud (if within the saltmarsh mosaic, but not separate external areas of mudflat)

How this option will benefit the environment

It maintains coastal saltmarsh in good condition and restores saltmarsh in unfavourable condition when grazing or cutting are key factors.

If successful there will be:

- saltmarsh areas in favourable condition on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), meaning they are adequately conserved and are meeting conservation objectives

- saltmarsh areas in improving condition if not on SSSIs, meaning measures are in place that if maintained will make them favourable over time
- a mosaic of open habitats and bare ground with typical saltmarsh plant species such as sea aster, sea purslane, sea-blite and sea-lavender, although the exact species will depend on the location of the saltmarsh
- a gradual change from less stable and seasonal habitats on the seaward side to the more stable, well-established landward saltmarsh and transitions covered only by the highest tides

Requirements

You must:

- maintain or re-introduce favourable management, mainly through suitable grazing, where appropriate, but also by limiting disturbance
- continue an appropriate grazing regime (the right types of stock, in the right numbers and at the right times of year) or stop grazing where necessary (for example, to restore condition or prevent erosion)
- maintain the saltmarsh vegetation by not disturbing the surface, but allow natural and dynamic coastal changes, such as changes due to storms or windblow

The agreement will set out what you cannot do. It's likely you'll not be allowed to:

- use fertilisers or manures
- use supplementary feed
- plough, cultivate or re-seed

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application:

- a map of permitted access routes - you can mark these on any map, including your Farm Environment Record (FER)

On your annual claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [CT6 - Coastal vegetation management supplement](#)
- [OR2 – Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 – Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement.](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

The precise management agreed will depend on the particular conditions on a site. It could include any of the following:

- light grazing
- no grazing
- controlling damaging activities associated with public access

This option will contribute to climate change adaptation and help to conserve and strengthen the distinctive local character of estuarine and coastal landscapes.

A site suitable for restoration through this option may be one that is currently being grazed but where this is impacting on the quality of the habitat and associated species. For example, a site may currently be over-grazed or grazed at an inappropriate time of year. Alternatively, it may be a

site that needs grazing, but is difficult to graze and has become dominated by a few coarse plant species. Where significant changes to grazing levels are required, these can be supported under the [CT6](#) supplement (to be used with this option). You can include the transitions between saltmarsh and other habitats to landward, exposed to infrequent tidal inundation in this option as they can support important species and plant communities which are increasingly rare.

You should keep any seaweed or driftwood accumulations and allow sediment to accumulate or migrate inland following storms and other coastal processes.

Further information

You can find more information from:

- the Environment Agency in the [saltmarsh management manual](#)
- Natural England in the [climate change adaptation manual](#)

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

CT4: Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on arable land

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on arable land option.

How much will be paid

£442 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option runs for 20 years, not the standard 5 years for the scheme, in recognition of the level of management change involved and its largely irreversible nature.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part parcels, only on sites that are both of the following:

- next to saltmarsh or other inter-tidal habitats
- arable land that lies behind a coastal defence - most of the land must lie below mean high water spring tide level (the average of the heights of two successive high waters when the tidal range is greatest)

The creation of the inter-tidal habitat must both:

- conform to the [Environment Agency's flood and coastal risk management strategy for England](#)
- be approved by the Environment Agency and Natural England

Where this option cannot be used

If the planned creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat is:

- as compensation, planning consent condition or other [Habitat Regulations](#) requirement
- on land that has previously received 20 years' agri-environment funding for inter-tidal habitat creation

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land area (once inter-tidal habitat is created), even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- open water (such as lagoons and creeks)
- bare mud

How this option will benefit the environment

It creates inter-tidal and saline habitats, including transitional areas (transitions between saltmarsh and nearby habitats), on arable land or improved grassland.

If successful there will be:

- inter-tidal and saltmarsh areas developing (note that it will not be possible to precisely predict the balance of saltmarsh and mudflat in a dynamic coastal system)
- a mosaic of open habitats such as lagoons, creeks and mud flats
- saltmarsh plants colonising more stable higher areas of the habitats
- lugworm casts, feeding birds and other evidence of marine invertebrates

As a result of tides bringing in sediment and seeds, a range of inter-tidal habitats will form such as mudflats, coastal saltmarsh, together with saline lagoons and transitions between these and other habitats where the topography promotes this. These habitats will benefit many specialised plants and animals adapted to the differing degrees of tidal inundation and saline influence. These factors result in variations in vegetation cover from bare mud to dense saltmarsh, and succession between them over time.

The creation of small-scale saline lagoons, which require an input of seawater, can be promoted by this option. This option will also contribute to more sustainable flood management, adaptation to climate change and enhancement of the coastal landscape. Where sediment is deposited, the option may contribute to the protection of important archaeological sites from the impacts of ploughing or other forms of cultivation (but early consultation with historic specialists will be needed where such sites are present).

Requirements

You may need a [Feasibility Study \(PA2\)](#) if your application includes this option. It will include how to:

- prepare the site and manage any existing vegetation
- excavate any lagoons or creeks
- manage vegetation once established
- carry out any necessary breaches to the sea wall

Keeping records

Before you apply, you should contact both Natural England and the Environment Agency for advice and get any consents or permissions required. You do not need to send these with your application, but you will need to submit them with your payment claim.

You must send the following with your application:

- a map of permitted access routes - you can mark these on any map, including your Farm Environment Record (FER)

On your annual claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must send the following with your claim:

- written support from the Environment Agency

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- a grazing record for any sites grazed
- written support from Natural England adviser
- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate these supplements on the same area as this option:

- [CT6 - Coastal vegetation management supplement](#)
- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement.](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

To make sure that transitional areas are included in the agreement area, the boundary of the agreement should normally extend to Highest Astronomical Tide (HAT) plus 1 metre. This will allow for development of transitional zone, including unusual transitions from saline to brackish to freshwater habitats. You need to identify such instances in the initial planning stages before completion of the agreement and clearly justify for individual sites.

This is a specialised option that is only likely to be used in a relatively small number of cases, where a managed breach of coastal defences is planned. On sites where there is interest and potential for this option, you should talk to Natural England and the Environment Agency at an early stage. Planning for such projects can often take several years, with coastal process modelling and feasibility studies usually needed.

Where coastal defences are not being maintained and are then overtopped or breached naturally, option [CT5 - Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat by non-intervention](#) would apply.

Further information

You can find more information in:

- the Environment Agency's [saltmarsh management manual](#)

- The Saltmarsh Creation Handbook: A Project Manager's Guide to the Creation of Saltmarsh and Inter-tidal Mudflat by AS Nottage and PA Robertson (RSPB/CIWEM, 2005)

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

CT5: Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat by non-intervention

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat by non-intervention option.

How much will be paid

£271 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option runs for 20 years, not the standard 5 years for the scheme, in recognition of the level of management change involved and its largely irreversible nature.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part parcels on a non-rotational basis on sites that are both:

- next to either saltmarsh or other inter-tidal habitats
- on land that lies behind a coastal defence - most of the land must lie below mean high water spring tide level (the average of the heights of two successive high waters when the tidal range is greatest)

Suitable sites may have:

- defences that are overtopped by high tides
- recently been breached and show evidence of being inundated or percolated by salt water through the defences

The creation of the inter-tidal habitat must both:

- conform to the [Environment Agency's flood and coastal risk management strategy for England](#)
- be approved by the Environment Agency and Natural England

Where this option cannot be used

If the creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat is:

- as compensation, planning consent condition or other [Habitat Regulations](#) requirement
- on land that has previously received 20 years' agri-environment funding for coastal habitat creation

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land area (once inter-tidal habitat is created), even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- open water (such as lagoons and creeks)
- bare mud

How this option will benefit the environment

It creates inter-tidal and saline habitats, including transitional areas (transitions between saltmarsh and nearby habitats), following the unmanaged breach of sea walls or the overtopping of sea walls.

If successful there will be:

- inter-tidal and saltmarsh areas developing (note that it will not be possible to precisely predict the balance of saltmarsh and mudflat in a dynamic coastal system)
- a mosaic of open habitats such as lagoons, creeks and mudflats
- saltmarsh plants colonising more stable higher areas of the habitats
- lugworm casts, feeding birds and other evidence of marine invertebrates

As a result of tides bringing in sediment and seeds, a range of inter-tidal habitats will form such as mudflats, coastal saltmarsh, together with saline lagoons and transitions between these and other habitats where the topography promotes this. These habitats will benefit many specialised plants and animals adapted to the differing degrees of tidal inundation and saline influence. These factors result in variations in vegetation cover from bare mud to dense grassland, and succession between them over time.

The creation of small-scale saline lagoons, which require an input of seawater, can be promoted by this option. This option will also contribute to more sustainable flood management, adaptation to climate change and enhancement of the coastal landscape. Where sediment is deposited, the option may contribute to the protection of important archaeological sites from the impacts of ploughing or other forms of cultivation (but early

consultation with historic specialists will be needed where such sites are present).

Requirements

If your application is successful the planned management will be detailed in a feasibility study for the site. It will include how to:

- prepare the site and manage any existing vegetation
- excavate any lagoons or creeks
- manage vegetation once established
- make any further breaches to the sea wall, where needed
- agree all drainage works, including modification to existing drainage, in writing with Natural England before you carry out any work

Keeping records

Before you apply, contact both Natural England and the Environment Agency for advice and get the consents or permissions required. You do not need to provide the consents or permissions with your application, but you must send them with your payment claim.

You must send the following with your application:

- a map of permitted access routes – you can mark these on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

On your annual payment claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements and send the following:

- support from the Environment Agency

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record
- photographs of the management undertaken

Related options

You can locate these supplements on the same area as this option:

- [CT6 - Coastal vegetation management supplement](#)
- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 – Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 – Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement.](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but are not requirements for this item.

To make sure that transitional areas are included in the agreement area, the boundary of the agreement should normally extend to Highest Astronomical Tide (HAT) plus 1 metre. This will allow for development of transitional zone, including unusual transitions from saline to brackish to freshwater habitats. Such instances would need to be identified in the initial planning stages prior to completion of the agreement and clearly justified for individual sites.

This is a specialised option that is only likely to be used in a relatively small number of cases, where coastal defences are not being maintained and are then overtopped or breached naturally. Where a managed breach is planned, then options CT4 - Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on arable land or CT7 - Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on intensive grassland would apply.

On sites where there is interest and potential for this option, discussions should be held with Natural England and the Environment Agency at an early stage. It should be recognised that unmanaged sea wall breaches are of course unpredictable, but contingency plans can be put in place.

Further information

Further information is available from:

- the Environment Agency's [saltmarsh management manual](#)
- The Saltmarsh Creation Handbook: A Project Manager's Guide to the Creation of Saltmarsh and Inter-tidal Mudflat by AS Nottage and PA Robertson (RSPB/CIWEM, 2005)

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

CT6: Coastal vegetation management supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the coastal vegetation management supplement supplement.

How much will be paid

£117 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Whole or part parcel

Non-rotational

Only with one of the following options:

- [CT3 - Management of coastal saltmarsh](#)
- [CT4 - Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on arable land](#)
- [CT5 - Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat by non-intervention](#)
- [CT7 - Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on intensive grassland](#)

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It supports saltmarsh vegetation management, for example by reducing existing levels of grazing, or introducing grazing or cutting.

If successful there will be:

- more varied sward structure and greater wildlife diversity
- better control of any scrub and coarse vegetation
- increased numbers of saltmarsh nesting species (such as redshank) due to more varied vegetation structure
- a reduction in trampling damage where grazing levels have been reduced

Requirements

Agreement holders will need to carry out specific cutting or grazing management tailored to their site.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related supplements

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements:

- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement.](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

Further information

Further information is available from:

- the Environment Agency's [saltmarsh management manual](#)
- advice on [managing coastal saltmarsh](#)

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

CT7: Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on intensive grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat on intensive grassland option.

How much will be paid

£276 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option runs for 20 years, not the standard 5 years for the scheme, in recognition of the level of management change involved and its largely irreversible nature.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part-parcels which are non-rotational, on sites that are both:

- next to saltmarsh or other inter-tidal habitats
- grassland that lies behind a coastal defence - most of the land must lie below mean high water spring tide level (the average of the heights of two successive high waters when the tidal range is greatest)

The creation of the inter-tidal habitat must both:

- conform to the [Environment Agency's flood and coastal risk management strategy for England](#)
- be approved by the Environment Agency and Natural England

Where this option cannot be used

If the planned creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat is:

- as compensation, planning consent condition or other [Habitat Regulations](#) requirement
- on areas of grassland priority habitat, unless agreed with Natural England

- on land that has previously received 20 years' agri-environment funding for inter-tidal habitat creation

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land area (once inter-tidal habitat is created), even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- open water (such as lagoons and creeks)
- bare mud

How this option will benefit the environment

It creates inter-tidal and saline habitats, including transitional areas (transitions between saltmarsh and nearby habitats), on grassland or improved grassland.

If successful there will be:

- inter-tidal and saltmarsh areas developing
- a mosaic of open habitats such as lagoons, creeks and mudflats
- saltmarsh plants colonising more stable higher areas of the habitats
- lugworm casts, feeding birds and other evidence of marine invertebrates

As a result of tides bringing in sediment and seeds, a range of inter-tidal habitats will form such as mudflats, coastal saltmarsh, together with saline lagoons and transitions between these and other habitats where the topography promotes this. These habitats will benefit many specialised plants and animals adapted to the differing degrees of tidal inundation and saline influence. These factors result in variations in vegetation cover from bare mud to dense saltmarsh, and succession between them over time.

The creation of small-scale saline lagoons, which require an input of seawater, can be promoted by this option. This option will also contribute to more sustainable flood management, adaptation to climate change and enhancement of the coastal landscape. Where sediment is deposited, the option may contribute to the protection of important archaeological sites from the impacts of ploughing or other forms of cultivation (but early consultation with historic specialists will be needed where such sites are present).

Requirements

You must:

- agree all drainage works, including modification to existing drainage, in writing with Natural England you carry out any work

You may need a [Feasibility Study \(PA2\)](#) to include this option in an application. The study will include how to:

- prepare the site and manage any existing vegetation
- excavate any lagoons or creeks
- manage vegetation once established
- carry out any necessary breaches to the sea wall

Keeping records

Before you apply you should contact both Natural England and the Environment Agency for advice and gain consents or permissions required. You do not need to provide the consents or permissions with your application, but you will need to submit them with your payment claim.

You must send the following with your application:

- a map of permitted access routes – you can mark these on any map, including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

On your annual payment claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements and must send the following:

- support from Environment Agency

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- a grazing activity record for any sites grazed
- photographs of the management undertaken

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [CT6 - Coastal vegetation management supplement](#)
- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement.](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [SP10 - Administration of group managed agreements supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

To make sure that transitional areas are included in the agreement area, the boundary of the agreement should normally extend to Highest Astronomical Tide (HAT) plus 1 metre. This will allow for development of transitional zone, including unusual transitions from saline to brackish to freshwater habitats. Such instances would need to be identified in the initial planning stages prior to completion of the agreement and clearly justified for individual sites.

This is a specialised option that is only likely to be used in a relatively small number of cases, where a managed breach of coastal defences is planned. On sites where there is interest and potential for this option, discussions should be held with Natural England and the Environment Agency at an early stage. Planning for such projects can often take several years, with coastal process modelling and feasibility studies usually needed.

Where coastal defences are not being maintained and are then overtopped or breached naturally, option [CT5 - Creation of inter-tidal and saline habitat by non-intervention](#) would apply.

Further information

You can find more information in:

- the Environment Agency's [saltmarsh management manual](#)
- The Saltmarsh Creation Handbook: A Project Manager's Guide to the Creation of Saltmarsh and Inter-tidal Mudflat by AS Nottage and PA Robertson (RSPB/CIWEM, 2005)

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

ED1: Educational access

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the educational access option.

How much will be paid

£290 per visit.

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier and Mid Tier

ED1 is not a standalone item and can only be applied for with other Mid Tier (including Wildlife Offers) and Higher Tier options, an agreement cannot be for ED1 only.

How this option will benefit the environment

It allows for school pupils and care farming clients to visit the farm to learn, understand and become engaged with farming and the environment.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

The tour of the farm will last at least 2 hours and will be conducted by a member of farm staff or volunteer who suits the visitors' needs. During the tour the links between farming, conservation and food production will be explained, using the land as a classroom. The [Farm visit evaluation](#) form will be completed for each visit claimed.

If the visitors are from a care farming setting, ensure that they are still given a tour of the farm and an educational experience.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- the children cannot be older than 16 (to GCSE level). There is no age limit on care farming
- charge for visits
- receive any other direct income relating to the educational visit
- youth clubs, toddler groups and extra-curricular events are not eligible visitors
- respite care and those set to work on tasks are not eligible visitors
- as there is no maximum party size, only one group on the holding at a time is eligible to be claimed
- You cannot claim for more than 25 visiting groups in any agreement year.

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you have not carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

Where this option is used in Higher Tier or on SSSIs, we will check that the recommended management is being met and the prohibited activities not carried out. These will be discussed and agreed with your NE adviser.

In order to assist you achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option we recommend that you employ best practice.

We recommend that you:

- carry out a health and safety check and prepare a risk assessment for the farm, then give this to potential group leaders
- carry out local promotion to schools and care farming settings and providers to ensure a wide prospective audience is reached
- promote the farm details online. The links below have some examples of national networks
- read and understand the industry code of practice for undertaking farm visits
- discuss with your insurer your public liability levels
- you can use all or part of the farm for visits and can use neighbouring land if it offers additional benefit

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It is your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Copies of the standard farm visit evaluation form - as visits may take place after the annual claim deadline, RPA will accept valid forms until 31 January following the claim year

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

The maximum number of claimed visits is 25. It is possible to deliver more visits or to deliver visits to parties that would otherwise not be eligible and to charge these visitors if you wish. You cannot claim these visits through Countryside Stewardship.

Further information

- [LEAF Education](#) educates children and young people about food and farming in a sustainable countryside
- [Social Farms & Gardens](#) offers support and resources on the therapeutic use of farms (care farming)
- [Visit My Farm](#) has resources for land managers to support educational visits, ideas for successful visits, health and safety information and suggestions on how to maximise visitor numbers and enjoyment
- [Countryside Classroom](#) the industry led place to promote your farm.
- [Industry code of practice to prevent ill health to visitors to the farm](#)

FG1: Fencing

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the fencing item.

How much will be paid

£4.00 per metre (m).

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Woodland Creation grants if one of the following apply:

- in conjunction with a habitat management or creation option where new fencing is required to meet the option grazing requirements
- to prevent water pollution caused by farming (approval from a Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer is **not** required nor does the parcel need to be in a High Priority area for water quality)
- to protect environmental features (for example newly planted trees, buffer strips and field corners taken out of management) or as agreed with the Forestry Commission Woodland Officer.

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Capital Grants:

- to prevent water pollution caused by farming (approval from a Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer is **not** required nor does the parcel need to be in a High Priority area for water quality)

You can also use with [TE5](#) for Woodland Creation grants where appropriate and agreed with a Forestry Commission Woodland Officer.

Where this item cannot be used

- On historic or archaeological features as identified in the Historic Environment Farm Environment Records (HEFER)
- On a site where a fence has previously received a grant

How this item will benefit the environment

This item helps control livestock, protects environmental features and helps to manage habitats.

Requirements

You must:

- remove all old fencing material before putting up the new fencing
- use softwood timber that is fully peeled, coated with wood preservative and pressure treated, or treated with an approved preservative - untreated durable timber can be used as set out in the Forestry Commission guide to forest fencing
- put up a fence at least 1.05m high
- use strands of galvanised 4 millimetre (mm) mild plain steel wire or 2.5mm barbed wire
- use enough strands to control the livestock
- use straining posts that are at least 125mm by 125mm square (or have a 100mm top diameter) and are at least 1.87m long
- set the straining posts at least 750mm into the ground and no more than 150m apart
- place a straining post at every change of direction (horizontal or vertical) and at each end of the fence
- use struts that are 75mm by 75mm square, or have a 65mm top diameter, and 1.87m long
- set the struts at least 450mm into the ground and mortise them into the straining post
- use intermediate posts that are 75mm by 75mm square (or have a 65mm top diameter) and 1.75m long
- set the intermediate posts at least 600mm in the ground and no more than 3.5m apart
- make sure that all the materials meet the relevant [British Standards](#) - see copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Do not:

- attach the fence to trees or hedgerows
- block or restrict [access to open access land](#)

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing site before work starts

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#) or [Woodland Creation manual](#) for more detail.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

You can use this item on the same length as the following supplement:

- [FG4 - Rabbit fencing supplement](#)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) including how to apply.

FG2: Sheep netting

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the sheep netting item.

How much will be paid

£4.90 per metre (m).

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Woodland Creation grants if one of the following apply:

- in conjunction with a habitat management or creation option where new fencing is required to meet the option grazing requirements
- to prevent water pollution caused by farming (approval from a Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer is **not** required nor does the parcel need to be in a High Priority area for water quality)
- to protect environmental features (for example newly planted trees, buffer strips and field corners taken out of management) or as agreed with the Forestry Commission Woodland Officer.

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Capital Grants:

- to prevent water pollution caused by farming (approval from a Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer is **not** required nor does the parcel need to be in a High Priority area for water quality)

You can also use with [TE5](#) for Woodland Creation grants where appropriate and agreed with a Forestry Commission Woodland Officer.

Where this item cannot be used

- On historic or archaeological features as identified in the Historic Environment Farm Environment Records (HEFER)
- On a site where a fence has previously received a grant

How this item will benefit the environment

This item protects environmental features from livestock and helps manage habitats.

Requirements

You must:

- remove all old fencing material before putting up the new fencing
- use softwood timber that is fully peeled, coated with wood preservative and pressure treated, or treated with an approved preservative - untreated durable timber can be used as set out in the Forestry Commission guide to forest fencing
- put up a steel wire mesh fence at least 1.05m high
- use additional strands of galvanised steel wire (plain or barbed) if you need extra height
- use straining posts that have a top diameter of at least 125 millimetre (mm), or are 100 by 100mm in cross-section when sawn
- make sure the straining posts are 1.85m long if set in concrete and 2.15m long otherwise
- place the straining posts no more than 150m apart if using mild steel line wire, or 300m apart for high tensile wire
- use a straining post at every change of direction (horizontal or vertical) and at each end of the fence
- use struts that have a top diameter of at least 80mm, or are 75mm by 75mm when sawn
- make sure the struts are 1.6m if set in concrete and 1.9m long otherwise
- notch struts into the straining post at an angle of no more than 45 degrees
- use intermediate posts that have a top diameter of at least 65mm, or are 75mm by 75mm when sawn
- make sure the intermediate posts are 1.7m long and space them no further than 3.5m apart
- make sure that all the materials you use meet the relevant [British Standards](#) - see copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Do not:

- attach the fence to trees or hedgerows

- block or restrict [access to open access land](#)

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the site before work starts

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#) or [Woodland Creation manual](#) for more detail.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants item

You can use this item on the same feature as the following supplement:

- [FG4 - Rabbit fencing supplement](#)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) including how to apply.

FG3: Permanent electric fencing

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the permanent electric fencing item.

How much will be paid

£4.90 per metre (m).

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier

Only:

- where new fencing is required to meet option grazing requirements

or

- in areas affected by water pollution caused by farming (approval from a Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer is **not** required nor does the parcel need to be in a High Priority area for water quality)

or

- to protect environmental features (for example newly planted trees, biodiverse buffer strips and field corners taken out of management) or as agreed with the Forestry Commission Woodland Officer.

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Capital Grants:

- in areas affected by water pollution caused by farming (approval from a Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer is **not** required nor does the parcel need to be in a High Priority area for water quality)

Where this item cannot be used

- on historic or archaeological features as identified in the HEFER
- on a site where a fence has previously received a grant

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful this item will help control livestock and protect environmental features. It will also help to manage habitats.

Requirements

- erect wire fencing at least 1050mm high using a minimum of 4 mild steel or high tensile plain wires
- use straining posts with a top diameter of at least 150mm and 2150mm long, spaced according to the type of wire used
- use struts with a top diameter of least 80mm and 2100mm long, notched into straining posts
- use intermediate posts with a top diameter of at least 63mm and 1700mm long, spaced according to the type of wire used
- install a mains-operated energiser in accordance with the Institute of Electrical Engineers IEE Regulations
- make sure that all the materials meet the relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Do not:

- block or restrict [access to open access land](#)

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing site

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) manual for more detail.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same length as the following item:

- [FG4 - Rabbit fencing supplement](#)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) including how to apply.

FG4: Rabbit fencing supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the rabbit fencing supplement.

How much will be paid

£2.50 per metre (m).

Where to use this supplement

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier, Capital Grants and Woodland Creation grants but only with:

- [FG1 - Fencing](#)
- [FG2 - Sheep netting](#)
- [FG3 - Permanent electric fencing](#)
- [FG9 - Deer fencing](#)

How the item will benefit the environment

This item helps control rabbits, protects environmental features and helps to manage habitats.

Requirements

You must:

- use galvanised, 18 gauge, 31 millimetre (mm) hexagonal wire mesh to construct the rabbit fence
- attach the netting to a pair of 2.65mm, high tensile, spring steel straining wires using galvanised netting rings
- make sure there is one straining wires at the bottom of the fence and one at the top
- bury the bottom edge of the netting to a depth of 150mm, or lap the netting on the surface of the ground towards the rabbit threat
- anchor lapped netting at 1m intervals
- make sure that all the materials meet the relevant [British Standards](#) - see copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing site before work starts

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) manual for more detail.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this supplement

The following advice is helpful, but it is not a requirement for this item.

Use this supplement on a site where there is evidence of damage caused by rabbits, such as significant burrowing or crop damage.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) including how to apply.

FG5: Fencing supplement - difficult sites

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the fencing supplement - difficult sites supplement.

How much will be paid

£1.24 per metre (m).

Where to use this supplement

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier and Woodland Creation grants but only with:

- [FG1 - Fencing](#)
- [FG2 - Sheep netting](#)
- [FG3 - Permanent electric fencing](#)
- [FG7 - Anti-predator combination fencing](#)
- [FG8 - Anti-predator temporary electric fencing](#)
- [FG9 - Deer fencing](#)

How this supplement will benefit the environment

This supplement helps control livestock, protects environmental features and helps to manage habitats on difficult sites.

Requirements

You must:

- complete the associated fencing to the relevant standard
- agree a specification for the works with Natural England or Forestry Commission
- complete the works as set out in the approved specification

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing site before work starts

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. If you are a Higher Tier applicant you should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier](#) or [Woodland Creation manual](#) for more detail.

Related items

You can use this supplement on the same length as the following supplements:

- [FG4 - Rabbit fencing supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this supplement

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

Use this item where the site you are going to fence:

- is remote
- cannot be accessed by vehicles
- is on steep slopes
- is prone to flooding or waterlogged for large parts of the year
- is in need of a lot of ground preparation

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) including how to apply.

FG7: Anti-predator combination fencing

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the anti-predator combination fencing item.

How much will be paid

£11.10 per metre (m).

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier.

Only:

- on dry open grassland habitat used by breeding stone-curlew – in conjunction with a grassland option
- in a national breeding wader target area or where there are significant numbers of breeding waders – in conjunction with the management or creation of lowland wet grassland for breeding wader options ([GS9](#) and [GS11](#))
- on certain coastal habitats (such as shingle) used by breeding seabirds, especially terns

Where this item cannot be used

On historic or archaeological features without specialist approval, such as from the county archaeologist or Historic England

How this item will benefit the environment

It increases the productivity of priority ground-nesting birds when used with effective habitat management.

Requirements

- agree with Natural England a specification for the fencing in year 1 of the agreement
- create a permanent anti-predator combination fence that meets the specification and timings as agreed with Natural England
- check regularly that target predators are absent from the enclosure

- prevent vegetation from touching the fence's live wires

Fence specification

The fence is likely to:

- be buried about 25 cm deep into the ground using a trenching machine
- extend at least 1m above ground
- have electric wires set at around 65cm, 115cm, 130cm and 150cm above ground level, offset 5cm to 10 cm out from the post

Do not:

- allow the fence to restrict or block [access to open access land](#)

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing site
- written support from NE adviser
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs during and after work
- detailed specification must be provided (by the end of year 1)
- records of the number of breeding pairs and breeding productivity of target species within and (as far as possible) outside the fence

Applicants must contact the Local Authority or Historic Environments Record Office before applying for this item for advice and gain any consents or permissions required. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents or permissions with your payment claim.

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item

Constructing the fence

This item can also be used as a stock fence but this item should only be used when fencing is needed at the same location each year.

Anti-predator fences are effective only against large ground predators such as foxes, badgers and hedgehogs. This item should be used alongside effective habitat management and when predators are likely to limit the productivity of the target species.

When constructing the fence it is necessary to:

- make sure that the fence surrounds a nesting and chick feeding habitat that benefits the target species
- place fencing away from tall vegetation
- leave enough space between the fence and boundary for vegetation management
- modify gates to stop predators getting through, over or under them

Maintaining the fence

Regular inspections are needed to ensure that:

- vegetation is not touching the fence
- the voltage is at the required level
- the structure is maintained to the required specification
- no target predators are in the enclosed area

The Natural England adviser will advise on how frequently these visits are needed (usually at least once a week when birds are nesting) and whether the power should be left on all year.

Control vegetation before it touches the bottom wire. Strim first under the fence line, then apply herbicide.

Licences

A disturbance licence will be needed if working near Schedule 1 species, such as stone curlew and little tern.

Further information

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

FG8: Anti-predator temporary electric fencing

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the anti-predator temporary electric fencing item.

How much will be paid

£2.85 per metre (m).

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier.

Only:

- on lowland wet grassland used by breeding waders - but only when practical reasons prevent the use of [FG7 - Anti-predator permanent combination fencing](#)
- on certain coastal habitats (such as shingle) used by breeding seabirds, especially terns
- on breeding stone-curlew habitats within grassland and arable land, where both of the following apply:
 - combination fencing cannot be used
 - predatory mammals are known to be limiting productivity

Where this item cannot be used

On historic or archaeological features without specialist approval, such as from the county archaeologist or Historic England

How this item will benefit the environment

It increases the productivity of priority ground-nesting birds when used with effective habitat management.

Requirements

- agree with Natural England a specification for the fence in year 1 of the agreement

- create a temporary electric anti-predator fence that meets the specification and timings as agreed with Natural England
- regularly check that target predators are absent from the enclosure
- prevent vegetation from touching the fence's live wires

Fence specification

The fence is likely to have:

- set wires at 5cm (live), 15cm (earthed), and then with alternate live and earthed wires set at 10cm intervals up to a height of 1.1m, with an additional live wire at 1.5m
- wires held by extended insulators
- a multi-strand top wire coloured white (to increase its visibility to deer and birds)

Do not:

- restrict or block [access to open access land](#)

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing site
- written support from Natural England adviser
- item specification, if required
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work
- a detailed specification
- records of the number of breeding pairs and breeding productivity of target species within and (as far as possible) outside the fence

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item

Constructing the fence

Temporary electric anti-predator fencing is best for sites where the fencing cannot be left out all year, or where re-location of the fencing is necessary from year to year.

Anti-predator fences are effective only against large ground predators such as foxes, badgers and hedgehogs. This item should be used alongside effective habitat management and when predators are likely to limit the productivity of the target species.

Where possible the fence should be erected before breeding starts. If this is not possible it will need to be installed with minimal disturbance to the birds. Get a disturbance licence from Natural England if needed for Schedule 1 species, such as stone curlew and little tern.

When constructing the fence it is necessary to:

- make sure that the fence surrounds a nesting and chick feeding habitat that benefits the target species
- place fencing away from tall vegetation
- leave enough space between the fence and boundary for vegetation management
- modify gates to stop predators getting through, over or under them

Maintaining the fence

Regular inspections are needed to ensure that:

- vegetation is not touching the fence
- the voltage is at the required level
- the structure is maintained to the required specification
- no target predators are in the enclosed area

Natural England will advise on how frequently these visits are needed (usually at least once a week when birds are nesting).

Control vegetation before it touches the bottom wire. Strim first under the fence line, then apply herbicide.

Further information

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

FG9: Deer fencing

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the deer fencing item.

How much will be paid

£7.20 per metre (m).

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier and Woodland Creation grants but only on woodland.

How this item will benefit the environment

It will protect newly created or existing woodland from deer browsing as part of a wider woodland creation or woodland management project.

Requirements

You must:

- meet the fence specifications set out in the tables below (and in the Forestry Commission technical guide [Forest fencing](#))
- clear debris from the line of the fence
- make the line of the fence smooth enough that the bottom of the fence sits with the ground (there must be no gaps that deer can enter through)
- make sure the fence is regularly inspected
- maintain the fence so that deer cannot enter the land until the trees are large enough that they no longer need to be protected

Specifications for the fence's woodwork

Species of deer	Endposts and turning posts (metres by centimetres)	Struts (metres by centimetres)	Intermediate stakes (metres by centimetres)	Maximum stake spacing (metres)
Roe	2.8m by 10 to 13cm	2.5m by 8 to 10cm	2.5m by 5 to 8cm	10m

Species of deer	Endposts and turning posts (metres by centimetres)	Struts (metres by centimetres)	Intermediate stakes (metres by centimetres)	Maximum stake spacing (metres)
Muntjac	2.8m by 10 to 13cm	2.5m by 8 to 10cm	2.5m by 5 to 8cm	10m
Red/sika/fallow	2.8m by 12 to 18cm	2.5m by 10 to 13cm	2.6m by 8 to 10cm	10m

Specifications for the height of the fence and the size of the mesh

Species of deer	Minimum fence height (metres)	Maximum mesh size (millimetres)
Red and sika	1.8m	200 by 300mm
Fallow	1.8m	200 by 220mm
Roe	1.5m	200 by 150mm
Muntjac	1.5m	75 by 75mm

What the management plan needs to include

You can only use this option on an existing woodland site if your management plan clearly identifies that deer are present and pose a threat to the site. You do not need a woodland management plan where this item is being used to protect newly planted trees using capital item [TE4 - Supply and plant tree](#).

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- Forestry Commission Management Plan approval letter

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. If you are a Higher Tier applicant you should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) manual for more detail.

Related items

You can use this item on the same area as the following items:

- [FG4 - Rabbit fencing supplement](#)
- [FG5 - Fencing supplement - difficult sites](#)
- [FG14 - Badger gate](#)
- [FG15 - Water gates](#)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) including how to apply.

FG10: Temporary deer fencing

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the temporary deer fencing item.

How much will be paid

£5.20 per metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Higher Tier only on newly created or existing woodland or woodland subject to Woodland tree health.

Where this item cannot be used

To protect newly planted woodland supported by item [TE4 - Supply and plant tree](#).

To protect newly planted woodland supported by item [TE5 - Supplement for individual use of tree shelters](#).

How this item will benefit the environment

It will protect newly coppiced woodland from deer browsing as part of a wider woodland management project.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to make sure the fence:

- protects newly coppiced woodland
- meets the specifications set out in the table below (and in the Forestry Commission practice note [Recommendations for fallow, roe and muntjac deer fencing](#))
- is erected as soon as possible after coppicing has taken place and before stools have started to grow again
- has a line that is clear of debris
- has a line that is smooth enough that the bottom of the fence sits with the ground (there must be no gaps that deer can get through)

- is maintained so that deer cannot enter the land until the coppice re-growth is large enough that it no longer needs to be protected

Specifications for the height and mesh size of temporary fences:

Species of deer	Minimum fence height (m)	Maximum mesh size (mm)
Fallow	1.5	200 by 220
Roe	1.5	200 by 150
Muntjac	1.5	75 by 75

What the management plan needs to include

Where the item is used on an existing woodland site, the management plan needs to identify that deer are present on the site in large numbers and are a threat to it.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- Forestry Commission Management Plan approval letter
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) or [Woodland tree health manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) or [Woodland tree health](#) including how to apply.

FG11: Deer enclosure plot

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the deer enclosure plot item.

How much will be paid

£136 per unit.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier.

Only on woodland, wood pasture, scrub, heathland, and moorland or grassland restoration to protect regeneration of woody species from deer browsing.

How this item will benefit the environment

It will protect areas of woodland that are approximately 16 square metres in size from deer browsing. This will allow monitoring of the area's regeneration potential and the impact of browsing.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- erect a deer enclosure plot that is at least 1.5m high by 4m by 4m
- make sure the fence meets the specifications set out in the Forestry Commission technical guide [Forest fencing](#), but with no gates
- make sure the fence is inspected at least once a year
- maintain the fence so that deer cannot enter the site for the length of the agreement
- make sure that stakes are large enough to support the enclosure plot for the length of the agreement
- replace any stakes or fencing materials that become damaged during the term of the agreement
- clear debris from the line of the fence
- make the line of the fence smooth enough that the bottom of the fence sits with the ground (there must be no gaps that deer can get through)

What the management plan needs to include

The management plan needs to identify that deer are present on the site and are a threat to it.

Do not:

- cut any vegetation inside the plot

Keeping records

Agreement holders are likely to need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- Forestry Commission Management Plan approval letter if required
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to choose a site

Choose a site within the woodland where it is reasonable to expect the regeneration of trees, shrubs and flowers to take place, but where this is not currently happening. The area should receive enough light for regeneration to occur.

Further information

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

FG12: Wooden field gate

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the wooden field gate item.

How much will be paid

£390 per gate.

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier, Woodland Creation grants and Capital Grants but only along with a management option or boundary restoration item .

Where this item cannot be used

- Where gate posts are placed on historic or archaeological features identified in the Historic Environment Farm Environment Records (HEFER)
- To replace an existing gate or wooden wings previously funded with a grant

How this item will benefit the environment

Wooden gates help stock management, or stop livestock from getting into an area where they may cause damage, such as a historic or archaeological feature.

Wooden wings for gates stockproofs ditch crossing points by linking the gate to the ditch edge.

Requirements

Wooden field gate

You must:

- construct the gate out of timber in a style that is traditional to the local area

- construct the gate to the specifications below if there is no local gate style:

Section	Gates up to 3 metres (m) wide	Gates 3m and over wide
Top rail	100 millimetres (mm) by 75mm	125mm by 75mm
Top rail tapered to	75mm by 75mm	75mm by 75mm
Under rails	75mm by 25mm	75mm by 25mm
Braces	75mm by 25mm	75mm by 25mm
Hanging stile	100mm by 75mm	125mm by 75mm
Shutting stile	75mm by 75mm	75mm by 75mm

- hang and clap all styles of gate separately from an adjoining fence line – do not use the hanging post as an end strainer
- either set gate posts at least 900mm into the ground and surround with concrete at least:
 - 450mm by 450mm wide
 - 600mm deep, or
- erect gate posts without concrete surrounds and set at least 1.1m below the ground surface, with the soil compacted around the posts in 150mm layers
- weather cap the top of the gate posts

If you use in combination with the item [FG9](#), the gate (FG12) must be deer proof.

Wooden wings for gates

You must:

- install wings on both sides of the gate
- make sure each wing consists of at least 3 wooden rails fixed between 2 posts
- not fix the rails to the hanging post of the gate
- make sure the rails are at least 38mm by 87mm

make sure the posts are at least:

- 100mm diameter half round
- 1.8m long
- sunk 0.7 m into the ground

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the proposed location for the gates or wings before work starts

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) manual for more detail.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Constructing the gates

Frame the gates soundly and use wooden materials. All gates should match in height with the adjoining fence and have the appropriate fittings for their operation.

If you need to widen a gateway during wall or bank restoration, or to create a new opening you may need planning permission. Consult the Local Planning Authority or the National Park Authority about hedgerow regulations and the permission needed.

Using wooden wings

You can use wooden wings to extend the stockproof width of the gate where this is necessary, for example where a gateway is over a culvert or adjacent to a ditch or dyke.

These are only likely to be necessary where they are already a feature of the landscape, such as on grazing marshes.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) including how to apply.

FG13: Stone gate post

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the stone gate post item.

How much will be paid

£280 per post.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier.

Only in conjunction with boundary restoration items or item [FG12 - Wooden field gate](#). It can only be used if stone gate posts are traditional in the area.

Where this item cannot be used

On sites of historic or archaeological interest

How this item will benefit the environment

It will help conserve local landscape character and sites of historic interest by establishing stone gate posts made from local materials in local styles.

Requirements

Agreement holders will need to set up a stone or slate gate post in the local material, cut or tooled to the size and shape typical of the local area.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the proposed location of the new gate posts

- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Existing gate posts

Existing gate posts from another location on the holding should not be used.

Further information

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

FG14: Badger gate

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the badger gate item.

How much will be paid

£135 per gate.

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier, Woodland Creation and Capital Grants but only on badger routes that are in use at the moment, and are restricted by a new fence line which is being funded through Countryside Stewardship.

Where this item cannot be used

- In existing fence lines
- In newly erected fences supporting wet grasslands for breeding waders

How this item will benefit the environment

As badgers can pass freely through the fence this item reduces the damage they cause to fence lines (which were themselves installed to benefit habitats through appropriate grazing, and so on).

Requirements

You must:

- construct the badger gate to the following dimensions:
 - flap - 250 millimetres (mm) by 200mm by 40mm
 - lintel - 285mm by 40mm by 40mm
 - floor block - 205mm by 40mm by 40mm
 - two uprights - 450mm by 40mm by 40mm
- use wood treated with a non-toxic, low odour, preservative product
- make sure no nails or rough sawn edges are left exposed

- fit the gate frame and floor block into the fence, stapling the wire to the wooden frame
- sink the frame into the ground until the floor block sits at ground level
- allow a period for the badgers to use the open gate, and then fit the wooden flap, holding it at the top on a pivot, so it can open and close freely both ways, or
- fit the flap with the rest of the gate and hold it open with wire until the badgers start using the gate regularly
- only use materials that meet the relevant [British Standards](#) - see copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs during and after work has been completed

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing site before work starts
- item specification, if required

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) manual for more detail.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

You can only use this item on the same area and in conjunction with one or more of the following items and supplements:

- [FG1 - Fencing](#)
- [FG2 - Sheep netting](#)
- [FG4 - Rabbit fencing supplement](#)
- [FG5 - Fencing supplement difficult sites](#)
- [FG9 Deer Fencing](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose a site

Before putting up a fence, check the proposed fence line carefully for badger runs or paths. Runs will be most clearly visible during the spring, when badger activity is high and vegetation is not at full height. Well-used paths will often be distinct and relatively clear of vegetation because of repeated trampling.

Before installing the gate

- cut a gap in the netting approximately 200mm wide by 300mm high where the fence crosses a badger run
- leave the gap open until badgers are regularly using it
- cut extra holes in any places along the fence where damage occurs (for extra gates to be installed)

You should install the gate(s) in the gap(s) once badgers have become used to the fence.

How to maintain the gate

Check the gate regularly to make sure it does not become blocked or fall into disrepair.

Further information

Find out how to [avoid harming badgers and whether a licence is needed](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) including how to apply.

FG15: Water gates

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the water gates item.

How much will be paid

£240 per gate.

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier, Capital Grants and Woodland Creation grants but only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution caused by farming
- on fence lines across streams in conjunction with other stock control items

How this item will benefit the environment

This item prevents livestock from entering watercourse channels. It also stops livestock from trampling waterside banks and leaves bankside vegetation lush and unbroken by livestock paths.

Requirements

You must:

- fit a gate across the river or stream, and make sure that the gate:
 - is framed and made of wood
 - fits the profile of the river or stream
 - matches the height of the fence next to it
 - uses timber that is fully peeled and tanalised or treated with an approved preservative
 - can float up and down as the water levels rise and fall
 - has an approach fence that is either post-and-rail or fixed netting
 - is separate (along with the approach fencing) from the main fence line
 - meets the relevant [British Standards](#) - see copies of the most up-to-date standards

- make sure the gate consists of a series of wooden droppers attached to a length of wire cable, or a round wooden rail suspended horizontally between straining posts. The droppers must be:
 - at least 50 millimeters (mm) square in cross section
 - made from sawn, untreated timber that has been drilled and then threaded on to the cable or rail
 - separated by 150mm lengths of plastic pipe

If the stream gully is more than 1.5 metres (m) deep, the gate can be constructed in several sections. The droppers must be:

- made of untreated timber
- at least 70mm square
- hung on round wooden poles using loops of fencing wire

Keeping records

You must contact the Environment Agency before applying for this item for advice and get any consents or permissions required.

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work
- any consents and permissions from the Environment Agency

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work (in addition to the ones stated above)
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing site before work starts

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) manual for more detail.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

You can use this item on the same area as the following items:

- [BN7 - Hedgerow gapping-up](#)
- [BN12 - Stone wall restoration](#)
- [BN13 - Top wiring – stone walls](#)
- [BN14 - Stone wall supplement - stone from quarry](#)
- [FG1 - Fencing](#)
- [FG2 - Sheep netting](#)
- [RP5 - Cross drains](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to get flood defence consent

You may need a Flood defence consent (FDC) to use this item near a watercourse or within 10m (this varies with some local byelaws) of the top of a riverbank.

The Environment Agency issue FDCs for main rivers and local flood authorities issue FDCs for ordinary watercourses.

If you think you need a FDC contact the Environment Agency first.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Capital Grants](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) including how to apply.

FG16: Deer pedestrian gate

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the Deer pedestrian gate option.

How much will be paid

£271.50 per gate.

Aim

To install a deer proof pedestrian gate within a deer fence to allow for ease of access and facilitate woodland management.

Where to use this item (eligibility)

- Must be undertaken within a woodland where deer fencing is the agreed method of protection
- This capital item can be used with Woodland Improvement (WD2), Woodland Tree Health and Woodland Creation and Maintenance applications
- Appropriate protection measures will be agreed with a Forestry Commission Woodland Officer. Where a deer fence is used additional payments will not be made for tree shelters within the fenced area. Pedestrian deer gates cannot be used with a temporary deer fence

Where this item cannot be used

Where deer fencing is not an appropriate protection measure.

How this item will benefit the environment

Protects trees from deer browsing and damage and helps facilitates deer management.

Requirement

Meet the fence specifications as set out below and in the Forestry Commission's Technical Guide '[Forest Fencing 2006](#)'.

The gate must be a minimum of 0.9 metres (m) wide. Do not use the hanging posts as an end strainer. Hanging post dimensions must be a minimum of 2.8m x 120 to 180 millimetres (mm) diameter for Red/Sika/Fallow deer, or 2.8m x 100-130mm for Roe and Muntjac.

Install hanging posts following the Forest Fencing guide ensuring they are suitably compacted. Make sure there are no gaps at the bottom of the gate that are wider than the mesh sizes as stated in the Forest Fencing guide. Maintain the gates so that deer cannot enter the land until the trees are large enough that they no longer need to be protected.

Specifications for the height of the gate and the size of the mesh: minimum gate height (m) and maximum mesh size (mm) vary by deer species.

- Red and Sika 1.8m, 200mm by 300mm
- Fallow 1.8m, 200mm by 220mm
- Roe 1.5m, 200mm by 150mm
- Muntjac 1.5m, 80mm by 80m

Wooden wings for gates

Wooden wings can be used to make sure the deer proof width of the gates where necessary, for example where a gateway is adjacent to a ditch. These are only likely to be necessary where they are already a feature of the landscape. Each wing must consist of rails or fencing mesh to meet the standard as per the Forest Fencing guide. Gates are to be installed at the same time as the deer fence and prior to tree planting taking place.

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them on request.

- Receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- Any consents or permissions connected with the work

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual for [Higher Tier](#) or [Woodland grants](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

Please contact your local Forestry Commission Woodland Officer.

FG17: Deer vehicle gate

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the Deer vehicle gate option.

How much will be paid

£344.60 per gate.

Aim

To install a deer proof vehicular gate within a deer fence to allow for ease of vehicular access and facilitate woodland management.

Where to use this item (eligibility)

- Must be within a woodland where deer fencing is the agreed method of protection.
- This capital item can be used with Woodland Improvement (WD2), Woodland Tree Health and Woodland Creation and Maintenance applications
- Appropriate protection measures will be agreed with a Forestry Commission Woodland Officer. Where a deer fence is used additional payments will not be made for tree shelters within the fenced area. Vehicular deer gates cannot be used with a temporary deer fence.

Where this item cannot be used

Where deer fencing is not an appropriate protection measure.

How this item will benefit the environment

Protects trees from deer browsing and damage and helps facilitates deer management.

Requirement

Meet the fence specifications as set out below and in the Forestry Commission's Technical Guide '[Forest Fencing 2006](#)'.

The gate must be a minimum of 3.0 metres (m) wide. Do not use the hanging posts as an end strainer. Hanging post dimensions must be a minimum of 2.8m x 120 to 180 millimetres (mm) diameter for Red/Sika/Fallow deer, or 2.8m x 100-130mm for Roe and Muntjac.

Install hanging posts following the Forest Fencing guide ensuring they are suitably compacted. Make sure there are no gaps at the bottom of the gate that are wider than the mesh sizes as stated in the Forest Fencing guide.

Maintain the gates so that deer cannot enter the land until the trees are large enough that they no longer need to be protected.

Specifications for the height of the gate and the size of the mesh: minimum gate height (m) and maximum mesh size (mm) vary by deer species.

- Red and Sika 1.8m, 200mm by 300mm
- Fallow 1.8m, 200mm by 220mm
- Roe 1.5m, 200mm by 150mm
- Muntjac 1.5m, 80mm by 80mm

Wooden wings for gates

Wooden wings can be used to make sure the deer proof width of the gates where necessary, for example where a gateway is adjacent to a ditch. These are only likely to be necessary where they are already a feature of the landscape. Each wing must consist of rails or fencing mesh to meet the standard as per the Forest Fencing guide. Gates are to be installed at the same time as the deer fence and prior to tree planting taking place.

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them on request.

- Receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- Any consents or permissions connected with the work

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual for [Higher Tier](#) or [Woodland grants](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

Please contact your local Forestry Commission Woodland Officer.

FM1: Management of geodiversity features

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of geodiversity features item.

How much will be paid

Up to 100% of actual costs.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier.

Only on:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) where land management options are included in the agreement

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful this item will ensure sensitive geological features are managed positively and protected from damage.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- agree a specification for the works with Natural England
- get at least 3 written quotations for completion of the work, identifying associated costs, and agree the selected quotation with NE
- complete the works as set out in the approved specification and within the agreed timescale

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- photographs of site before works commence

- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is not available
- photographs of the completed work

Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- the 3 quotes for completion of the work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Use this item to:

- protect sensitive geological features and to remove geological material at risk
- conserve geological features by removing trees, scrub, scree, spoil and other items from exposures
- control access to geological features

Further information

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

FM2: Major preparatory works for priority habitats (creation and restoration) and priority species

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the major preparatory works for priority habitats (creation and restoration) and priority species item.

How much will be paid

Up to 100% of actual costs.

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier only:

- with a land management option where a [priority species](#) is known to be present, or occurs locally and the work is likely to lead to its colonisation – the work needs written support from a recognised specialist (either an individual or organisation) on the species
- when the need for major preparatory works is identified in an Implementation Plan or Feasibility Study approved by Natural England
- to create or enhance a [priority habitat](#) along with a land management option

Where this item cannot be used

This item cannot be used to fund:

- any work within the scope of standard options or capital items
- certified agricultural seed, amenity grass seed or legume varieties seed, even if these are species found in the wild, unless the seed is used:
 - to restore bare peat on moorland
 - where agricultural or amenity grasses are used as a nurse crop to establish moorland vegetation

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful this item will result in large scale restoration and creation of priority habitats and bespoke management for priority species.

Requirements

You must:

- when necessary, agree with Natural England a detailed specification for the works
- get at least 3 written quotations for completion of the work, identifying associated costs, and agree the selected quotation with Natural England
- complete the works in the approved specification, implementation plan or feasibility study within the agreed timescale

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application:

- 3 quotes for completion of the work

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is not available
- photographs of the completed work
- specification of agreed works

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- photographs of site before works start
- a copy of the implementation plan or feasibility study, when necessary

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Moorland management option

You can use this item with [UP3 - Management of moorland option to fund](#):

- restoring and stabilising bare peat - seeding, geo-textiles, plug planting, re-profiling and sphagnum inoculation

- enhancing wet heath - plug plants, sphagnum, geo-textiles, and stone or wooden dams for gully works
- heath restoration works by removing conifers
- the cost of transporting materials over sensitive moorland habitats, such as blanket bog

Other land management

You can use this item with other land management options to fund:

- specific plug plants (food plants for invertebrate species, such as barberry for barberry carpet moth, hogs fennel for fisher's estuarine moth, tailored seed mixes for short-haired bumble bee)
- native British seed mixes (sourced from wild populations) to increase plant diversity by:
 - over-sowing with an agreed seed mix or green hay
 - spreading brash or plug planting along with habitat creation or restoration
 - the cost of collecting, transporting and spreading hay or brash
- creating coastal habitat, including inter-tidal habitat ('managed realignment')
- creating shingle islands for species such as tern or avocet
- creating and enhancing lowland heath - clearing bracken litter and humus, preparing ground, spreading heather cuttings or seeds, and creating bare ground
- restoring and maintaining natural river processes in a floodplain
- hiring and transporting specialist equipment for preparatory work for priority species habitat management
- maintenance costs for hiring, purchasing or maintaining equipment that helps priority species to thrive, such as:
 - maintaining electric fencing on breeding lapwing plots
 - maintaining mobile batteries for electric fencing
 - keeping grass cut to stop shorting of electric fence
 - regular equipment maintenance

Further information

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

FY1: Deer high seat

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the deer high seat item.

How much will be paid

£300 per unit.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier, including Woodland tree health.

Where this item cannot be used

Where deer fencing has already been erected to keep deer out of the area.

How this item will benefit the environment

It will provide a safe, temporary vantage point from which to cull deer, reducing the impact their browsing has on the land.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to consider:

- the health and safety of non-authorized users of the seat - eg prominently display British Standard signs prohibiting public access
- the health and safety of authorized users – eg make sure the seat has safety bars, is of an adequate size, and is securely attached to the anchor point
- the protection of the tree, if a tree is used as an anchor point - eg use webbing straps, rather than wire and nails, to attach the seat to the tree

The high seat must be portable, free-standing and made from galvanised tubular or box-section steel.

What the management plan needs to include

The woodland management plan identifies deer are a threat to the woodland's condition.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- Forestry Commission Management Plan approval letter
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) or [Woodland tree health manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Further information

Find more information about [constructing high seats](#) in The Deer Initiative's best practice guide.

Read more information about [Higher Tier](#) or [Woodland tree health](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

FY2: Woodland infrastructure

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the woodland infrastructure item.

How much will be paid

40% of actual costs

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier and Woodland Creation grants.

How this item will benefit the environment

It makes woodlands more accessible by road, allowing timber and other forest products to be moved more easily. This improves the management of the woodland. Applications for a Woodland Creation Grant can include this item to support the establishment of new woodland through the movement of planting stock (forestry products) and their maintenance, where the woodland creation plan in your application identifies that poor access currently prevents this.

Requirements

An existing Forestry Commission approved woodland management plan must identify that poor vehicle access to the woodland is preventing the movement of timber and other forest products.

You must prepare a detailed specification, tailored to the site. The specification needs to set out the work that will be carried out on site, the volume of timber that is expected to be produced and the soil conditions on the site.

The work could include the construction of:

- extraction tracks for mechanised timber extraction to a transfer point
- haulage roads and turning points
- haulage road entrances or laybys

- profiling and paving timber transfer points and stacking areas
- culverts and other road and track side drainage
- woodland security, such as gates for new entrance points

The specification needs to meet national legislation, following the construction, design and management (CDM) regulations for forest roads and tracks. Further information about the CDM regulations is available in the Forestry Commission's [Operations Note 25](#).

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application:

- the 3 quotes for completion of the work

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is not available
- photographs of the completed work
- consent from local planning authority, if required

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work (in addition to the ones stated above)
- photograph of site before works starts
- Forestry Commission Management Plan approval letter

Before applying for this item you must send a description of the work to the local planning authority so it can see if the work can be classified as a [permitted development](#).

Permitted developments do not require full planning permission. Proximity to the public highway or designation on the site determines whether you need full planning permission. You will need full planning permission where you construct a new access from a classified public highway.

Where the road crosses a watercourse or uses culverts during construction, use or maintenance you must get consent for the work from the Local Planning Authority (or internal drainage boards within an internal

drainage district). You do not need to send this with your application, but you will need to submit consents/permissions with your payment claim.

The Forestry Commission will decide whether the work requires consent under the [Environmental Impact Assessment \(Forestry\) Regulations](#). This is dependent on whether the proposal will have a significant effect on the environment.

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. If you are a Higher Tier applicant you should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual ([Higher Tier](#) or [Woodland Creation grant](#) for more detail.

Further information

See the [Higher Tier](#) or [Woodland Creation grant manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS1: Take small areas out of management

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the take small areas out of management option.

How much will be paid

£365 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher-Tier on whole and part parcels on:

- permanent grass
- corners and small areas within permanent grassland fields

Where this option cannot be used

- On historic or archaeological features identified in your Historic Environment Farm Environmental Record (HEFER) or Farm Environment Record (FER)

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 – Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 - Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides year-round habitat and food for a range of wildlife within grass fields.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

There will be a small area (no more than 0.5ha) of grass which is left ungrazed and uncut. This will provide tall grass tussocks with abundant flowering plants during the summer and dead seed heads by the autumn and winter.

Prohibited Activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, do not carry out any of the following activities:

- cut or graze more frequently than 1 year in every 5
- operate machinery or carry out other activities during the bird breeding season, they may disturb breeding birds or damage nests
- apply any fertilisers or manures
- apply any lime
- use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds or invasive non-natives, soft and hard rush, nettles or bracken
- locate the option next to another area under the same option
- cut or graze all areas in the same year if there is more than 1 area
- use more than once in every 5ha of permanent grassland on the holding

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you have not carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you employ best practice.

We recommend that you:

- only cut or graze 1 year in every 5 (it is acceptable to leave these areas uncut and ungrazed for the full length of the agreement)

Keeping records

Where there's uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel levels, including associated invoices
- Stock records to show grazing activity on parcels

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful but is not a requirement for this item.

Using the mosaic approach

Better results will be achieved when the areas of longer vegetation are scattered widely across a landscape and located close to other habitat features, in a mosaic approach.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS2: Permanent grassland with very low inputs (outside SDAs)

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the permanent grassland with very low inputs (outside SDAs) option.

How much will be paid

£95 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier.

Whole parcel (except when located with [GS1](#))

Only on:

permanent grassland outside severely disadvantaged areas (SDAs) and below the moorland line

This option can only be used if one or more of the following criteria are met.

- The grassland qualifies as semi-improved (see [Permanent grassland options eligibility assessment form](#))
- To help the sustainable management and buffering of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or priority habitats
- To maintain grassland to conserve species of national or regional importance, or protect historic or archaeological features
- When in-field scrub cover is less than 1% and the option will be used in target areas for ground-nesting wading birds
- As part of the Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package
- On parcels adjacent to a permanent watercourse

Where this option cannot be used

- Part parcel (except when located with [GS1](#))

Features that can be included in this option

The following features can be included if they are part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).

- Ditches, dykes, drains, rivers, streams that are less than 4m wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- Temporary water
- Permanent water up to 0.1ha
- Natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways, as long as the requirements can still be met
- Bracken
- Areas of scree, rock outcrops and boulders - each area can cover up to 0.1ha
- Grazed woodland and scrub that allows livestock access and has grass underneath

Related Mid-Tier options

These options and supplements can be located in the same area as this option.

- [GS16 - Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [GS17 - Lenient grazing supplement](#)
- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 - Organic conversion - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 - Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

This will be grassland that contains some flowering grasses and wild flowers, and a variety of vegetation heights. This will provide nectar and shelter for invertebrates and an increased food supply for birds.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the spring and early summer, the grassland will have a good cover of flowering grass species and wildflower species, and may also contain scattered areas of scrub and/or rushes. Grazing or cutting will ensure a variety of plant heights. Bare ground will be very limited.

By autumn, the sward will vary in height with tussocks of grass. Some grasses and wildflowers will be allowed to go to seed.

Any archaeological or historic features will be protected under a grass cover, with no increase in scrub cover, no bare ground present, and no damage incurred due to machinery use.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, do not carry out any of the following activities:

- undertake any mechanical operations (including hay/silage cutting) between 15 March and 30 June, or allow activities outside these dates that disturb breeding birds, including ground nesting birds and their chicks
- cut rushes between 15 March and 31 July
- plough, cultivate or re-seed
- use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe to control nettles, bracken, injurious weeds or invasive non-native species
- cut more than one-half of scrub in any one year, except on historic and archaeological features
- use supplementary feed except for mineral blocks
- carry out drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without Natural England's written permission before work starts
- apply more than 12 tonnes/ha of farmyard manure or apply more than the following amounts of fertiliser as an alternative to farmyard manure. Applications of fertiliser and manure must not be increased if the current rate is less than:
 - 9 kg/ha nitrogen
 - 23 kg/ha phosphate
 - 83 kg/ha potash
- harrow or roll on historic or archaeological features

- apply paper waste or other industrial by-products. On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you have not carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- graze or cut for hay or silage
- remove any cuttings
- maintain a sward with a range of heights during the growing season to ensure that at least 20% is less than 7cm and 20% is more than 7cm. No height variation needs to be maintained when the field is closed up for a cut of hay or silage.
- maintain soil pH above 5.4 by liming, if necessary to promote a range of grasses and wild flowers, but not if the target is to maintain acid grassland.
- graze or cut areas of dense rush growth so that stands of soft or hard rush cover 20% or less of the parcel area and are less than 20cm high by 30 September
- where scrub cover is less than 5%, keep areas of well-established scrub in separate small patches, lines and occasional individual bushes across the site
- where scrub cover is equal to or above 5%, maintain between 5% and 10% scrub cover over the parcel
- prevent additional scrub encroachment on historic or archaeological features
- check for breeding birds before operating machinery or carrying out other activities which may disturb breeding birds or damage their nests. The breeding season tends to run from mid-March until mid-July, but it can start earlier and finish later, depending on the species and the weather.

You should not:

- allow bare ground to cover more than 5% of the option area, and only in the form of small, well-distributed areas

- allow more than 5 square metres of localised patches of bare ground around rabbit warrens by year 2
- top more than 50% of the total area in any one year
- from the start of October to end of July, top except in patches to control injurious weeds and invasive non-native species

Keeping records

Where there's uncertainty about whether or not the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept to demonstrate delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- a standard soil analysis carried out in the last 5 years, including analysis of organic matter by loss on ignition. The rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution already require farmers and land managers to carry out soil testing on cultivated agricultural land and such test results may be used to meet the record-keeping requirements for this option.
- Any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record
- [Permanent grassland eligibility assessment form](#) (You do not have to use this form. You can use your own document if it gives enough information to meet the requirements.)
- Photographs of the management undertaken

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Choose the right location

Grassland which contains rare plant species is clearly valuable. It can still be valuable, and suited to this option, if it contains commoner species:

- legumes such as red clover, lesser trefoil and black medick
- herbs such as ribwort plantain and yarrow
- attractive wildflowers such as selfheal and germander speedwell

Low input grassland is most valuable when located alongside other important landscape features such as scrub and wetlands in a mosaic approach.

Grassland is also the best protection for historic and archaeological features, as long as plants with powerful roots like scrub or bracken do not take hold, and bare ground does not develop.

Managing the sward

The land will be much more valuable for insects, birds and other animals if it has a varied, patchy structure all year round, as detailed under the recommended management. It is much easier to achieve this structure by grazing with cattle than by grazing with sheep only, which may fail to achieve the varied sward height and structure that is required.

Grazing may be rotational or intermittent, but the stock should eat the sward down well during the grazing periods to avoid it becoming rank during the rest periods. Wet areas can be important sources of insect food and should be maintained where possible.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS3: Ryegrass seed-set as winter food for birds

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the ryegrass seed-set as winter food for birds option.

How much will be paid

£331 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher-Tier

Whole or part parcel

Rotational

- Only on:
- temporary grassland
- permanent grassland that has been cultivated and re-sown within the last 5 years

Swards must contain at least 50% ryegrass (perennial, Italian or hybrid).

Related Mid-Tier options

These options and supplements can be located in the same area as the following options.

- [OR3 – Organic conversion – rotational land](#)
- [OT3 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

There will be an abundance of ryegrass seed in the autumn, providing food for many birds (including yellowhammers and other buntings, gamebirds such as grey partridge, and skylarks) until late winter.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the spring the grass will be growing in preparation for a silage cut.

In summer, after the final silage cut (see recommended management for details) the grass will continue to grow **un-grazed**.

Throughout the autumn and winter the grass will be left to go to seed, providing the food supply to birds.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- take the first silage cut later than 31 May. Do not cut more than once, except for swards containing at least 70% Italian or hybrid ryegrass
- do not take a second cut later than 30 June for swards containing at least 70% Italian or hybrid ryegrass

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- close the field for at least 5 weeks before cutting and take a silage cut before 31 May
- close the field after cutting and removal, allow the sward to flower and set seed in the autumn, and leave the sward undisturbed until 1 March
- part parcels must be at least 10 metres (m) wide

On swards containing at least 70% Italian or hybrid ryegrass, a second cut of silage (or hay) can be taken before 30 June.

This option can be moved between different eligible parcels of land, but the same total area (hectarage) must be maintained each year.

You should not:

- allow any grazing for at least 5 weeks before the first cut or, for Italian or hybrid ryegrass, in the period before the second cut

Keeping records

Where there's uncertainty about whether or not the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept to demonstrate delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the instructions set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Stock records to show grazing activity
- Evidence of the sward composition will be needed with the application
- When applying to use this option on permanent grassland, evidence will be needed that the grassland has been cultivated within the last 5 years

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose a site

This option is designed to benefit buntings and other declining farmland birds, though it is also good for invertebrates and small mammals. For best results it should be used in areas that have:

- a population of buntings
- dense hedges and scrub for nesting
- invertebrate-rich habitat for summer feed (for example, leniently grazed, low-input grassland and enhanced arable margins)

This option can provide essential winter seed food. On mixed farms it can be combined with arable options such as [AB9 - Winter bird food](#). (See guidance on the Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package.)

As a part-field option the best results can be obtained by placing it next to a hedgerow or wooded edge. However, it should be kept well away from hedges and trees to feed skylarks.

This option should only be used on areas that are at least 0.5ha in size. More birds will benefit if the option is split between 2 or more locations up to 500 metres (m) apart.

The option is intended for intensive grass farms that have little scope to put land in other grassland or arable options, where regular reseeding is a typical practice.

How to manage this option

The aim is to have a large amount of herbage over the winter, which will enable hard harrowing or an early spring cut.

If grass is in rotation on the farm, or is regularly ploughed and re-sown, this option could be used:

- on fields due to be ploughed or re-sown
- on thinned swards that would benefit from the self-seeding this option provides

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS4: Legume and herb-rich swards

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the legume and herb-rich swards option.

How much will be paid

£309 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher-Tier on whole or part parcels in rotation, on:

- arable land
- temporary grassland
- permanent grassland that has been cultivated and re-sown within the last 5 years

You must also meet one of the following conditions.

- Follow a recommended fertiliser management system to plan nutrient inputs across the farm
- Adopt a recommended fertiliser management system within 18 months of the start of the agreement
- Qualify as a low intensity farmer

Where this option cannot be used

- On parcels at risk of soil erosion or runoff as identified in the Farm Environment Record (FER)
- On organic land or land in conversion to organic status
- On parcels with historic or archaeological features in your Historic Environment Farm Environmental Record (HEFER) or Farm Environment Record (FER)

How this option will benefit the environment

A vigorous sward with abundant legumes and herbs, suitable for productive cattle and sheep, will also provide habitat and food for

invertebrates, including crop pollinators, and improve soil structure and water infiltration.

This option does not use nitrogen fertilisers, which contribute to climate change.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

After establishing in the first year, a mixture of legumes, herbs and wildflowers (as described in the recommended management) will be growing and flowering throughout the spring, summer and early autumn for the remainder of the agreement.

The sward will be left to rest for at least 5 weeks between 1 May and 31 July, so that the majority of red clover flowers are open and available for pollinators

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Use pesticides, except herbicides to spot treat or weed-wipe injurious weeds or invasive non-native species, soft and hard rush, nettles or bracken
- Use inorganic fertilisers containing nitrogen

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- establish a mixed sward of grasses, legumes and herbs and wildflowers in the first 12 months of the agreement

- maintain the required area of mixed sward for the remainder of the agreement
- make sure the sward has a minimum 10% cover of red clover
- make sure the sward has an additional minimum 10% cover of other legumes, herbs and wildflowers (not counting white clover, creeping buttercup or injurious weeds)
- make sure that the sward contains at least 5 species of grass, 3 species of legume (including bird's-foot trefoil) and 5 species of herb or wildflower
- re-establish the sward if necessary, on the same or a different field, to maintain these minimum requirements
- manage the sward by cutting or grazing
- you can move this option between different eligible parcels, but you must maintain the same total area (hectarage) each year

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcels level, including associated invoices
- Stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- If you use the option on permanent grassland, evidence that it has been cultivated within the last 5 years
- A fertiliser management plan that is in place at the time of application or within 18 months of the start of your agreement

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose a site

The option allows only very limited use of pesticides so only choose fields that do not have a burden of weeds or slugs. Clovers, in particular, grow less well in soil that has a pH less than 6.0 and that is below index 2 for

phosphorus and potassium. Soil can be improved with lime, manures or Phosphate and potassium (but not Nitrogen) fertiliser.

This option is not intended to be used on valuable semi-natural permanent pasture. Permanent grassland re-sown with grass or other herbaceous forage during the last 5 years, temporary grassland and other 'agricultural' areas of grass could benefit from this option.

How to establish

Sow shallowly on to a firm, clean, fine seedbed. Or, sow into an established grass sward. Create at least 50% bare ground (and preferably 70%) and pay careful attention to slugs and other pests. Sowing legumes and herbs after August may not allow good enough establishment before the winter.

Legumes

Most of the widely available, inexpensive cultivars of red clover have low persistence, so it's likely that you will need to re-establish the sward in its third year. White and red clover can cause bloat, particularly in cattle.

Herbs

Chicory is a highly productive species, eaten by cattle and sheep and effective in protecting against internal parasites. It's better suited to grazing than cutting, as its stout stem is difficult to dry and can damage bale wrapping material.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS5: Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs option.

How much will be paid

£16 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher-Tier

Whole parcel (except when located with GS1)

Only on:

- permanent grassland within severely disadvantaged areas (SDAs) and below the moorland line

This option can only be used if one of the following criteria are met.

- The grassland qualifies as semi-improved (see [Permanent grassland options eligibility assessment form](#))
- To help the sustainable management and buffering of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or priority habitats
- To maintain grassland to conserve species of national or regional importance, or protect historic or archaeological features
- When in-field scrub cover is less than 1% and the option will be used in target areas for ground-nesting wading birds
- On parcels adjacent to a permanent watercourse

Where this option cannot be used

- Part parcel (except when located with [GS1](#)).

Features that can be included in this option

The following features can be included if they are part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).

- Ditches, dykes, drains, rivers, streams that are less than 4 metres (m) wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- Temporary water
- Permanent water up to 0.1ha
- Natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways, as long as the requirements below can be met
- Bracken
- Areas of scree, rock outcrops and boulders - each area can cover up to 0.1ha
- Grazed woodland and scrub that allows livestock access and has grass underneath

Related Mid-Tier options

These options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option.

- [GS16 - Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [GS15 Haymaking supplement](#) or [GS17 Lenient grazing supplement](#)
- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 - Organic conversion - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 – Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP6 Cattle grazing supplement](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

Flowering grass and wildflowers, and a varied sward structure will provide nectar food and shelter for invertebrates. The grassland habitat will attract increased numbers of ground-nesting and feeding birds, particularly waders such as lapwing and snipe.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the spring and early summer, the grassland will have a good cover of flowering grass and wildflower species and may also contain scattered areas of scrub and/or rushes. Grazing or cutting will ensure a variety of plant heights. Bare ground will be very limited.

By autumn, the sward will vary in height with tussocks of grass, and some grasses and wildflowers will be allowed to go to seed.

Any archaeological or historic features will be protected under a grass and wildflower cover, with a low cover of scrub, bracken or bare ground, and no damage incurred due to machinery use.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- undertake any mechanical operations (including hay/silage cutting) between 15 March and 30 June, or allow activities outside these dates that disturb breeding birds, including ground nesting birds and their chicks
- cut rushes between 15 March and 31 July
- plough, cultivate or re-seed
- use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe to control nettles, bracken, injurious weeds or invasive non-native species
- cut more than one-half of scrub in any one year, except on historic and archaeological features
- use supplementary feed except for mineral blocks
- carry out drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without having Natural England's written permission before work starts
- apply more than 12 tonnes per ha of farmyard manure, or apply more than the following amounts of fertiliser as an alternative to farmyard manure. Applications of fertiliser or manure must not be increased if the current rate is less than:
 - 9 kg/ha nitrogen
 - 23 kg/ha phosphate
 - 83 kg/ha potassium
- apply fertiliser between 15 March and 30 June
- harrow or roll on historic or archaeological features
- apply paper waste or other industrial by-products

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- graze or cut for hay or silage
- remove any cuttings
- maintain a sward with a range of heights during the growing season so that at least 20% is less than 7 centimetres (cm) and 20% is more than 7cm. No height variation needs to be maintained when the field is closed up for a cut of hay or silage.
- maintain soil above pH 5.4 by liming, if necessary to promote a range of grasses and wild flowers, but not if, the target is to maintain acid grassland.
- graze or cut areas of dense rush growth so that stands of soft or hard rush cover 20% or less of the parcel area and are less than 20cm high by 30 September
- keep areas of well-established scrub in separate small patches, lines and occasional individual bushes across the site where scrub cover is less than 5%
- maintain between 5% and 10% scrub coverage in parcel areas where cover is equal to or above 5%
- control areas where bracken is present so that the area does not increase
- maintain areas covered by dwarf shrub
- prevent the spread of scrub and bracken on historic and archaeological features
- check for breeding birds before operating machinery or carrying out other activities which may disturb breeding birds or damage their nests. The breeding season tends to run from mid-March until mid-July, but it can start earlier and finish later, depending on the species and the weather.

You should not:

- allow bare ground in the form of small, well-distributed areas to cover more than 5% of the option area
- allow bare ground to develop on historic or archaeological features

- allow more than 5 square metres of localised patches of bare ground around rabbit warrens by year 2

Keeping records

Where there's uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- a standard soil analysis carried out in the last 5 years, including analysis of organic matter by loss on ignition. The [rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution](#) already require farmers and land managers to carry out soil testing on cultivated agricultural land and such test results may be used to meet the record-keeping requirements for this option.
- [Permanent grassland eligibility assessment form](#) (You do not have to use this form. You can use your own document if it gives enough information to meet the requirements.)

At the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic evidence:

- Photographs of the management undertaken

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Choose the right location

Grassland which contains rare plant species is clearly valuable. It can still be valuable, and suited to this option, if it has a range of commoner herbs or dwarf shrubs such as red clover, yarrow, self heal, heather and bilberry.

Low input grassland is most valuable when located alongside other important landscape features such as scrub and wetlands in a mosaic approach.

Grassland is also the best protection for historic and archaeological features, as long as plants with powerful roots like scrub or bracken do not take hold, and bare ground does not develop.

Managing the sward

The land will be more valuable for insects, birds and other animals if it has a varied, patchy structure all year round. It is much easier to achieve this structure by grazing with cattle than by grazing with sheep only, which may fail to achieve the varied sward height and structure that is required.

Wet areas can be important sources of insect food and should be maintained where possible.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS6: Management of species-rich grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of species-rich grassland option.

How much will be paid

£182 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on whole and part parcels on grassland priority habitat.

In Mid-Tier you can only use this option if it meets the relevant criteria and you have written approval from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA).

The land must also be mapped on the Priority Habitat Inventory (see the [MAGIC website](#)) as one of the following.

- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland meadows
- Upland hay meadow
- Purple moor grass
- Rush pasture

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are permanently ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).

- Ditches, dykes, drains, rivers or streams that are less than 4 metres (m) wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- Temporary water
- Permanent water less than or equal to 0.1ha (at the discretion of Natural England)

- Natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways (as long as you can still carry out the requirements of the option)
- Bracken
- Scree, rock outcrops and boulders up to 0.1ha
- Grazed woodland and scrub that has grass underneath it and that livestock can access (at the discretion of Natural England)
- Small areas of other habitat types, such as reedbeds, at the discretion of Natural England

Related options

These options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option.

- [BE3 - Management of hedgerows](#)
- [GS15 - Haymaking supplement](#)
- [GS16 - Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [OR2 - Organic conversion - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 - Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 - Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It will maintain and improve priority grasslands. It will increase the number and frequency of important plant species, with most wildflowers in bloom over the summer. Many other priority species, such as bumblebees, butterflies, birds or bats, will benefit, and buried archaeological features will not be disturbed.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the spring and early summer, the grassland will have a good cover of flowering grass and wildflower species, including at least 4 high value plants typical of the priority grassland type. The grassland may also contain scattered areas of scrub and/or rushes. Grazing and/or cutting will ensure a variety of plant heights, appropriate for the priority grassland type. Bare ground will be very limited.

By autumn, the sward will vary in height, appropriate for the priority grassland type, with some grasses and wildflowers allowed to go to seed.

Any archaeological or historic features will be protected under a grass and wildflower cover, with a low cover of scrub, bracken or bare ground, and no damage incurred due to machinery use.

Prohibited Activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- plough, cultivate or re-seed
- cut between 15 March and 30 June
- use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe to control nettles, bracken, injurious weeds or invasive non-native species (weed wiping may not be allowed on some sites – this will be specified in your agreement)
- harrow, roll, supplementary feed or allow additional scrub or bracken to encroach on historic or archaeological features
- operate machinery or carry out other activities during the bird breeding season that may disturb breeding birds or damage nests
- supplementary feed except for the provision of mineral blocks (non-energy based)
- carry out drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without the RPA's written permission before work starts.
- apply any inorganic fertiliser
- apply farmyard manure in years when the field is not cut for hay/haylage

- apply more than 12 tonnes per ha of farmyard manure, or increase the application rate if it is currently less than this

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

In Mid Tier you can only use this option if it meets the relevant criteria and you have written approval from RPA. Additional aims and prohibited activities may be added to refine the standard requirements, as part of the approval process.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- manage the grassland by grazing, hay/haylage cutting, or a mixture of both, to maintain or increase the presence and abundance of high value plant species
- maintain the appropriate plant heights for the priority grassland type, as stated in the additional aims within your agreement
- exclude livestock for at least 7 weeks before cutting for hay/haylage, and graze the aftermath
- maintain a continuous grass and wildflower cover, particularly over historic features
- graze or cut areas of dense rush growth so that stands of soft or hard rush cover 20% or less of the parcel area and are less than 20 centimetres (cm) high by 30 September
- control undesirable plants, such as nettles, bracken, injurious weeds or invasive non-native species
- agree all drainage works, including modification to existing drainage, in writing with Natural England before you carry out any work
- check for breeding birds before operating machinery or carrying out other activities which may disturb breeding birds or damage their nests. The breeding season tends to run from mid-March until mid-July, but it can start earlier and finish later, depending on the species and the weather

You should not:

- top more than 50% of the total area in any one year

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application.

- Map of species rich grassland - this can be marked on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Where there's uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- a standard soil analysis carried out in the last 5 years, including analysis of organic matter by loss on ignition. The [rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution](#) already require farmers and land managers to carry out soil testing on cultivated agricultural land and such test results may be used to meet the record-keeping requirements for this option.
- A grazing record for any sites grazed
- [Permanent grassland eligibility assessment form](#) (You do not have to use this form. You can use your own document if it gives enough information to meet the requirements.)
- Photographs showing the extent of scrub or bracken on the site, and on historic or archaeological features
- Bag returns, if an agreed wildfowl strategy is in place
- Photographs of the management undertaken

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

For successful management, in most cases you will need the following.

- Appropriate livestock (which will often be cattle), over which you have full control
- Machinery to carry out management requirements such as hay cutting

- Consideration of how best to manage associated features such as ditches and scrub

Upland calcareous and other very extensively managed grassland, especially in large parcels, may not be accepted for this option. Such grassland may be eligible for other Higher Tier options, such as [GS13 - Management of grassland for target features](#).

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS7: Restoration towards species-rich grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the restoration towards species-rich grassland option.

How much will be paid

£145 per hectare (ha).

How long the option lasts

This option lasts for 10 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part-parcels, only on parcels of grassland that have high or medium potential for being restored to grassland priority habitat.

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features in this option if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- ditches, dykes, drains, rivers or streams that are less than 4m wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- temporary water
- permanent water less than or equal to 0.1ha, at the discretion of Natural England)
- natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways (as long as you are still able to carry out the requirements of the option)
- bracken
- scree, rock outcrops and boulders up to 0.1ha
- grazed woodland and scrub that has grass underneath it and that livestock can access, at the discretion of Natural England
- small areas of other habitat types, such as reedbeds, at the discretion of Natural England

How this option will benefit the environment

It will restore grasslands that have the potential to become priority grasslands. It will increase the number and frequency of important plant species. Many other priority species, such as bumblebees, butterflies, birds or bats, will also benefit. Buried archaeological features will not be disturbed.

Requirements

You will probably need to:

- increase the presence and abundance of high value plant species, for example by deliberately introducing new species
- maintain a range of plant heights suitable for invertebrates, birds or other priority species
- manage the grassland by grazing, hay cutting, or a mixture of both
- maintain a continuous cover, particularly over historic features
- use very little or no manure, fertiliser, pesticide or supplementary feed
- maintain scrub, rushes and other potentially dominating plants at the levels set out in the agreement
- control undesirable plants (these can be specified in the agreement)

You will need to agree a detailed timetable setting out how you will restore the grassland and the timetable to achieve it. This should include details of how you will introduce seeds or plants, identify the source of the material and the varieties and quantities you will use. It should also set out how you will manage the grassland after you have introduced the plants or seeds.

The agreement will set out what you cannot do. It's likely you'll not be allowed to:

- plough, cultivate or re-seed, unless agreed with Natural England
- harrow, roll or allow scrub or bracken to encroach on historic or archaeological features
- carry out activities that may disturb breeding birds or damage nests

Keeping records

On your annual claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- a standard soil analysis carried out in the last 5 years. The [rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution](#) already require farmers and land managers to carry out soil testing on cultivated agricultural land - you can use these test results to meet the record-keeping requirements for this option
- inputs used
- any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record
- photographs showing the extent of scrub or bracken on any historic or archaeological features
- photographs showing any areas where sward enhancement will be carried out
- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [BE3 - Management of hedgerows](#)
- [GS15 - Haymaking supplement](#)
- [GS16 - Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 - Organic conversion - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 - Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement](#)
- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

- [WT3 - Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose a site

This option works best on infertile soils where the soil phosphorus index (as shown by soil analysis) is low and where the sward is not dominated by aggressive plant species or injurious weeds. It is best used where it will extend an existing area of priority habitat.

How to manage the site

The management for this option will be tailored to the site, but in most cases you will need the following:

- appropriate livestock (which will often be cattle), over which you have full control
- machinery to allow management requirements such as hay cutting to be carried out
- consideration of how best to manage associated features such as ditches and scrub
- capital works to support this option (for example, to increase the number of plant species, use option [FM2 - Major preparatory works for priority habitats \(creation and restoration\) and priority species](#))
- change of hay cutting and grazing patterns, at least in the short term

Upland calcareous and other very extensively managed grassland, especially in large parcels, may not be accepted for this option. Such grassland may be eligible for other options, such as [GS13 - Management of grassland for target features](#).

Once the grassland is restored to priority habitat, it may be eligible for option [GS6 - Management of species-rich grassland](#).

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS8: Creation of species-rich grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of species-rich grassland option.

How much will be paid

£267 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option lasts for 10 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part parcels, only on arable, set-aside or temporary grassland that has high or medium potential for the creation of priority habitat (if it has medium potential, you will need written support from Natural England).

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are permanently ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- ditches, dykes, drains, rivers or streams that are less than 4m wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- temporary water
- permanent water less than or equal to 0.1ha, at the discretion of Natural England)
- natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways (as long as you can still carry out the requirements of the option)
- bracken
- scree, rock outcrops and boulders up to 0.1ha
- grazed woodland and scrub that has grass underneath it and that livestock can access, at the discretion of Natural England
- small areas of other habitat types, such as reedbeds, at the discretion of Natural England

How this option will benefit the environment

It will create priority grasslands and establish a wide range of important plant species. Many other priority species, such as bumblebees, butterflies, birds or bats, will also benefit, and buried archaeological features will not be disturbed.

Requirements

You will probably need to:

- establish a flower rich grassland in the first year
- maintain it as permanent grassland
- maintain a range of plant heights suitable for invertebrates, birds or other priority species
- manage the grassland by grazing, hay cutting, or a mixture of both
- maintain a continuous cover, particularly over historic features
- use very little or no manure, fertiliser, pesticide or supplementary feed
- maintain scrub, rushes and other potentially dominating plants at the levels set out in the agreement
- control undesirable plants (these can be specified in the agreement)

You must have a detailed implementation timetable to create the grassland. This should set out how you will create it, including details of the varieties and quantities of seed or plant material you will use and where they'll come from, and how you will manage the grassland after you have introduced the seeds or plants.

Do not:

- plough, cultivate or re-seed after the grassland has been successfully established, unless agreed with Natural England
- harrow, roll or allow scrub or bracken to encroach on historic or archaeological features
- carry out activities that may disturb breeding birds or damage nests

Keeping records

On your annual claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- a standard soil analysis carried out in the last 5 years. The [rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution](#) already require farmers and land managers to carry out soil testing on cultivated agricultural land - you can use these test results to meet the record-keeping requirements for this option
- inputs used
- any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record
- photographs showing any areas where sward enhancement will be carried out
- confirmation that eligibility requirements have been met
- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [BE3 - Management of hedgerows](#)
- [GS15 - Haymaking supplement](#)
- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 - Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose a site

This option works best on infertile soils where the soil phosphorus index (as shown by the soil analysis) is low, and the sward and soil seedbank are not dominated by aggressive plant species or injurious weeds.

Species-rich grassland can sometimes be created by natural regeneration (possibly by adding extra plant species) or, much more commonly, through cultivating and sowing an agreed seed mix.

This option will normally be targeted at sites that are next to or close to existing species-rich grasslands.

How to manage the site

The requirements for this option will be tailored to the site, but in most cases you will need the following:

- appropriate livestock (which will often be cattle), over which you have full control
- consideration of how best to manage associated features such as ditches and scrub
- capital works to support this option (for example, to increase the number of plant species, use option [FM2 - Major preparatory works for priority habitats \(creation and restoration\)](#) and [priority species](#))

Upland calcareous and other very extensively managed grassland, especially in large parcels, may not be accepted for this option. Such grassland may be eligible for other options, such as:

- [GS13 - Management of grassland for target features](#)
- [GS14 - Creation of grassland for target features](#)

Once the grassland has become a priority habitat, it may be eligible for option [GS6 - Management of species-rich grassland](#).

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS9: Management of wet grassland for breeding waders

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of wet grassland for breeding waders option.

How much will be paid

£264 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part parcels on permanent grassland that is **one** of the following.

- Coastal or floodplain grazing marsh identified as priority habitat
- Other grassland identified as habitat for breeding waders

The grassland must already support breeding waders (curlew, lapwing, redshank or snipe) or have high potential for being restored for them. You must also meet **one** of the following conditions.

- You are currently following a recommended fertiliser management system to plan nutrient inputs across the farm
- You will adopt a recommended fertiliser management system within 18 months of the start of the agreement
- You qualify as a low intensity farmer

In Mid-Tier you can only use this option if it meets the relevant criteria and you have written approval from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). The land must be mapped on the Priority Habitat Inventory as coastal flood plain grazing marsh or purple moor grass and rush pasture or lowland meadow (see the [MAGIC website](#)).

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).

- Ditches, dykes, drains, rivers or streams that are less than 4 metres (m) wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- Permanent water less than or equal to 0.1ha (larger areas may be eligible at the discretion of Natural England)
- Temporary water
- Natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways (as long as you still able to carry out the requirements of the option)
- Small areas of other types of habitat, such as reedbeds and scrub (at the discretion of Natural England)

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [GS16 - Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 – Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 – Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 - Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

You can also use the following supplements with this option, but only in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of Natural England:

- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It will provide habitat in wet grassland for breeding wading birds (curlew, redshank, lapwing or snipe). Fields will have wet areas and suitable sward conditions throughout the winter and spring and into the early summer. Waders will be able to nest and, in most years, successfully fledge their young.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the spring and early summer, the correct sward conditions for the target wader species will be maintained, usually by grazing as per the agreed stocking calendar. Waders will be able to nest undisturbed.

Management of ditch water levels will ensure that soils are wet and/or there are areas of surface water and bare, wet mud during the breeding season for waders to feed. The appropriate sward conditions and in-field wetness for the target wader species will be explained in the additional aims within your agreement.

By autumn, grazing will have removed the year's grass growth so that the appropriate sward conditions can be achieved the following spring.

During the autumn and winter, there will be areas of surface water and wet features. Wintering wildfowl and waders will be able to feed and roost undisturbed.

Management will ensure that cover of soft and hard rush is no more than 10 to 20% (as described in the additional aims) and cover of trees, scrub and other undesirable species (listed in the recommended management) is low. Any archaeological or historic features will be protected under a grass cover, with a low cover of bare ground, no increase in scrub cover and no damage incurred as a result of machinery use.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- plough, cultivate or reseed the grassland, unless agreed in writing with the RPA
- use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe to control nettles, bracken, soft and hard rush, injurious weeds or invasive non-native species (weed wiping may not be allowed on some sites – this will be specified in your agreement)

- harrow or roll, supplementary feed or allow additional scrub to encroach on historic or archaeological features
- cut silage/hay/haylage or rushes before 15 July (or the date specified in the additional aims and prohibited activities)
- operate machinery or carry out other activities during the bird breeding season that may disturb birds or damage nests
- carry out activities which may disturb non-breeding birds from November to March
- carry out drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without the RPA's written permission before work starts.
- apply any inorganic fertiliser
- apply more than 12 tonnes per ha of farmyard manure (or the amounts stated in the additional prohibited activities) or increase the application rate if it is currently less than this
- apply farmyard manure in years when the field is not cut for hay/haylage
- work on ditches between 1 April and 31 August
- use supplementary feed except for mineral blocks (hay/haylage may be scattered in autumn/winter, but only if this is required to extend the grazing season in order to provide the correct spring sward conditions)

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you have not carried out any prohibited activities.

In Mid Tier you can only use this option if it meets the relevant criteria and you have written approval from RPA. Additional aims and prohibited activities may be added to refine the standard requirements, as part of the approval process.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you employ best practice.

We recommend that you:

- provide the correct sward conditions for the target species, usually by grazing with cattle in accordance with the stocking calendar.
- manage livestock during the breeding season to reduce the risk of them trampling nests (appropriate stocking rates will be set out in the stocking calendar)

- maintain wet features (such as footdrains, gutters and scrapes) every 2-4 years to provide muddy areas for waders to feed
- keep these features wet into May or June by holding high ditch water levels and allow them to dry out gradually in July or August
- keep the vegetation around wet features short by grazing or rotational cutting
- control and manage trees, scrub, and undesirable species (which may include injurious weeds, nettles, bracken and invasive, non-native species) so that their cover is less than 5%
- control and manage soft and hard rushes so that their cover is less than 10 to 20% (as described in the additional aims)
- if present, maintain hedges so they are shorter than 2 metres (m)
- where spring grazing of hay meadows is a traditional practice, exclude livestock for at least 7 weeks before cutting and by 7 May at the latest
- check for breeding birds before operating machinery or carrying out other activities which may disturb breeding birds or damage their nests. The breeding season tends to run from mid-March until mid-July, but it can start earlier and finish later, depending on the species and the weather.

You should not:

- close fields up for silage, hay or haylage if this will not achieve the appropriate sward conditions
- top more than 50% of the total area in any one year
- supplementary feed on historic features, areas of species-rich grassland or within 5m of ditches or wet features, or on any other areas specified in your agreement

Keeping records

Where there's uncertainty about whether or not the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept to demonstrate delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- A grazing activity record for any sites grazed

- Evidence that you are following a recommended fertiliser management system or that you qualify as a low intensity farmer
- Stocking calendar
- Photographs of the management undertaken

On your annual payment claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item. For best results:

- use this option as part of a suite of wet grassland and target features options, over a wide area, potentially linking with other landowners
- use this option within, next to or linking Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) containing wading birds
- use this option within, next to or linking non-designated areas with good wader populations
- make sure this option does not conflict with Environment Agency, internal drainage Board or local authority policies on flood storage, ditch and river management, water resources and fish migration
- apply for land drainage consent if necessary
- discuss the location of capital works with the Environment Agency, internal drainage boards and local authorities
- discuss the location of capital works with Historic England (designated sites) / local authority historic environmental officer (non-designated sites) if historic and archaeological features are present.

Sites which may be unsuitable for this option include:

- sites with botanical interest, where hydrological changes could damage plant communities
- washlands and other areas that flood during the wader breeding season

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS10: Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl option.

How much will be paid

£157 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part parcels, on permanent grassland that is one of the following.

- Coastal or floodplain grazing marsh identified as priority habitat
- Other grassland identified as habitat for wintering waders and wildfowl

The grassland must already support wintering wildfowl and waders or have high potential for being enhanced to support them. You must also meet **one** of the following conditions.

- You are currently using a recommended fertiliser management system to plan nutrient inputs across the farm
- You will adopt a recommended fertiliser management system within 18 months of the start of the agreement
- You qualify as a low intensity farmer

In Mid-Tier you can only use this option if it meets the relevant criteria and you have written approval from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA).

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).

- Ditches, dykes, drains, rivers or streams that are less than 4 metres (m) wide for the majority of their length in the parcel

- Permanent water less than or equal to 0.1ha (larger areas may be eligible at the discretion of Natural England)
- Temporary water
- Natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways (as long as you are still able to carry out the requirements of the option)
- Small areas of other types of habitat, such as reedbeds and scrub (at the discretion of Natural England)

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [GS16 - Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 – Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 – Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 - Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

You can also use the following supplements with this option, but only in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of Natural England.

- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly \(Higher Tier only\)](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It will provide habitat in wet grassland for wintering wildfowl and wading birds. Fields will have wet areas throughout the winter, attracting wading birds and wildfowl, which will be able to feed and roost undisturbed.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the summer, the grassland will be managed by grazing (ideally) or cutting, to remove the year's grass growth by autumn (leaving some grass tussocks).

During the autumn and winter, there will be areas of standing water and wet features. Wintering wildfowl and waders will be able to feed and roost undisturbed.

Management will ensure that cover of soft and hard rush is no more than 20% and cover of trees, scrub and other undesirable species (listed in the recommended management) is low.

Any archaeological or historic features will be protected under a grass cover, with a low cover of bare ground, no increase in scrub cover and no damage incurred as a result of machinery use.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- undertake any mechanical operations (including hay/silage cutting) between 15 March and 30 June, or allow activities outside these dates that disturb breeding birds, including ground nesting birds and their chicks
- cut rushes between 15 March and 31 July
- plough, cultivate or reseed the grassland, unless agreed in writing with the RPA
- use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe to control nettles, bracken, soft and hard rush, injurious weeds or invasive non-native species (weed wiping may not be allowed on some sites – this will be specified in your agreement)
- harrow or roll, supplementary feed or allow additional scrub to encroach on historic or archaeological features
- carry out activities which may disturb non-breeding birds from November to March

- carry out drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without the RPA's written permission before work starts.
- apply inorganic fertiliser when this option is used in Mid Tier
- apply more than 12 tonnes per ha of farmyard manure, or increase the application rate of manure (or fertiliser) if it is currently less than this
- apply farmyard manure (or fertilisers, if permitted in Higher Tier) in years when the field is not cut for hay/haylage
- work on ditches between 1 April and 31 August
- use supplementary feed except for mineral blocks

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you have not carried out any prohibited activities.

In Mid Tier you can only use this option if it meets the relevant criteria and you have written approval from RPA. Additional aims and prohibited activities may be added to refine the standard requirements, as part of the approval process.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you employ best practice.

We recommend that you:

- manage the land by grazing, and possibly cutting
- provide areas of standing water and wet features (such as footdrains, gutters and scrapes) to attract waders and wildfowl through the winter months (ditch water levels may need to be held high to achieve this)
- maintain wet features every 2 to 4 years to provide muddy areas for waders and wildfowl to feed
- keep the vegetation around wet features short by grazing or rotational cutting
- control and manage trees, scrub, soft and hard rushes and undesirable species, which may include injurious weeds, nettles, bracken and invasive, non-native species
- if present, maintain hedges so they are shorter than 2 metres (m)
- where spring grazing of hay meadows is a traditional practice, exclude livestock for at least 7 weeks before cutting and by 7 May at the latest

- check for breeding birds before operating machinery or carrying out other activities which may disturb breeding birds or damage their nests. The breeding season tends to run from mid-March until mid-July, but it can start earlier and finish later, depending on the species and the weather.

You should not:

- top more than 50% of the total area in any one year
- supplementary feed on historic features, areas of species-rich grassland or within 5m of ditches or wet features, or on any other areas specified in your agreement

Keeping records

Where there's uncertainty about whether or not the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept to demonstrate delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- A grazing activity record for any sites grazed
- Evidence that you are following a recommended fertiliser management system or that you qualify as a low intensity farmer
- Photographs of the management undertaken

On your annual payment claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

For best results:

- use this option as part of a suite of wet grassland and target features options, over a wide area, potentially linking with other landowners

- use this option within, next to or linking Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) that have wintering waders and wildfowl as interest features
- use this option within, next to or linking non-designated areas with good wader and wildfowl populations
- make sure this option does not conflict with Environment Agency, internal drainage board or local authority policies on flood storage, ditch and river management, water resources and fish migration
- apply for land drainage consent if necessary
- discuss the location of capital works with the Environment Agency, internal drainage boards and local authorities
- discuss the location of capital works with Historic England (designated sites) / local authority historic environmental officer (non-designated sites) if historic and archaeological features are present

Sites which may be unsuitable for this option include:

- sites with an unreliable water supply
- improved, intensively managed grassland for geese, which is cut for silage and receives more than 50 kilograms (kg) per ha of inorganic nitrogen fertiliser
- sites with botanical interest, where hydrological changes could damage plant communities

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS11: Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of wet grassland for breeding waders option.

How much will be paid

£406 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option lasts for 10 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part parcels, only on parcels that have been in arable, fallow or temporary grass in the last 5 years and have high potential for being restored to habitat for breeding waders.

You must also meet one of the following conditions:

- You are following a recommended fertiliser management system to plan nutrient inputs across the farm
- You will adopt a recommended fertiliser management system within 18 months of the start of the agreement
- You qualify as a low intensity farmer

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- ditches, dykes, drains, rivers or streams that are less than 4m wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- permanent water less than or equal to 0.1ha (larger areas may be eligible at the discretion of Natural England)
- temporary water

- natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways (as long as you are still able to carry out the requirements of the option)
- small areas of other types of habitat, such as reedbeds and scrub, at the discretion of Natural England

How this option will benefit the environment

It will create wet grassland for breeding wading birds from arable or temporary grassland. Fields will have well-established swards, with wet areas throughout the winter and spring and into the early summer. Waders will be able to nest and, in most years, successfully fledge their young.

Requirements

You will probably need to:

- establish a suitable sward and manage it by grazing, mainly with cattle, in accordance with the stocking calendar agreed with Natural England
- manage livestock during the breeding season to reduce the risk of them trampling nests
- provide wet features (such as footdrains, gutters and scrapes) for waders to feed (you will need to keep these areas wet into the early summer, usually by holding high ditch water levels)
- control and manage trees, scrub, hedges, rushes and undesirable species
- use little or no manure, fertiliser, pesticide or supplementary feed

The agreement will set out what you cannot do. It's likely you'll not be allowed to:

- plough, cultivate or reseed the grassland after successfully establishing it, unless agreed in writing with Natural England
- harrow and roll on historic features
- carry out activities that may disturb birds or damage nests

Keeping records

On your annual claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- inputs used
- a grazing activity record for any sites grazed
- photographs showing any areas where sward enhancement will be carried out
- evidence that you are following a recommended fertiliser management system or that you are a low intensity farmer
- stocking calendar
- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 - Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

In exceptional circumstances you can also use the following supplements with this option, but only at the discretion of Natural England:

- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

For best results:

- use this option as part of a suite of wet grassland and target features options, over a wide area, potentially linking with other landowners

- use this option within, next to or linking Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) that have wading birds as interest features
- use this option within, next to or linking non-designated areas with good wader populations
- make sure this option does not conflict with Environment Agency, internal drainage board or local authority policies on flood storage, ditch and river management, water resources and fish migration
- apply for land drainage consent if necessary
- discuss the location of capital works with the Environment Agency, internal drainage boards and local authorities
- discuss the location of capital works with the Historic Environment Service if historic and archaeological features are present

Sites which may be unsuitable for this option include:

- washlands
- other areas that flood during the wader breeding season

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS12: Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl option.

How much will be paid

£310 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option lasts for 10 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part parcels, only on parcels that have been in arable, fallow or temporary grass in the last 5 years. They must also have high potential for being restored to habitat for wintering waders and wildfowl.

You must also meet one of the following conditions:

- You use a recommended fertiliser management system to plan nutrient inputs across the farm
- You will adopt a recommended fertiliser management system within 18 months of the start of the agreement
- You qualify as a low intensity farmer

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- ditches, dykes, drains, rivers or streams that are less than 4m wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- permanent water less than or equal to 0.1ha (larger areas may be eligible at the discretion of Natural England)
- temporary water

- natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways (as long as you are still able to carry out the requirements of the option)
- small areas of other types of habitat, such as reedbeds and scrub, at the discretion of the delivery body

How this option will benefit the environment

It will create wet grassland for wintering wildfowl and wading birds from arable or temporary grassland. Fields will have well-established swards, with wet areas throughout the winter. Wading birds and wildfowl will be able to feed and roost undisturbed.

Requirements

You will probably need to:

- establish a suitable sward and manage it by grazing, and possibly cutting
- provide areas of standing water and wet features (such as footdrains, gutters and scrapes) to attract waders and wildfowl through the winter months (ditch water levels may need to be held high to achieve this)
- control and manage trees, scrub, hedges, rushes and undesirable species
- use little or no manure, fertiliser, pesticide or supplementary feed

The agreement will set out what you cannot do. It's likely you'll not be allowed to:

- plough, cultivate or reseed the grassland after successfully establishing it, unless agreed in writing with Natural England
- harrow or roll on historic features
- carry out activities that may disturb birds or damage nests

Keeping records

On your annual claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices

- inputs used
- a grazing activity record for any sites grazed
- bag returns, if an agreed wildfowl strategy is in place
- photographs showing any areas where sward enhancement will be carried out
- evidence that you are following a recommended fertiliser management system or that you qualify as a low intensity farmer
- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 - Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

In exceptional circumstances you can also use the following supplements but only at the discretion of Natural England:

- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

For best results:

- use this option as part of a suite of wet grassland and target features options, over a wide area, potentially linking with other landowners

- use this option within, next to or linking Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) that have wintering waders and wildfowl as interest features
- use this option within, next to or linking non-designated areas with good wader and wildfowl populations
- make sure this option does not conflict with Environment Agency, internal drainage board or local authority policies on flood storage, ditch and river management, water resources and fish migration
- apply for land drainage consent if necessary
- discuss the location of capital works with the Environment Agency, internal drainage boards and local authorities
- discuss the location of capital works with the Historic Environment Service if historic and archaeological features are present

Sites where the water supply is unreliable are not suitable for this option.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS13: Management of grassland for target features

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of grassland for target features option.

How much is paid

£90 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part parcels, only on grassland that meets both of the following requirements:

- it has moderate or low potential for being restored to priority habitat
- it is clearly associated with a species or feature that would benefit from focused management

Alternatively, you can use it on priority coastal and floodplain grazing marsh that meets both of the following requirements:

- it is not targeted for the wet grassland options ([GS9](#), [GS10](#), [GS11](#) and [GS12](#))
- it is clearly associated with a species or feature that is targeted by Natural England and that would benefit from focused management

Where this option cannot be used

On grassland that is classed as grassland priority habitat (with the exception of priority coastal and floodplain grazing marsh).

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are permanently ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme:

- ditches, dykes, drains, rivers or streams that are less than 4m wide for the majority of their length in the parcel

- permanent water less than or equal to 0.1ha, at the discretion of Natural England (larger areas may be permitted on coastal and floodplain grazing marsh)
- temporary water
- natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways (as long as you can still carry out the requirements of the option)
- bracken
- scree, rock outcrops and boulders up to 0.1ha
- grazed woodland and scrub that has grass underneath it and that livestock can access, at the discretion of Natural England
- small areas of other habitat types, such as reedbeds, at the discretion of Natural England

How this option will benefit the environment

It will maintain or increase the quantity of the targeted habitat, species or features. Many priority species such as bumblebees, butterflies, birds or bats will also benefit. Buried archaeological features will not be disturbed.

Requirements

You will probably need to:

- maintain or increase the presence, quality or abundance of the targeted feature
- maintain a range of plant heights suitable for invertebrates, birds or other priority species
- manage the grassland by grazing or cutting
- maintain a continuous cover, particularly over historic features
- use little or no manure, fertiliser, pesticide or supplementary feed
- maintain scrub, rushes and other potentially dominating plants at the levels set out in the agreement
- control undesirable plants (these will be specified in the agreement)

Do not:

- plough, cultivate or re-seed the grassland, unless agreed with Natural England
- harrow, roll or allow scrub or bracken to encroach on historic or archaeological features

- carry out activities that may disturb birds or damage nests

Keeping records

On your annual claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- inputs used
- any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record
- a standard soil analysis carried out in the last 5 years. The [rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution](#) already require farmers and land managers to carry out soil testing on cultivated agricultural land - you can use these test results to meet the record-keeping requirements for this option
- if there is scrub on the site, photographs showing the extent of it
- if there is scrub or bracken on historic or archaeological features, photographs of the extent of it
- photographs showing any areas where sward enhancement will be carried out
- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [BE3 - Management of hedgerows](#)
- [GS15 - Haymaking supplement](#)
- [GS16 - Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [GS17 - Lenient grazing supplement](#)
- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 - Organic conversion - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 - Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement](#)

- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 - Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Species and features this option can be used for

You can use this option for a wide range of species or other features, such as:

- priority species
- scarce plants
- bumblebees, butterflies or other targeted invertebrates
- birds or other targeted vertebrates
- feeding areas for over-wintering geese in target locations that are free from disturbance
- areas that have breeding waders but that are not suitable for option [GS9 - Management of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- buried historic or archaeological features

What is needed

The management of land under this option can be very varied, but it is likely to need:

- appropriate livestock, over which you have full control
- machinery to carry out management requirements, such as cutting
- consideration of how best to manage associated features such as ditches
- capital works to support this option (for example to oversow with additional plant species, use option [FM2 - Major preparatory works for priority habitats \(creation and restoration\) and priority species](#))

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS14: Creation of grassland for target features

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of grassland for target features option.

How much is paid

£253 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option lasts for 10 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part parcels, only on arable, temporary or former set-aside grassland that has low or moderate potential for the creation of grassland priority habitat.

Features that can be included in this option

You can use it on the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are permanently ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme:

- ditches, dykes, drains, rivers or streams that are less than 4m wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- permanent water less than or equal to 0.1ha, at the discretion of Natural England (larger areas may be permitted on coastal and floodplain grazing marsh)
- temporary water
- natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways (as long as you can still carry out the requirements of the option)
- bracken
- scree, rock outcrops and boulders up to 0.1ha
- grazed woodland and scrub that has grass underneath it and that livestock can access, at the discretion of Natural England

- small areas of other habitat types, such as reedbeds, at the discretion of Natural England

How this option will benefit the environment

It will establish a suitable sward with a range of grass, legume and wildflower species. This will protect and enhance the targeted feature, as well as benefiting a range of other species, such as bumblebees, butterflies, birds or bats. Buried archaeological features will not be disturbed.

Requirements

You must establish a grassy sward with a range of grass, legume and wildflower species in the first year of your agreement.

Once this is established you must:

- maintain it as permanent grassland
- maintain a range of plant heights suitable for invertebrates, birds or other priority species
- manage the grassland by grazing or cutting
- maintain a continuous cover over historic features
- use little or no manure, fertiliser, pesticide or supplementary feed
- maintain scrub, rushes and other potentially dominating plants at the levels set out in the agreement
- control undesirable plants (these will be specified in the agreement)

You will also need to agree a detailed implementation timetable for the creation of the grassland. This should set out how you will create it, including details of the varieties and quantities of seed or plant material you will use and where they will come from. It should also set out how you will manage the sward once it has been established.

Do not:

- plough, cultivate or re-seed the grassland after successfully establishing it, unless agreed in writing with Natural England
- harrow, roll or allow scrub or bracken to encroach on historic or archaeological features
- carry out activities that may disturb birds or damage nests

Keeping records

On your annual claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- a standard soil analysis carried out in the last 5 years. The [rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution](#) already require farmers and land managers to carry out soil testing on cultivated agricultural land - you can use these test results to meet the record-keeping requirements for this option
- inputs used
- any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record
- photographs showing any areas where sward enhancement will be carried out
- photograph of current scrub extent
- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate these options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [BE3 - Management of hedgerows](#)
- [GS15 - Haymaking supplement](#)
- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 - Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Species and features this option can be used for

You can use it for a wide range of species or other features, such as:

- priority species
- scarce plants
- bumblebees, butterflies or other targeted invertebrates
- birds or other targeted vertebrates
- feeding areas for over-wintering geese in target locations that are free from disturbance
- buried archaeological features

You will need clear evidence that the feature is present on the site or close to it. You should discuss the suitability of the site with your adviser and agree what management is needed.

What is needed

The management of land under this option can be very varied, but it is likely to need:

- appropriate livestock, over which you have full control
- machinery to carry out management requirements, such as cutting
- consideration of how best to manage associated features, such as ditches
- capital works to support this option (for example, to oversow with additional plant species, use option [FM2 - Major preparatory works for priority habitats \(creation and restoration\) and priority species](#))

After the agreement term, the grassland may be eligible for option [GS13 - Management of grassland for target features](#).

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply

GS15: Haymaking supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the haymaking supplement.

How much will be paid

£85 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

- Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier
- Whole or part-parcel
- Only in combination with **one** of the following land management options.
 - [BE4 - Management of traditional orchards](#)
 - [BE5 - Creation of traditional orchards \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
 - [GS5 - Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs](#)
 - [GS6 - Management of species-rich grassland](#)
 - [GS7 - Restoration towards species-rich grassland \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
 - [GS8 - Creation of species-rich grassland \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
 - [GS13 - Management of grassland for target features \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
 - [GS14 - Creation of grassland for target features \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
 - [WD4 - Management of wood pasture and parkland](#)
 - [WD5 - Restoration of wood pasture and parkland \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
 - [WD6 - Creation of wood pasture \(Higher Tier only\)](#)

Related Mid-Tier supplements

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements.

- [GS16 – Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)

How this supplement will benefit the environment

To ensure the continuation, or reintroduction, of haymaking on fields which are, or were, cut for hay each year. It allows a crop of herb-rich hay to be grown and harvested, which will lead to wildflowers and grasses

blossoming and setting seed. This will help to conserve many of the plants in the meadow and provide pollen and nectar for bees and other insects.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the spring and summer wildflowers and grasses will grow. These will be cut to make field-dried, unwrapped hay or haylage in late summer. After cutting, the sward will be managed by grazing.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, do not carry out any of the following activities:

- cut hay before 5 July (outside SDA's) or 15 July (in SDA's)
- cut haylage before 1 August
- graze meadows for at least 7 weeks before cutting.

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- cut and remove unwrapped field-dried hay or haylage every year
- where spring grazing of meadows is a traditional practice, exclude livestock for at least 7 weeks before cutting and by 7 May at the latest
- if haylage is made, cut after 1 August
- if haylage is made, turn the swath at least once and wilt for at least 48 hours
- graze the aftermath sward, preferably with cattle, aiming for an average sward height of no more than 8 centimetres (cm) by the end of the grazing season

Keeping records

Where there's uncertainty about whether or not the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept to demonstrate delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the instructions set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record

At the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic records.

- Photographs of the management undertaken

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Cost of haymaking

This supplement is normally available for **one** of the following:

- to ensure the continuation, or reintroduction, of haymaking on fields which are, or were, cut for hay each year
- if the cost of haymaking is particularly high, for example: if buying machinery or livestock would lead to additional costs for making or storing hay
- if there are long distances between the meadows and the hay barn

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS16: Rush infestation control supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the rush infestation control supplement.

How much will be paid

£73 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

- Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier
- Only on:
 - permanent grassland
 - on a single parcel of land with continuous rush cover of more than 50% of the parcel
 - only on a single parcel for a maximum of 3 years

Options to use with this supplement

This supplement must be used with **one** of the following options.

- [GS2 - Permanent grassland with very low inputs \(outside SDAs\)](#)
- [GS5 - Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs](#)
- [GS6 - Management of species rich grassland](#)
- [GS7 - Restoration towards species rich grassland \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [GS9 - Management of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS10 - Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS13 - Management of grassland of target features \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [UP2 - Management of rough grazing for birds](#)

Related supplements

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements.

- [GS15 – Haymaking supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

This is a short-term incentive to reduce rush cover in parcels with heavy infestations. It will help prevent the loss of botanically rich grasslands or provide nesting areas for breeding wading birds.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the spring and summer, grazing and/or cutting will reduce the height and density of rush growth by autumn. By year 3 of the agreement, this will have reduced dense rush growth to less than 30% of the parcel area.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- cut rushes between 15 March and 15 July

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- graze or cut areas of dense rush growth every year so that rushes are less than 20 centimetres (cm) high by 30 September
- keep bare ground cover at less than 10% by year 2, to reduce the risk of new rushes becoming established
- graze with cattle, as sheep normally avoid grazing rush
- check for breeding birds before operating machinery or carrying out other activities which may disturb breeding birds or damage their nests. The breeding season tends to run from mid-March until mid-July, but it

can start earlier and finish later, depending on the species and the weather.

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record
- Photographs of management undertaken

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Maintaining rushes

The aim is to reduce heavy infestations of rushes to a cover below 30%. Cover should then be maintained at between 10% and 30%. Also:

- ensure damage to nests or disturbance of chicks is avoided when cutting
- avoid controlling rush where there is standing or flowing water on or close to the surface for most of the year
- avoid cutting areas where rush is growing in association with sphagnum mosses
- graze with cattle, as sheep normally avoid grazing rush
- wherever possible, remove cuttings to prevent low growing plants being smothered

Cutting machinery

The following machines are most appropriate for rush cutting.

- Grass mower trailed by a tractor
- Pasture topper
- Forage harvester

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

GS17: Lenient grazing supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the lenient grazing supplement.

How much will be paid

£44 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this supplement

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part parcels on:

- permanent grassland
- in combination with [GS2](#) including as part of the Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife package
- in combination with [GS5 permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDA's](#)
- on parcels where at least one boundary is a hedgerow and/or there is scrub cover within 200 metres (m) of the parcel

You can rotate this supplement between eligible parcels but you must maintain the same total area each year, and once applied to a parcel it must remain on it for at least 3 successive years.

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It will create habitat for spiders and other insects, including grasshoppers and beetles. This in turn provides critical spring and summer invertebrate food for birds such as yellowhammers, reed buntings and skylarks.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the growing season lightly graze the fields, to ensure a diverse sward height, with a range of shorter and taller grasses.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Cut for hay or silage

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- graze during the growing season to maintain a sward:
 - that has an average height of 7 centimetres (cm) to 13cm
 - where at least 20% is shorter than 10cm
 - where at least 20% is over 10cm tall
- graze with cattle, or a mixture of cattle and sheep, in order to achieve the varied sward height

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- Photographs of the management undertaken

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Sward height importance

The option is usually used as part of a package to benefit declining farmland birds. It provides the critical spring and summer invertebrate food needed by species such as yellowhammers.

Most invertebrates are much more abundant in taller grass but birds find it difficult to access them if the whole sward is tall. Birds need shorter patches where they can land and check for danger. They can then dart into the taller patches to catch their prey, or wait for them to move to the edge of the tall grass or out into the shorter patches.

Option amount and location

Normally at least 1ha of this option per 100ha of the farm area is needed to provide sufficient invertebrates.

Place the supplement on part parcels next to hedges or scrub for yellowhammers and other buntings. For skylarks place away from trees, hedges or other tall structures.

The target birds do not generally feed more than 300 metres (m) from their nests, so parcels of this option should not be more than 500m apart.

This option is more effective on grassland including herbs and wildflowers, but you can also use it on grassland with few, if any, herbs or wildflowers.

Checking sward height

If a sward stick is not available, you can measure uncompressed sward height using a ruler or lines on boots. Ignore stems and seedheads – measure to the top green leaf.

How to achieve the right sward

Graze with cattle, rather than just sheep (which risks non-compliance with the requirements). That way it is much easier to achieve the correct diverse sward structure.

The grazing can be rotational or intermittent, but the stock should eat the sward down well during the grazing periods to avoid it becoming rank during the rest periods.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

HE1: Historic and archaeological feature protection

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the historic and archaeological feature protection item.

How much will be paid

Up to 100% of actual costs.

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier only for work to conserve or protect individual historic environment features when physical work is needed to change land management practices or restore a site.

Where this item cannot be used

- For work related to historic (roofed) buildings
- For management plans for parklands, historic features or areas – use [PA2 - Feasibility study](#)
- For work previously funded under an agri-environment scheme

How this item will benefit the environment

It is for physical works that directly relate to conserving or protecting historic environment features in the landscape. This will help the long-term survival of historic and archaeological features.

Requirements

You must:

- agree a specification with Natural England and then send at least 3 written quotations identifying all associated costs for completing the work in line with the specification
- agree the selected quotation with Natural England
- complete the work as set out in the approved specification within the agreed time

- get any relevant consents before carrying out the work, such as scheduled monument consent from Historic England or listed building consent from the local planning authority

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application:

- 3 quotes for completion of the work

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs to show completed works
- a detailed specification

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- photographs of the feature before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Historic and archaeological features

Some historic environment features or areas are suffering from damage or loss. A land management option alone may not be enough, or may not be suitable, to make the management changes needed to protect the feature from further harm. The feature may also need restoration work.

This item supports this by funding work such as:

- moving fence lines or all-terrain vehicle tracks if they currently run across an archaeological site
- moving feed sites and restoring the surface
- clearing vegetation and restoring eroded surfaces

- consolidating structures, such as ruins or bridges, that are not eligible for [HE2 - Historic building restoration](#)
- de-silting designed water-bodies
- archaeological excavation, if it is needed to preserve 'by record' known archaeology which would be affected by agreed management on the site.

You can find information on the location of Scheduled Monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields and listed buildings, as well as undesignated historic and archaeological features on:

- the Historic England annual [Heritage at Risk register](#) - this identifies historic environment features at high risk from loss or damage
- the [MAGIC website](#) for information in map form
- the [Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England](#) website
- the [county historic environment record](#)

Complex sites

There is no standard specification for this item as all work will need to be tailored to the individual site. For complex situations or sites a management plan may be required and can be funded through [PA2 - Feasibility study](#).

Further information

You can find more information from Historic England's [Farming the historic landscape](#) booklet.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

HE2: Historic building restoration

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the historic building restoration item.

How much will be paid

Up to 80% of actual costs.

Where to use this item

Available as a standalone item.

This is a pilot grant scheme only available for buildings situated within the boundaries of the following National Parks:

- Dartmoor
- Lake District
- Northumberland
- Peak District
- Yorkshire Dales

Only on roofed buildings, identified as a priority by Natural England for funding within Countryside Stewardship, which will be repaired in line with historic building restoration guidance principles. These are:

- non-residential buildings built with traditional materials and methods in a characteristic local, vernacular or ‘designed’ architectural style
- ornamental or architecturally designed buildings – for example, those on model farms, or in parklands or designed landscapes

Where this item cannot be used

- on modern buildings made from concrete, timber or steel frames and clad in materials such as concrete, breeze blocks, tiles, fibre cement sheeting or profiled metal sheeting
- on structures such as bridges
- on ruined buildings (more than 50% of the building has been lost)

- on converted historic buildings - such as to residential, holiday accommodation or commercial use - or a home's ancillary building, such as garages
- on buildings previously funded under an agri-environment scheme

How this item will benefit the environment

It is for conserving and lengthening the life of rural buildings that contribute to the character and enjoyment of the landscape and are of historic interest.

The work will prevent further decay to the fabric of historic buildings and benefit their long-term survival.

Requirements

- agree a specification with your local National Park adviser, develop a detailed management plan and then send at least 3 written quotations identifying all associated costs for completing the work in line with the specification
- agree the selected quotation with Natural England
- complete the work as set out in the approved management plan within the agreed time
- get any relevant consents before carrying out the work, such as scheduled monument consent from Historic England or listed building consent from the local planning authority

Protecting and maintaining the buildings

After the work has been completed the building will need to be protected and maintained in a weatherproof condition for a period of 5 years from completion of the work and final grant payment. This includes fixtures and fittings and nearby associated features, such as mounting blocks and stack or stook bases.

The character of the building, in its local setting, will need to be kept – with maintenance works and minor repairs carried out on a like-for-like basis using traditional material and methods.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- photographs of the building before works start
- the specification and schedule of works for all the work to be completed - once approved, these will form a mandatory part of the agreement
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [historic buildings restoration grant manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- receipted invoices and bank statements
- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Applicants will need to send the following with their application:

- the 3 quotes for completion of the work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their National Park adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

There is no standard specification for building restoration and all work will be tailored to the individual site. A specification will need to be agreed with the relevant National Park adviser and Natural England.

Before applying for this item a management plan will be required to identify the restoration work and costs, and can be applied for through [PA2 - Feasibility study](#).

Project planning

Guidance on restoring and repairing historic buildings is available in the [historic buildings restoration grant manual](#) and through your National Park local adviser. It will explain which work is eligible and the repair principles to follow.

This item cannot be used for management plans for historic building restoration - use [PA2 - Feasibility study](#).

Further information

Historic England has a [guide to restoring and maintaining historic farm buildings](#).

There is a lot of competition for this capital item. Any buildings applied for will be assessed separately to identify the best and highest priority historic building restoration projects.

The assessment will include thinking about how the building:

- adds to the area's landscape character
- can offer or retain wildlife habitat or nest sites
- offers the public access

Natural England will also look at:

- the sort of work that needs doing
- how urgent the repair work is
- whether Countryside Stewardship is the most appropriate grant for restoring the building - this is because it cannot be used to fund converting the building to an alternative use, such as residential or commercial use

See the [historic buildings restoration grant manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

HE3: Removal of eyesore

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the removal of eyesore item.

How much will be paid

£290 per item.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier.

Only with a land management option

Where this item cannot be used

- for routine clearing and maintenance
- if clearance is required, such as for health and safety or cross compliance reasons

How this item will benefit the environment

It removes and disposes of unsightly items which have a negative effect on the landscape.

Requirements

- agree a specification for the works with Natural England in year 1 of the agreement
- complete the works as set out in the agreed specification within the agreed timescale

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable

- photographs of the eyesore before works start
- item specification if required
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

HS1: Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings option.

How much will be paid

£3.25 per square metre

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier for traditional farm buildings or parts of buildings that:

- were built using traditional methods and using timber, brick, stone, tile or slate
- were built before 1940 for agricultural use, for example housing machinery or animals, or storing or processing crops and food
- are still in agricultural use on a farm holding, whether or not this was the original use
- are sound and weatherproof
- are recorded on the Farm Environment Record (FER)

You must own or control the building or the part of the building entered into the option for the life of the agreement.

Where this option cannot be used

You cannot use this option if the building:

- is a metal-framed Dutch barn
- was constructed as a dwelling
- is a farmhouse, residential or domestic building

How this option will benefit the environment

It will help to maintain traditional farm buildings, using traditional methods and materials. This will also enhance the local landscape and preserve places for wildlife.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

There will be:

- traditional farm buildings, fixtures and fittings in a sound condition and weatherproof with any existing areas of non-traditional material maintained
- buildings maintained on a 'like for like' basis using traditional materials and methods
- preserved and accessible features used by bats, owls and kestrels (see [building wildlife assessment form](#))
- new bat, owl or kestrel boxes installed in the first year, where the wildlife assessment form has identified a need
- a building maintenance plan completed in the first year, and a log of work updated annually (see [building maintenance plan and log form](#))

Prohibited Activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Sell or convert the building for non-agricultural use during the life of the agreement.
- If bat activity has been identified, do not undertake any works on the building without advice from a licensed ecological consultant (a licence may be required)

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

Year 1

- complete a building maintenance plan
- install bat or barn owl boxes with open access points, if recommended in the wildlife assessment

Every year

- carry out visual inspections at least once a year and keep records of the results in the building maintenance plan and wildlife assessment
- carry out maintenance work and repairs on a 'like for like' basis
- record the maintenance work carried out in the building maintenance plan log
- keep the building weatherproof, including fixtures, fittings and features such as mounting blocks, stack or stook bases
- use traditional material and methods for any maintenance work, keeping the character of the building within its local setting
- maintain areas where a non-traditional material has previously been used to repair or re-clad the building, such as corrugated iron sheeting to cover roofs
- maintain existing features identified as possible roosting areas for bats, such as non-structural crevices and cavities, taking care not to disturb any bats
- follow any advice from the ecological consultant about when work can be undertaken on the building's fabric and get any bat licences that are needed

Keeping Records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Photographs showing the condition of the building before the start of the agreement
- A copy of the building maintenance plan (see [building maintenance plan and log form](#)) - to be updated with inspection results and completed works throughout the life of the agreement
- Any receipted invoices (or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable)
- Any consents or permissions connected with this work
- A wildlife assessment of the building's suitability for barn owls, kestrels and bats (see [building wildlife assessment form](#)) - to be updated with the results of annual inspections

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to calculate the option area

The eligible area for this option is the area of the ground floor of the building. Do not include any other space from extra floors, or any parts of the yard, in the calculation.

Maintenance work

Carry out routine maintenance work to protect the fabric of the building and to keep it weatherproof. This does not include work to fix significant defects or decay, or work to bring a building in poor repair back to a good condition.

Regular inspections

Inspect the site regularly to identify areas that might need attention such as:

- blocked downpipes and gutters
- broken or slipped slates, tiles or glass
- pointing on walls
- the condition of paintwork
- barriers to wildlife access
- vegetation that needs clearing
- any other items that need minor repairs

Specific tasks and minor repairs

Carry out specific tasks regularly so the building stays in good condition and is weatherproof. Tasks could include:

- clearing gutters from debris and leaves
- fixing slipped slate or broken roofing slates and tiles to prevent rainwater penetration
- renewing cast iron gutters and drainpipes
- replacing broken glass
- repainting woodwork and metalwork
- repointing walls
- clearing vegetation

How often the work needs doing

You will need to do some work every year. You may need to do seasonal tasks, such as clearing gutters and removing vegetation, several times a year.

Start on any agreed work as soon as the agreement begins, such as:

- installing wildlife boxes
- undertaking work to enable access for wildlife
- completing the building maintenance plan

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

HS2: Take historic and archaeological features out of cultivation

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the take historic and archaeological features out of cultivation option.

How much will be paid

£425 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part parcels. In Mid-Tier you can use this option only:

- on Scheduled Monuments on arable land or temporary grassland
- with the written approval of Historic England as confirmed on your Historic Environment FER (HEFER) consultation response

In Higher Tier you can use this option:

- on Scheduled Monuments where approved by Historic England and on historic or archaeological features identified in your HEFER

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate these options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It protects historic and archaeological features from damaging cultivation practices. Depending on land use and location it may also:

- reduce diffuse pollution
- reduce soil erosion

Protecting historic and archaeological features will conserve the character of the farm and protect England's heritage for future generations. This option may also maintain and conserve landscape character.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be a continuous grass and/or flower mixture growing over the historic and archaeological feature.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Plough on earthwork sites when establishing grass or flower mixtures
- Harrow or roll
- Supplementary feed within 6m of the option area
- Allow scrub or bracken growth on the option area
- Carry out drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without written permission before work starts
- Locate vehicle or stock access routes within 6 metres (m) of the feature (existing surfaced tracks can be used)

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- use shallow cultivation on arable land to establish a grass or flower mixture
- re-seed temporary grassland by slot seeding, making sure not to damage the existing sward

- maintain a continuous grass sward over the feature

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Map of existing tracks - you can mark these on any map, including your Farm Environment Record (FER)
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Written approval for the option from Historic England

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

- None

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

HS3: Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on historic and archaeological features

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on historic and archaeological features option.

How much will be paid

£79 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier.

In Mid-Tier you can use this option only:

- on Scheduled Monuments on arable land or temporary grassland
- with the written approval of Historic England as confirmed on your Historic Environment FER (HEFER) consultation response

In Higher Tier you can use this option:

- on Scheduled Monuments where approved by Historic England and on historic or archaeological features identified in your HEFER

Where this option cannot be used

- Where historic or archaeological earthworks are known to survive
- Where soil movement or loss has been identified as a problem

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate these options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [AB4 – Skylark plots](#)
- [AB7 - Whole crop cereals](#)
- [AB10 - Unharvested cereal headland](#)

- [AB11 – Cultivated areas for arable plants](#)
- [AB14 - Harvested low input cereal](#)
- [OP5 - Undersown cereal](#)
- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OR4 - Organic conversion - horticulture](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)
- [OT4 - Organic land management - horticulture](#)
- [SW6 - Winter cover crops](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It reduces damage to historic and archaeological features under cultivation by using non-inversion (minimum tillage) machinery and shallower cultivation depths.

Protecting historic and archaeological features will conserve the historic character of the farm and protect England's heritage for future generations. This option may also maintain and conserve landscape character.

If successful there will be a soil surface with no evidence of:

- erosion
- subsoil (which indicates a deeper cultivation depth)
- freshly disturbed archaeological remains, such as pottery, burnt flint, flint tools, animal and human bone and building stone and tile

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Non-inversion machinery will be used to reduce cultivation depths to no more than 15 centimetres (cm) deep.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Grow the following crops on the option area:
 - maize
 - lucerne

- root and tuber crops (excluding non-harvestable root crops such as grazed fodder beet and forage turnips)
- short rotation coppice
- miscanthus
- Carry out drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without written permission before work starts
- Locate vehicle or stock access routes within 6 metres (m) of the feature (existing surfaced tracks can be used)
- Carry out the following field operations to deeper than 15cm:
 - tillage
 - soil management
 - planting
 - harvesting

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- use non-inversion (minimum tillage) machinery to reduce cultivation depths

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A map of existing tracks. You can mark these on any map, including your Farm Environment Record (FER)
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Consents or permissions connected with this work

- Written approval for the use of the option from Historic England
- Photographs of the management undertaken

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Where earthworks survive, you should use [HS9 Restricted depth crop establishment to protect archaeology under an arable rotation](#).

Reduce cultivation depth and compaction

You can reduce cultivation depth by:

- raising the height of the chisel
- using depth control chains or gauges
- using a GPS depth controller
- increasing the number of discs (14 discs for a 3m width instead of the usual 9)
- using depth wheels with parallelogram mounting

You can reduce compaction by:

- not working in wet soil conditions
- reducing tyre pressure on vehicles travelling on the site to spread the load more evenly

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

HS4: Scrub control on historic and archaeological features

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the scrub control on historic and archaeological features option.

How much will be paid

£137 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

- Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier
- Whole or part parcel
- Only on historic and archaeological features with more than 5% scrub cover

Related Mid-Tier options

These options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option.

- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 - Organic conversion - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 - Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [UP1 - Enclosed rough grazing](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It reduces the risk of root damage to historic and archaeological features by permanently removing the majority of scrub.

Protecting historical and archaeological features will conserve the character of the farm and protect England's heritage for future generations. This option may also maintain and conserve landscape character.

Depending on the site's location, this option may help to:

- reduce diffuse pollution

- reduce soil erosion

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be a well-managed grass sward, keeping bare ground to a minimum, growing over the historic and archaeological feature.

Throughout the year the historic and archaeological features are not obscured by scrub or damaged by erosion.

During the autumn and winter, about a quarter of the scrub will be removed each year for the first three years, and regrowth will be controlled thereafter so that scrub covers no more than 75% of the feature.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- Clear scrub between 1 March and 30 September
- Grub out stumps and roots
- Plough, cultivate or re-seed
- Harrow or roll
- Supplementary feed on or within 6 metres (m) of the historic or archaeological feature
- Locate vehicle or stock access routes within 6 metres (m) of the feature (existing surfaced tracks can be used)

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- remove 25% of scrub on the feature every year for the first 3 years (total 75%), clearing only between 1 October and 28 February
- remove cuttings and brash
- prevent and control scrub re-growth
- prevent additional scrub encroaching on historic or archaeological features.
- maintain a continuous grass sward or vegetation cover over the features so that no more than 5% have bare patches and erosion
- ensure all necessary consents are in place to remove any mature trees

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Photographs of the historic and archaeological features and the extent of scrub before works start
- A map of existing tracks - these can be marked on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Ways to remove scrub

Scrub can be removed by:

- mowing
- flailing
- using a chainsaw or strimmer
- clearing by hand

Scrub should be cut down to ground level without disturbing the roots. Make sure all cut material is removed from the site.

Control scrub regrowth

Scrub regrowth can be controlled using:

- livestock grazing
- machinery
- chemicals to treat roots

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

HS5: Management of historic and archaeological features on grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of historic and archaeological features on grassland option.

How much will be paid

£30 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier.

- Only on historic and archaeological features on parcels of permanent grassland

The permanent grassland may form a mosaic with other vegetation types, such as heathland and moorland

Where this option cannot be used

- On land parcels of more than 15 hectares (ha) above the moorland line

Related Mid-Tier options

These options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option.

- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 - Organic conversion - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 - Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It maintains permanent grassland on historic and archaeological features.

Maintaining these features will conserve the character of the farm and protect England's heritage for future generations. This option may also maintain and conserve landscape character.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be a well-managed grass sward or area of vegetation covering the feature, keeping bare ground to a minimum.

There will be no more than 5% cover of scrub, bracken or pernicious weeds.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- Plough, cultivate or re-seed
- Harrow or roll
- Apply supplementary feed on or within 6m of the feature
- Locate vehicle or stock access routes within 6m of the feature (existing surfaced tracks can be used)

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- maintain a continuous grass sward or vegetation cover so that no more than 5% of the features develop bare patches or erosion
- make sure scrub, bracken or pernicious weeds cover no more than 5% of the features

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- A map of existing tracks - this can be marked on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Plan drainage works

Installing or maintaining drainage systems can damage historic and archaeological features. To avoid damage install access points outside the feature so that drains can be maintained without having to excavate.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

HS6: Maintenance of designed/engineered water bodies

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the maintenance of designed/engineered water bodies option.

How much will be paid

£440 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on:

- water bodies with an artificially retained area of open standing water
- the banks of the water body and buffer strips around associated features (such as leats and culverts)

Where this option cannot be used

- To include areas of water - only land can be included in a claim
- For field ponds dug to below the water table
- For water meadows (both bedwork and catch meadow systems)
- For water bodies that are covered by the [Reservoirs Act 1975](#)
- For raised water bodies that are deemed at high-risk by the Environment Agency under the [Flood and Water Management Act 2010](#)

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate these options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It protects the banks and associated historic built water-control features of designed or engineered historic water bodies. It maintains or strengthens the role of these features in water quality management.

Maintaining archaeological and historic features will conserve the character of the farm and protect England's heritage for future generations. This option can also help to maintain and conserve landscape character.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be a permanently vegetated 4 metre (m) grass buffer strip around the water body, and a permanently vegetated 2m grass buffer strip around any associated features outside the 4m buffer. Bare ground will be kept to a minimum and no more than a quarter of the water body will be permanently shaded. Scrub and undesirable species will cover no more than 5% of the perimeter/bank.

Maintenance will be carried out on a 'like for like' basis, traditional materials and methods should be used unless maintaining any existing non-traditional material. A structures maintenance record will be kept using the [template](#) provided.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Alter the depth, shape, profile and design of the built water body and associated engineering
- Erect new fences

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- establish or maintain a permanently vegetated buffer strip at least 4m wide on the perimeter or bank of the main water body

- establish or maintain a permanently vegetated buffer strip at least 2m wide around any associated features outside the 4m buffer strip
- manage the buffer strips to make sure there is no more than 5% bare ground
- make sure that no more than 25% of the water surface is in permanent shade
- control scrub and undesirable plant species so that there is no more than 5% covering the banks of the water body by year 2
- remove all cut material
- keep the character of the feature in its local setting by:
 - carrying out maintenance works and minor repairs on structural historic or archaeological features on a 'like-for-like' basis
 - keeping and maintaining any non-traditional material that was previously used to repair or re-clad the structures

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- The structures maintenance record detailed in the aim.

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Maintenance work

Annual maintenance

Carry out the routine work needed to protect structures and features to make sure they survive. This will help to identify and prevent the start of serious structural problems, which should help to avoid expensive restoration in the future.

Typical maintenance work can include:

- regularly inspecting buffer strips to make sure no scrub is developing

- making sure the buffer strips are not on compacted soil so that water can infiltrate
- inspecting the water body to make sure it is clear, and inspecting associated structures to make sure they are working properly
- undertaking minor repairs such as clearing vegetation from leats, sluices, hatches and dams, and repointing retaining walls

Summer is usually the best time for inspections and minor repair works, as water levels are lower and more of the water structures are visible.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

HS7: Management of historic water meadows through traditional irrigation

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of historic water meadows through traditional irrigation option.

How much will be paid

£440 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier only:

- on functioning water meadows that are managed using traditional practices, that is where irrigation is achieved through a system of inlet and outlet channels
- where management has written support from the Environment Agency

Where this option cannot be used

On meadows:

- that flood naturally and do not have control structures such as sluices and hatches to regulate water levels
- where water cannot be controlled - water needs to flow evenly across the meadow at up to 25 millimetres (mm) in depth when drowned

How this option will benefit the environment

It protects heritage by conserving historic water meadow systems and keeping them in a stable condition.

It maintains the demanding traditional management needed on both 'bedwork' and 'catch' water meadows. It also maintains habitat and water quality.

If successful there will be:

- a well-managed grass sward with no scrub developing

- a working water meadow system with structurally sound water control features
- maintenance carried out using traditional materials and methods

It will also help conserve the character of the farm and traditional land-use patterns.

Requirements

You must:

- float or drown the meadow for an agreed period of time each year
- maintain the gutters, carriers or channels to encourage an even film of water approximately 25mm deep to flow over the sward
- maintain and repair the water control structures such as sluices, weirs and hatches, keeping a record of the work
- manage the meadow by grazing or hay cutting once the land has dried out
- use very little or no manures, fertilisers, pesticides or supplementary feed
- control undesirable plants

The agreement will set out what you cannot do. It is likely you will not be allowed to:

- harrow or roll
- work on the gutters, carriers or channels during late spring and summer
- plough, cultivate or re-seed
- remove, replace or relocate historic structures

Keeping records

You must contact the Environment Agency before you apply for this item for advice and get any consents or permissions that are needed. You do not need to send these with your application, but must send any consents or permissions with your payment claim.

You must send the following with your application:

- a map of existing tracks and routes – you can mark these on any map, including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

On your annual claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements and send the following:

- confirmation from the Environment Agency

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- photographs of the state of the water meadow and its structural, historic and archaeological features before works start
- a [structures maintenance record](#) using the template and:
 - at least once a year, carry out and record the results of an inspection of the water body and associated features
 - complete the record with a list of items needing attention and a record of repair and maintenance work that has been carried out
- before and after photographs of all maintenance works and minor repairs that have been carried out
- stock grazing records
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- consents or permissions connected with the work (in addition to the ones stated above)
- records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel
- photographs of the state of the water meadow and its structural, historic and archaeological features when works completed.

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [BE3 – Management of hedgerows](#)
- [GS16 - Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 - Organic conversion - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 - Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP1 – Difficult sites supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)

- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 – Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Carrying out maintenance

Carry out routine maintenance work to protect structures and features to make sure they survive.

Carry out annual maintenance to spot and prevent the start of serious structural problems. This should help to avoid expensive restoration in the future.

Typical maintenance work may include:

- inspecting the water control structures such as sluices, weirs and hatches to make sure they are all working properly
- clearing carriers, leats, gutters and drains of vegetation and silt
- carrying out minor repairs to sluices, hatches, weirs, bridges, aqueducts, culverts and dams

Historic fabric should be kept as far as possible and not over-restored.

Field operations and stocking should not damage the soil structure, for example by allowing livestock to poach the ground.

Further information

You can find more information on the location of scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields and listed buildings, as well as undesignated historic and archaeological features on:

- the Historic England annual [Heritage at Risk register](#) - this identifies historic environment features at high risk loss or damage
- the [MAGIC website](#) for information in map form
- the [Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England](#) website
- the county [historic environment record](#)

You can also read about [Conserving historic water meadows](#) on the Historic England website.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

HS8: Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings in remote areas

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings in remote areas option.

How much will be paid

£6.73 per square metre

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier

Only for traditional farm buildings or parts of buildings that:

- are at least 400 metres (m) from the main farmstead
- are at least 200m from a metalled public road (a hard surface like asphalt, concrete, paving stones, bricks and cobbles) by the shortest practicable route
- are still in agricultural use on a farm holding, whether or not this was the original use
- are sound and weatherproof
- are recorded on the Farm Environment Record (FER)
- were built using traditional methods and using timber, brick, stone, tile or slate
- was built before 1940 for agricultural use, such as housing machinery or animals, or storing or processing crops and food

You must own or control the building or the part of the building entered into the option for the life of the agreement.

Where this option cannot be used

This option cannot be used if the building:

- is a metal-framed Dutch barn
- was constructed as a dwelling

- is a farmhouse, residential or domestic building

How this option will benefit the environment

It will help to maintain traditional farm buildings, using traditional methods and materials. This will also enhance the local landscape and preserve places for wildlife.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

There will be:

- traditional farm buildings, fixtures and fittings in a sound condition and weatherproof with any existing areas of non-traditional material maintained
- buildings maintained on a 'like for like' basis using traditional materials and methods
- preserved and accessible features as identified in the wildlife assessment (see [building wildlife assessment form](#))
- new bat, owl or kestrel boxes installed in the first year, where the wildlife assessment form has identified a need
- a building maintenance plan, completed in the first year, and log of work updated annually (see [building maintenance plan and log form](#))

Prohibited Activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Sell or convert the building for non-agricultural use during the life of the agreement
- If bat activity has been identified, do not undertake any works on the building without advice from a licensed ecological consultant (a licence may be required)

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

Year 1

- complete a building maintenance plan
- install bat or barn owl boxes with open access points, if recommended in the initial wildlife assessment

Every year

- carry out visual inspections at least once a year and keep records of the results in the building maintenance plan and wildlife assessment
- carry out maintenance work and repairs on a 'like for like' basis
- record the maintenance work that has been carried out in the buildings maintenance plan log
- keep the building weatherproof, including fixtures, fittings and features such as mounting blocks, stook or stack bases
- use traditional material and methods for any maintenance work, keeping the character of the building within its local setting
- maintain areas where a non-traditional material has previously been used to repair or re-clad the building, such as corrugated iron sheeting to cover roofs
- maintain existing features identified as possible roosting areas for bats, such as non-structural crevices and cavities, taking care not to disturb any bats
- get advice from a licensed ecological consultant if bat activity has been identified - this will apply at any time in the agreement
- follow any advice from a licensed ecological consultant about when work can be undertaken on the building's fabric and get any bat licences that are needed

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out

above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Photographs showing the condition of the building before the start of the agreement
- A copy of the building maintenance plan (see [building maintenance plan and log form](#)) - to be updated with inspection results and completed works throughout the life of the agreement
- Any receipted invoices (or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable), consents or permissions connected with the work
- A wildlife assessment (see [building wildlife assessment form](#)) of the building's suitability for barn owls, kestrels and bats - to be updated with the results of annual inspections
- Map of traditional farm building location - this can be marked on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)
- Map identifying traditional farm building and the distance to main steading and metalled public access - this can be marked on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to calculate the option area

The eligible area for this option is the area of the ground floor of the building. Do not include any other space from extra floors, or any parts of the yard, in the calculation.

Maintenance work

Carry out routine maintenance work to protect the fabric of the building and to keep it weatherproof. This does not include work to fix significant defects or decay, or work to bring a building in poor repair back to a good condition.

Regular inspections

Inspect the site regularly to identify areas that might need attention such as:

- blocked downpipes and gutters
- broken or slipped slates, tiles or glass

- pointing on walls
- the condition of paintwork
- barriers to wildlife access
- vegetation that needs clearing
- any other items that need minor repairs

Specific tasks and minor repairs

Carry out specific tasks regularly so the building stays in good condition and is weatherproof. Tasks could include:

- clearing gutters from debris and leaves
- fixing slipped slate or broken roofing slates and tiles to prevent rainwater penetration
- renewing cast iron gutters and drainpipes
- replacing broken glass
- repainting woodwork and metalwork
- repointing walls
- clearing vegetation

How often the work needs doing

Some work will be required every year. Seasonal tasks, such as clearing gutters and removing vegetation, may need to be done several times a year.

Start on any agreed work as soon as the agreement begins, such as:

- installing wildlife boxes
- undertaking work to enable access for wildlife
- completing the Buildings Maintenance Plan

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

HS9: Restricted depth crop establishment to protect archaeology under an arable rotation

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the restricted depth crop establishment to protect archaeology under an arable rotation option.

How much will be paid

£174 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier.

In Mid-Tier you can use this option only:

- on Scheduled Monuments on arable land or temporary grassland
- with the written approval of Historic England as confirmed on your Historic Environment FER (HEFER) consultation response

In Higher Tier you can use this option:

- on Scheduled Monuments where approved by Historic England and on historic or archaeological features identified in your HEFER.

Where this option cannot be used

On parcels at risk of soil erosion or runoff, as identified in the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate these options and supplements on the same area as these.

- [AB4 – Skylark plots](#)
- [AB7 - Whole crop cereals](#)
- [AB10 - Unharvested cereal headland](#)
- [AB11 – Cultivated areas for arable plants](#)

- [AB14 - Harvested low input cereal](#)
- [OP5 - Undersown cereal](#)
- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OR4 - Organic conversion - horticulture](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)
- [OT4 - Organic land management - horticulture](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It reduces the risk of damage to historic and archaeological features on arable land, particularly where subtle earthwork remains survive.

Maintaining archaeological and historic features will conserve the character of the farm and protect England's heritage for future generations.

Arable cultivation damages archaeological remains by:

- levelling out earthworks
- cutting through and churning up remains below ground
- eroding protective layers of soil

Using direct drill machinery across earthwork remains reduces the risk of damage to archaeological features.

Cover-cropping techniques can help to avoid damage to soil structure and weed problems which might otherwise build up under a direct drilling regime, by:

- reducing compaction
- limiting erosion
- suppressing weeds

If successful there will be a soil surface with no evidence of:

- erosion
- subsoil (which indicates a deeper cultivation depth)
- freshly disturbed archaeological remains, such as pottery, burnt flint, flint tools, animal and human bone and building stone and tile

There will also be improved soil structure and fewer weeds.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

All work involving tillage, soil management, planting and harvesting will go no deeper than 15 centimetres (cm). A direct drill system will be used where historic or archaeological earthworks are known to survive.

A sown cover crop will be used for at least one year of the five in agreement.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Use equipment trains that are longer than 6 metres (m)
- Grow the following crops on the option area:
 - maize
 - lucerne
 - root and tuber crops (excluding non-harvestable root crops such as grazed fodder beet and forage turnips)
 - short rotation coppice
 - miscanthus
- Carry out drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without written permission before work starts
- Locate vehicle or stock access routes within 6m of the feature (existing surfaced tracks can be used)
- Carry out the following field operations to deeper than 15cm:
 - tillage
 - soil management
 - planting
 - Harvesting

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- one year in every 5 include a sown cover as part of the crop rotation, based on the 'What to sow' section below

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A map of existing tracks - you can mark these on any map, including your Farm Environment Record (FER)
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Consents or permissions connected with the work
- Written approval for the use of this option from Historic England
- Photographs of the management undertaken

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Reduce cultivation depth and compaction

You can reduce cultivation depth through:

- direct drilling
- raising the height of the chisel
- using depth control chains or gauges
- using a GPS depth controller
- increasing the number of discs (14 discs for a 3m width instead of the usual 9)
- using depth wheels with parallelogram mounting

You can reduce compaction by:

- not working in wet soil conditions
- reducing tyre pressure of vehicles travelling on the site to spread the load more evenly

Cover crop: what to sow

A mixture based on the following species will supply overwinter cover and cover into the next year.

- Ryegrass
- Millet
- Triticale
- Red clover
- Crimson clover
- Birdsfoot trefoil
- Phacelia
- Common vetch
- Mustard

Shallow rooting species are preferable. This will prevent damage from plants with a deeper, penetrating root structure like sweet clover.

Cover crop: when to sow

Establish the cover crop quickly to get the most environmental benefits. You can do this by:

- including the cover crop in the preceding crop at harvest time using auto-casting equipment
- sowing the cover crop immediately following harvest in the autumn

Depending on the seed mixture, the cover crop can be broadcast on to the surface and rolled afterwards.

Sow in the autumn and keep until 31 July the following year.

Cover crop: sowing

You are more likely to succeed if you:

- establish the cover crop quickly
- sow mixtures with good frost tolerance
- have good ground cover

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

LH1: Management of lowland heathland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of lowland heathland option.

How much will be paid

£274 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Whole or part parcel

Non-rotational

Only on lowland heathland priority habitat; this can include areas of acid grassland mixed with heathland

Note: this option is not intended for use:

- on extensive grassland areas (without heather or dwarf shrubs) as these should be put into a relevant grassland option, such as:
 - [GS6 - Management of species-rich grassland](#)
 - [GS13 - Management of grassland for target features](#)
- on upland heathland over 300m above sea level and within the moorland line and the severely disadvantaged area

Features that can be included in this option

The following features can be included if they are part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- bare ground
- open water
- scrub

How this option will benefit the environment

It creates a diverse mosaic of vegetation, allowing all heathland types (such as wet or dry heath, transitional heaths, acidic mires and coastal heaths) to flourish. This includes pioneer heath and bare ground, which benefits rarer invertebrates, birds, reptiles and plants.

If successful there will be heathland areas with a diverse mosaic structure, including undisturbed bare ground and vegetation in all stages of its life cycle.

The cover of undesirable species will be low and species that increase when undermanaged (bracken, trees, dense grass tussocks) kept under control. Locally characteristic plant communities and the species they support (such as nightjar, woodlark, smooth snake and sand lizard, where within their range) are common.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- create a wide range of heather ages and structure through appropriate management (grazing, burning and/or cutting)
- provide bare ground cover between 1% and 10%
- maintain tree and scrub cover below 15%
- maintain the full range of age classes of Western or European gorse
- manage bracken so that cover is less than 10% in dense canopy

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely agreement holders will not be allowed to:

- create bare ground on historic or archaeological features
- use fertilisers or manures
- apply any lime
- plough, cultivate or re-seed
- carry out supplementary feeding
- use pesticides, including herbicides, except to spot treat or weed wipe or to control injurious weeds or invasive non-natives

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- copies of the Wildfire Risk Assessment and, where required, the Wildfire Response Plan (agreed with fire service) and Wildfire Management Plan - for guidance and example plans see the [Uplands Management Group template](#) or [Forestry Commission's guide](#)
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- consents or permissions connected with this work
- any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record
- photographs of the existing bracken

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You should also be aware that at the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will also be asked to take and submit the following photographic records:

- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related options

These supplements can be located on the same area as this option:

- [BE3 – Management of hedgerows](#)
- [OR2 – Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 – Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

- [WT3 – Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following section gives advice on carrying out this option successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this option.

Heathland is characteristic of acidic and nutrient-poor soils. Heathland sites should be managed to keep their ecological value, which depends on an open and diverse vegetation structure.

Sensitive, sustainable management will be needed, using a combination of appropriate grazing, cutting and removal and/or burning. In some cases herbicide application may be needed (such as for some scrub or bracken control).

Larger sites will often also include areas of acid grassland or wetland habitats - the transitional zones between heathland and such habitats are particularly valuable. If a heathland site is neglected or poorly managed, it is likely to lead to bare ground disappearing and an increase in cover of scrub, bracken, gorse, invasive grasses or secondary woodland.

The removal or disturbance of top soil may be needed, to create or maintain some features, such as bare ground. Do not create bare ground on historic or archaeological features. Such features are best protected by implementing an appropriate grazing or cutting regime, and/or preventing scrub and bracken growth.

Further information

Symes, N. and Day, J. 2003. A practical guide to the restoration and management of lowland heathland, The RSPB, Sandy

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

LH2: Restoration of forestry and woodland to lowland heathland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the restoration of forestry and woodland to lowland heathland option.

How much will be paid

£184 per hectare (ha).

How long the option lasts

This option lasts for 10 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme.

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Whole or part parcel

Non-rotational

Only on lowland heathland that has established tree cover over most of its area

Where this option cannot be used

- on areas of heathland with scattered trees and scrub - use [LH1 - Management of lowland heathland, to restore existing heathland habitat](#)
- on woodland being cleared on grassland areas (without dwarf shrubs) - use a relevant grassland option

Features that can be included in this option

The following features can be included if they are part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- bare ground
- open water

- scrub

How this option will benefit the environment

It re-establishes lowland heathland on forested land or land recently (since 1900) colonised by woodland.

Once trees are felled and removed and extensive areas of sandy soil are exposed, heathland areas should develop over the first 2 to 3 years. The area will have a tree cover under 15%, with a diverse mosaic structure and composition, including undisturbed bare ground and varied heathland vegetation types.

The cover of undesirable species will be low and vegetation that increases when undermanaged (bracken, scrub, dense grass tussocks) should be kept under control.

Locally characteristic plant communities and the species they support (such as nightjar, woodlark, smooth snake or sand lizard) will successfully colonise the site, if within their range.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- remove trees and scrub, along with the accumulated organic litter layer when it's deeper than 5cm
- graze or cut to manage the colonising heathland vegetation, leading to a balanced range and distribution of dwarf shrub age classes
- follow set times for grazing or cutting
- carry out hydrological restoration measures, if needed, such as damming ditches or blocking drainage, if appropriate
- create or maintain between 1% to 10% of bare ground cover – do not create bare ground on historic or archaeological features
- maintain tree or scrub cover below 15%
- maintain the full range of age classes of Western or European gorse
- manage bracken so that cover is less than 10%

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely that agreement holders will not be allowed to:

- plough, cultivate or re-seed

- apply fertilisers, manures or lime
- carry out supplementary feeding
- use pesticides, including herbicides, except to spot treat or weed wipe or to control injurious weeds or invasive non-natives

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- copies of the Wildfire Risk Assessment and, where required, the Wildfire Response Plan (agreed with fire service) and Wildfire Management Plan - for guidance and example plans see the [Uplands Management Group template](#) or [Forestry Commission's guide](#)
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- consents or permissions connected with this work
- any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record
- photographs of existing bracken

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You should also be aware that at the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic records:

- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related options

The following options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option:

- [BE3 – Management of hedgerows](#)
- [OR2 – Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 – Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement](#)

- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 – Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following section gives advice on carrying out this option successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this option

Tree removal and burning

Some areas where trees are well established will look more like woodland than heathland before management takes place. Remove felled trees from the site – but some wood can be retained on the site as a wildlife habitat if Natural England has given permission.

Thin branches and twigs can be burned on site, but do not burn in species-rich grassland, anthills or on other ecological or archaeological features. Clean the area as soon as possible after burning. Control nettles, thistle, dock, ragwort and other weed species as the site regenerates.

Site maintenance

Supplementary seed or heather brash from neighbouring sites may be needed to help heathland establish if there is not enough seed in the soil. Heathland features should be maintained and encouraged as they develop. Heathland sites have acidic and nutrient-poor soils and need active management to keep their ecological value. Such management will usually combine grazing, cutting and removal and/or burning.

Larger sites will often also include areas of acid grassland or wetland habitats, with the transitional zones between heathland and such habitats being of particular value.

The removal or disturbance of top soil may be needed, to create or maintain some features, such as bare ground. Do not create bare ground on historic or archaeological features. Such features are best protected by implementing an appropriate grazing or cutting regime, and/or preventing scrub and bracken growth.

Further information

The [Forestry Commission](#) should be consulted when developing this option. They will advise on the need for a felling licence or an environmental impact assessment.

Further information is available from:

- Symes, N. and Day, J. 2003. A practical guide to the restoration and management of lowland heathland, The RSPB, Sandy
- guidance on [habitat management for reptiles](#) from the ARC Trust

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

LH3: Creation of heathland from arable or improved grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of heathland from arable or improved grassland option.

How much will be paid

£517 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option lasts for 10 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme.

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Whole or part parcel

Non-rotational

On the following land if soil nutrient levels are low (a soil test will be needed to confirm this when applying, see below):

- arable
- temporary grassland
- improved permanent grassland

The best site is likely to be on well-drained sandy soil, former heathland that, ideally, has only been intensively managed for a few years. Sites are ideally near existing heathlands, so as to increase their extent and decrease fragmentation.

Where this option cannot be used

- on land that has previously been granted 10 years agri-environment funding (such as Higher Level Stewardship) for the creation of lowland heathland

- on areas that are better suited to grassland creation options (where those options should be used instead).

unsuitable sites are likely to:

- have a high pH with high (above 2) residual N, P and K indices
- have been intensively managed for many years
- be small, isolated areas away from existing heathland
- have never been heathland in the past

Features that can be included in this option

The following features can be included if they are part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- bare ground
- open water
- scrub

How this option will benefit the environment

Lowland heathland will be created, which includes mosaics with lowland acid grassland, on arable or improved grassland sites that have largely lost their heathland seed bank.

Heathland species should normally start to appear within 1 to 3 years. The heathland areas in this option will develop a diverse mosaic structure and composition, including undisturbed bare ground and varied vegetation of different ages.

The cover of undesirable species should be low and vegetation that increases when undermanaged (such as bracken, trees, dense grass tussocks) will need to be kept under control. Locally characteristic plant communities and the species they support (such as nightjar, woodlark, smooth snake or sand lizard) will colonise the site, if it's within their range.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- where necessary, carry out hydrological restoration measures, such as reversing drainage on potential wet heath areas by damming ditches or blocking drains
- encourage colonisation by using heather seed (directly or in brush or capsules) or cuttings, preferably from a donor site nearby
- graze or cut the colonising heathland vegetation at set times
- manage undesirable species, such as thistles, willowherbs, bramble and bracken, to keep cover under 10%

Do not:

- plough, cultivate or re-seed
- apply fertilisers, manures or lime
- carry out supplementary feeding
- use pesticides, including herbicides, except to spot treat or weed wipe or to control injurious weeds or invasive non-natives

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- copies of the Wildfire Risk Assessment and, where required, the Wildfire Response Plan (agreed with fire service) and Wildfire Management Plan - for guidance and example plans see the [Uplands Management Group template](#) or [Forestry Commission's guide](#)
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- consents or permissions connected with this work
- any sites grazed will require a grazing activity record
- a standard soil analysis carried out in the last 5 years. The [rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution](#) already require farmers and land managers to carry out soil testing on cultivated agricultural land - you can use these test results to meet the record-keeping requirements for this option.

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You should also be aware that at the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic records:

- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related options

The following options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option:

- [BE3 – Management of hedgerows](#)
- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grass](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 – Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following section gives advice on carrying out this option successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this option.

Take an integrated approach to heathland restoration. This includes considering landscape character and visual effects, archaeology and wildlife. Boundaries with nearby land uses will need to be considered, as will possible scrub clearance, fencing and public access issues.

Further information

Get further information from:

- Symes, N. and Day, J. 2003. A practical guide to the restoration and management of lowland heathland, The RSPB, Sandy
- guidance on [habitat management for reptiles](#) from the ARC Trust

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

LV1: Cattle grid

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the cattle grid item.

How much will be paid

£835 per item.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only when:

- a new management regime is being introduced to a site
- a substantial change in grazing management is needed

Where this item cannot be used

To place cattle grids on:

- public highways
- public rights of way

How this item will benefit the environment

It creates environmental benefits by aiding grazing management. Benefits include better management of priority habitats or landscape enhancement.

Requirements

- agree a specification for the works with Natural England in year 1 of the agreement
- complete the works as set out in the agreed specification within the agreed timescale

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the location where the cattle grid is planned
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work
- specification of agreed works

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

LV2: Livestock handling facilities

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the livestock handling facilities item.

How much will be paid

Up to 80% of actual costs.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only in conjunction with a land management option and if:

- a new management regime is being introduced on the site
- a substantial change in grazing management is needed
- livestock handling facilities are essential for carrying out the associated land management option

Where this item cannot be used

Where:

- existing handling facilities are available
- the site is not grazed
- it will damage historic and archaeological features
- it will damage peat exposures or other sensitive soils
- it will lead to poaching (trampling) damage

How this item will benefit the environment

It will help to improve grazing management.

Requirements

- agree a specification for the works with Natural England
- get at least 3 written quotations for the cost of the works
- complete the works as set out in the approved specification and within the agreed timescale

- erect permanent posts in the locations where mobile facilities will be used
- provide a map of the locations where mobile facilities will be used

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs to show the completed works
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements for more detail

Applicants will need to send the following with their application:

- the 3 quotes for completion of the work
- map of livestock facilities usage and storage locations where mobile facilities are used

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item

How to construct livestock handling facilities

This item will typically fund handling pens for cattle, and holding pens and shedding race for sheep.

Agree on a design and location with the adviser. Choose a design and construction materials that blend in with the local landscape.

When choosing a site, make sure that there is no damage to other features or natural resources. Ensure that poaching or vehicle access do not cause ground disturbance in the vicinity of the site.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

LV3: Hard bases for livestock drinkers

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the hard bases for livestock drinkers item.

How much will be paid

£110 per base.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution caused by farming, on sites where livestock have been excluded from stream or surface waters

Where this item cannot be used

- under livestock housing, roofs or cattle handling facilities that are not associated with feeding or drinking
- within 10m of ditches, streams or waterways
- on historic or archaeological features identified in the HEFER

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will provide hard bases where livestock can stand when drinking. This will reduce the risk of runoff and water pollution from mobilised sediments and organic manures.

Requirements

- dig the soil to a depth of at least 150mm, or down to a naturally occurring hard surface
- extend the dug area around the drinking trough to a width of at least 2.5m
- lay a geotextile membrane over the area before placing the hardcore
- compact the hardcore to a depth of at least 150mm, making sure it is well compacted

- blind the finished hardcore to a depth of at least 50mm
- edge the hard base with timber boards
- make sure the base meets [relevant British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [LV7 - Livestock troughs](#)
- [LV8 - Pipework associated with livestock troughs](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

- make sure the area chosen is a suitable size for the numbers of livestock

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

LV4: Hard bases for livestock feeders

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the hard bases for livestock feeders item.

How much will be paid

£170 per base.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution caused by farming.

Where this item cannot be used

- under livestock housing, roofs or cattle handling facilities that are not associated with feeding or drinking
- within 10m of ditches, streams or waterways
- on historic or archaeological features identified in the HEFER

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will provide hard bases where livestock can stand when feeding. This will reduce the risk of runoff and water pollution from mobilised sediments and organic manures.

Requirements

- dig the soil to a depth of at least 150mm, or down to a naturally occurring hard surface
- extend the dug area around the feeder to a width of at least 2.5m
- lay a geotextile membrane over the area before placing the hardcore
- compact the hardcore to a depth of at least 150mm, making sure it is well compacted
- blind the finished hardcore to a depth of at least 50mm
- edge the hard base with timber boards

- make sure the base meets [relevant British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [LV7 - Livestock troughs](#)
- [LV8 - Pipework associated with livestock troughs](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item:

- make sure the area chosen is a suitable size for the numbers of livestock

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

LV5: Pasture pumps and associated pipework

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the pasture pumps and associated pipework item.

How much will be paid

£220 per pump.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution caused by farming, where livestock have been excluded from stream or surface waters

or:

- in Higher Tier to encourage grazing to help manage and restore habitats (with the agreement of Natural England)

Where this item cannot be used

- to replace existing equipment in the same location

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will provide livestock with an alternative to drinking from watercourses. It will reduce bank erosion, sediment pollution and the faecal contamination of watercourses.

Requirements

- install a low-lift, animal-operated pasture pump
- secure the pump to robust, preserved timber
- construct a hardstanding area around the pump of at least 1m by 1m

- dig the hardstanding area to a depth of at least 150mm, or down to a naturally occurring hard surface
- compact hardcore on a geotextile liner to a depth of at least 150mm
- edge the hardstanding area with preserved timber (no smaller than 150mm by 50mm)
- use medium-density polyethylene pipework with an external diameter of at least 25mm
- make sure that all the joints are made out of brass or plastic and that they are watertight
- make sure that the pump meets [relevant British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following options and items:

- [LV8 - Pipework associated with livestock troughs](#)
- [SW1 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land](#)
- [SW2 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on intensive grassland](#)
- [SW11 - Riparian management strip](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How many cattle the pump can serve

Pasture pumps can lift water up to around 5m and pump to a distance of up to 50m. One pump can serve 10 to 15 cattle.

How to get best results from the pump

It may be necessary to train livestock to use the pump.

What to do with the pump in the winter

- remove the pump and store it during the winter to guard against frost damage
- make sure the pump is available for inspection after it is removed

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

LV6: Ram pumps and associated pipework

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the ram pumps and associated pipework item.

How much will be paid

£1,480 per pump.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution caused by farming, where livestock have been excluded from stream or surface waters

or

- in Higher Tier to encourage grazing to help manage and restore habitats (with the agreement of Natural England)

Where this item cannot be used

- to replace existing equipment in the same location

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will provide livestock with an alternative to drinking from watercourses. It will reduce bank erosion, sediment pollution and the faecal contamination of watercourses.

Requirements

- set the ram pump on a firm base made out of a 150mm thick slab of concrete or a 150mm layer of consolidated hardcore
- install a suitable water collection facility, sediment tank (if necessary), drive pipe (supplying pump), pump chamber, pump, and delivery pipe

- make sure that all the works meet the [relevant British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following options and items:

- [LV8 - Pipework associated with livestock troughs](#)
- [SW1 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land](#)
- [SW2 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on intensive grassland](#)
- [SW11 - Riparian management strip](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to use a ram pump

A ram pump uses the power of flowing water to pump a smaller quantity of water at a much higher pressure. Ram pumps do not need fuel or

electricity as they run entirely on water. Use a ram pump to pump fresh water from a stream to a head tank or reservoir.

Where to install the pump

Install the pump on a site with enough hydraulic head and a consistent water supply throughout the year.

How to operate the pump

Ram pumps can pump over large distances, but they need a buffer tank at the top of the system. The water entering the pump must have a low sediment content, or the resulting abrasion will lead to excessive wear and tear. Reduce the amount of sediment by using a sedimentation tank.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

LV7: Livestock troughs

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the livestock troughs item.

How much will be paid

£110 per trough.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution caused by farming

or:

- where grazing is being reintroduced as part of a Countryside Stewardship management option

Where this item cannot be used

- under housing or roof structures
- within 10m of ditches, streams or waterways
- within 6m of historic or archaeological features identified in the HEFER
- on areas vulnerable to soil erosion as identified on the FER

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will provide livestock with an alternative to drinking from watercourses and ponds. It will reduce bank erosion, sediment pollution and the faecal contamination of watercourses. It is not for replacing existing troughs.

Requirements

- make sure the trough is made of galvanised steel, or concrete, spray-moulded glass-reinforced cement (GRC), or polyethylene

- connect the trough to a water supply or to supply water from a bowser on a regular basis
- make sure the trough has a ball valve and service box and complies with BS3445
- meet the [Water Supply \(Water Fittings\) Regulations 1999](#) if using a mains water supply
- make sure the trough meets [relevant British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following options and items:

- [LV5 - Pasture pumps and associated pipework](#)
- [LV6 - Ram pumps and associated pipework](#)
- [LV8 - Pipework associated with livestock troughs](#)
- [SW1 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land](#)
- [SW2 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on intensive grassland](#)
- all other livestock grazing options

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to choose a site

Place the trough:

- on hard-standing or on well-drained soil to avoid unnecessary trampling (poaching), erosion or runoff
- away from features through which organic manures and sediment could enter waterways

How to maintain the site

To meet scheme requirements, do not:

- allow overflow or leaks to contribute to runoff, ponding or erosion in the field
- damage historic or environmental features identified in the HEFER

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

LV8: Pipework associated with livestock troughs

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the pipework associated with livestock troughs item.

How much will be paid

£2.65 per metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution caused by farming, where livestock have been excluded from stream or surface waters

or:

- with a Countryside Stewardship management or creation option, on a site where a new trough is needed to meet grazing requirements

Where this item cannot be used

- to replace existing equipment in the same location
- under housing or roof structures
- within 10m of watercourses
- on areas vulnerable to soil erosion as identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER)
- within 6m of historic or archaeological features identified in the HEFER

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will provide livestock with an alternative to drinking from watercourses. It will reduce bank erosion, sediment pollution and the faecal contamination of watercourses.

Requirements

- use pipework made of medium-density blue polyethylene with an external diameter of at least 25mm
- make sure that all the joints are made of brass or plastic and that they are watertight
- bury the pipework below cultivation depth and to at least 600mm (or as determined by the local water supplier)
- cover the pipe with a tubular steel guard or sleeve pipe if it crosses an open ditch
- lay the pipe 600mm below the ditch to allow for ditch cleaning
- lay the pipe on a 75mm bed of sand if it crosses farm tracks and then cover it with a further 100mm of sand, before overlaying it with backfill
- make sure that the pipe meets the [relevant British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants options and items

This item can be used on the same area as the following options and items:

- [LV5 - Pasture pumps and associated pipework](#)
- [LV6 - Ram pumps and associated pipework](#)
- [LV7 - Livestock troughs](#)
- [SW1 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land](#)
- [SW2 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on intensive grassland](#)
- all other livestock grazing options

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to maintain the site

To meet scheme requirements, do not:

- allow overflow or leaks to contribute to runoff, ponding or erosion in the field
- damage any historic or environmental features identified in the HEFER

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OP1: Overwintered stubble

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the overwintered stubble option.

How much will be paid

£116 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part parcels in rotation on:

- land registered as organic or 'in conversion' with a Defra-licensed organic control body
- land only on stubble that follows the harvest of:
 - land cereals (not maize)
 - oilseed rape
 - linseed

Where this option cannot be used

- Parcels at risk of soil erosion or runoff (as identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER)).

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate the following options on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It creates a winter food source for seed-eating birds, which feed on spilt grain and the seeds of broad-leaved weeds, and a foraging habitat for brown hare.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

After the harvest there will be stubble until mid-February. Within the stubble there will be a green overwinter cover crop between 10% and 50% of the option area.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Apply any fertilisers, manures or lime to the stubble
- Top or graze the stubble
- Cultivate the stubble after harvest

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- bale, chop or spread straw after harvest
- keep the stubble from harvest until 15 February
- establish a green overwinter cover crop (such as mustard or fodder radish) on at least 10%, but not more than 50%, of the option area
- record the location of this option on your annual claim

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out

above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- A valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option at application and on your annual claim – RPA will not request this information if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim
- The location of the rotational option

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Rotating this option

This is a rotational option, it can move between eligible parcels but maintain the same total area (hectarage) each year. Cover crops should be located (on up to 50% of the option area) where they will help to reduce any risk of soil erosion. To avoid destroying the stubble, the cover crop must be established using only shallow cultivation, and non-inversion techniques.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OP2: Wild bird seed mixture

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the wild bird seed mixture option.

How much will be paid

£640 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier, on whole or part parcels in rotation on:

- land registered as organic or 'in conversion' with a Defra-licensed organic control body
- land that has been sown to grass for fewer than 7 years

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate the following options on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides important food resources (small seeds) for farmland birds, especially in autumn and winter.

The flowering plants will benefit insects including bumblebees, solitary bees, butterflies and hoverflies.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the spring or summer, the seed mix, containing at least 6 small seed-bearing crops (not maize), will be established in blocks or strips of at least 6 metres (m) wide and between 0.4ha and 5ha in size. For 2 year

mixes, during the second spring, biennial plants, such as kale, will show continued growth and development.

Throughout the summer the plants will grow and flower.

By autumn the plants will set seed. This will provide the much-needed supply of small seeds throughout the winter, until at least mid-February.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Allow an individual crop group to exceed 90% of the total mix by weight
- Sow the following crops:
 - artichokes
 - canary grass
 - giant and intermediate sorghum
 - maize
 - miscanthus
 - sweet clover
 - tic beans

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- make sure blocks or strips are at least 6m wide and a minimum of 0.4ha in size - the maximum individual plot size is 5ha
- establish by sowing a seed mix containing at least 6 seed bearing crops between 15 February and 15 June. Seed mixes may contain a maximum of 3 of the following cereal crops:
 - barley
 - oats

- rye
- triticale
- wheat
- make sure the mix complies with organic certification rules. Apply to your organic control body for a derogation if organic seed is unavailable
- re-establish 1-year mixes annually and 2-year mixes every other year to maintain seed production
- re-sow winter bird plots that fail to establish
- retain winter bird food plots until 15 February each year

For advice on what to sow and re-sow, read the [Additional guidance and advice](#) section.

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Seed invoices
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- A valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option at application and on your annual claim – the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will not request this information if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

Use this option on most areas of the farm but mixtures work best in sunny locations and on fertile sites.

Avoid planting underneath overhanging trees or next to shading woodland. This leads to poorer establishment, growth and seed production.

You should place winter bird food mixes next to a field edge but they can extend into the field. Leave access to surrounding crops to allow for management.

Block and plot sizes

Creating wider and bigger areas of winter bird food allows more seeds to remain undiscovered for longer, which extends their value well into winter.

Smaller areas tend to suffer from birds eating all the food within a short time.

What to sow

Sow plants that will provide an extended supply of seeds for farmland birds from autumn into late winter.

Annual mixtures can include a range of cereal, brassica or other small-seeded crops such as:

- dwarf sunflower
- fodder radish
- gold of pleasure
- linseed
- mustard
- quinoa
- red millet
- spring barley
- spring oats
- spring triticale
- spring wheat
- white millet

Include biennial crops such as kale, stubble turnip or teasel in 2-year mixtures.

Make sure a single crop group, such as cereals or brassicas, is not more than 90% of the total seed mix by weight. The table below shows the crops most commonly sown in winter bird food seed mixes.

Crop group	Crops most commonly sown in winter bird food seed mixes
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Cereal	Barley
--------	--------

Cereal	Oats
--------	------

Cereal	Red millet
--------	------------

Cereal	Rye
--------	-----

Cereal	Triticale
--------	-----------

Cereal	Wheat
--------	-------

Cereal	White millet
--------	--------------

Brassica	Fodder radish
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Brassica	Forage rape
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Brassica	Gold of pleasure
----------	------------------

Brassica	Kale
----------	------

Brassica	Mustard
----------	---------

Brassica	Oilseed rape
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Brassica	Stubble turnip
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Other	Buckwheat
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Other	Chicory
-------	---------

Other	Dwarf sunflower
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Other	Linseed
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Other	Teasel
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To minimise the build-up of diseases, pests and weeds over time consider alternating between sowing cereal and brassica-based mixes on non-rotational plots every few years.

Structural crops

Structural crops that predominantly provide cover, and/or support for weaker stemmed crops such as barley and millet (which can be prone to lodging), can be included in the seed mix.

The following structural crops can be included:

- chicory
- dwarf sorghum
- Japanese reed millet
- sweet fennel

To ensure that these structural crops do not adversely compete with the main seed-bearing crops the following maximum seed rates are recommended:

- chicory - 0.3 kg/ha
- dwarf sorghum - 5 kg/ha
- Japanese reed millet - 2 kg/ha
- sweet fennel - 1 kg/ha

Where two or more structural crops are included in a seed mix reduce the maximum seed rate for each structural crop by 50%.

When and how to sow

Establish the plot between 1 March and 15 June, but ideally between mid-March and early June.

Create a fine and firm seedbed with seed sown at a depth between 1.5 centimetres (cm) and 2.5cm. Moisture and warmth will help any brassicas establish quickly to protect against flea beetle damage.

Managing the option

Apply organic fertilisers to help crops grow away from pest damage and produce plenty of seed.

Remember that winter bird food should be in place until at least 31 December in year 5 of the agreement.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OP3: Supplementary feeding for farmland birds

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the supplementary feeding for farmland birds option.

How much will be paid

£494 per tonne for every 2 hectares (ha) of wild bird seed mixture.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier only:

- on land registered as organic or 'in conversion' with a Defra-licensed organic control body
- when a qualifying area of OP2 wild bird seed mixture option is included in the agreement (you can apply for 1 tonne of OP3 supplementary feeding for every 2ha of OP2 Wild bird seed mixture)

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate the following options on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)
- [SP9 Threatened species supplement](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

Winter supplementary feeding

It provides important food sources for farmland birds in late winter and early spring on arable and mixed farms, by supplementing crops of winter bird food with additional seed, such as cereal, oilseed and specialised grains.

It gives the birds food through the 'hungry gap' (the late winter period when seed is in short supply) and as they enter the breeding season.

Ideally there will be seed-eating farmland birds using the feeding areas from December to April, including:

- yellowhammer
- grey partridge
- tree sparrow
- corn bunting
- linnet
- turtle dove (seen during the spring and summer) Target birds will be seen more frequently on the farm in the spring and there will be increased breeding success there.

Summer supplementary feeding

You can also use this option in combination with the [SP9 Threatened species supplement](#) to deliver summer supplementary feeding for turtle doves in priority areas.

You can find more information on how to carry out summer supplementary feeding for turtle doves in the [Where to use this option](#), [Requirements](#) and [Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option](#) sections on GOV.UK for [SP9](#) .

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

From 1 December to 30 April, there will be about 25 kilograms (kg) of both cereals and other small seeds (see recommended management for details of the seed mix) scattered once a week in multiple locations. For every 1 tonne of supplementary feed, there will be 2 feeding stations supplying 500kg each (or if there is less than 1 tonne of supplementary feed, it will be split equally between 2 separate feeding stations).

The seed will be scattered in areas which are firm and free-draining, such as farm tracks or hard standing areas, and in close proximity to enhanced overwinter stubbles, game cover or wild bird seed mixtures.

Keep a feeding diary which includes details of mixture used (weight of components and cost), dates of feeding, method of feeding (hopper or spreading), amount of feed, and the location of feeding areas.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Use hoppers to supply more than 10% of the total amount of feed provided during the specified feeding period
- Use tailings (small seeds and chaff removed from the harvested crop) to supply more than 30% by weight of the supplementary feed
- Use a non-organic seed mix unless organic seed is unavailable, in which case you must apply to the organic control body for a derogation.

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended Management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- make sure the winter supplementary feeding mix includes both cereals (not maize) and other small seeds. The small seeds component must be a minimum of 30% of the total mix by weight and contain at least three of the following, with no individual species exceeding 50% of the total small seed component by weight:
 - canary seed
 - linseed
 - oilseed rape
 - red millet
 - sunflower hearts
 - white millet
- spread the winter supplementary feeding mix at a rate of 25kg per feeding station once a week for 20 weeks between 1 December until 30 April. You can vary the amount to be fed by up to 5kg per week to match demand as necessary

- the feeding stations do not need to be located in the same areas as OP2 Wild bird seed mixture. You can choose suitable locations as listed in the Aims of this option.
- make sure the mix meets organic standards. Apply to the control body for a derogation if organic seed is unavailable.

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Dates of feeding
- Method of feeding (hopper or spreading)
- Amount of feed spread on each date
- The location of the feeding areas
- A valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option at application and on your annual claim – RPA will not request this information if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

- None

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OP4: Multi species ley

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the multi species ley option.

How much will be paid

£115 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier Whole or part parcel Rotational

Only:

- on land registered as organic or 'in conversion' with a Defra-licensed organic control body.
- if the land has been sown to grass it must be for fewer than 7 years.

Related Mid-Tier options

These options can be located on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides a valuable year-round habitat and food for farmland wildlife such as pollinators and farmland birds.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

A multi-species ley will be established in the first year containing at least 5 grass species, 3 legume species and 3 herb species. Rotational cutting or grazing will ensure there are flowering species throughout the summer months.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Allow the grass component to exceed 75% of the seed mix by weight (measured in kilograms per hectare).

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- in year 1 of the agreement, establish a multi-species ley containing at least:
 - 5 grass species
 - 3 legume species
 - 3 herb species
 - once established, manage with rotational cutting or grazing
 - for 50% of the option:
 - cut or graze between 1 April and 15 May
 - do not cut or graze this area again until 1 August
 - for the remaining 50% of the option area:
 - cut or graze between 15 May and 30 June
 - do not cut or graze this area again until 15 September
 - check for breeding birds before operating machinery or carrying out other activities which may disturb breeding birds or damage their nests. The breeding season tends to run from mid-March until mid-July, but it can start earlier and finish later, depending on the species and the weather.

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may

have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- A valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option at application and on your annual claim – the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will not request this information if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item. As this is a rotational option, it can be moved between eligible parcels but the same total area (hectarage) should be maintained each year.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OP5: Undersown cereal

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the undersown cereal option.

How much will be paid

£86 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

- Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier
- Whole or part parcel
- Rotational
- Only on:
 - land registered as ‘fully organic’ or ‘in conversion’ with a Defra-licensed organic control body

Related Mid-Tier options

The following options can be located on the same area as this option.

- [HS3 – Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on historic and archaeological features](#)
- [HS9 - Restricted depth crop establishment to protect archaeology under an arable rotation](#)
- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

Provides a habitat that benefits animals including invertebrates and birds that forage within the under sown cereal crop.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

By late spring, there will be a cereal crop (not maize) under sown with a grass/flower-rich legume ley.

Prohibited Activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- establish an autumn or spring sown cereal crop (not maize) under sown by 30 April with a grass/flower-rich legume ley

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- A valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option at application and on your annual claim – the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will not request this information if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item. As this is a rotational option, it may be moved between eligible parcels, but the same total area (hectarage) should be maintained each year.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OR1: Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the organic conversion (improved permanent grassland) option.

How much will be paid

£75 per hectare (ha) per year for up to 2 years

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier Whole parcel

Only on:

- land registered as 'in conversion' with a Defra-licensed organic control body improved and semi-improved permanent grassland
- arable land, where the land is to be reverted to permanent grassland as part of a Countryside Stewardship agreement

Where this option cannot be used

- On parcels that have previously been registered with an organic control body by the applicant
- On parcels for which the applicant has previously received conversion aid

Related Mid-Tier options

- The [Organic management – improved permanent grassland option \(OT1\)](#), should follow on from this option, when the organic conversion period is completed
- Other Countryside Stewardship options and supplements relevant to grassland management may be used on the same land area where eligibility rules allow

How this option will benefit the environment

It helps to convert permanent grassland from conventional management to organic management.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Using the Conversion plan as agreed with an organic control body, for the land and associated stock, Organic standards will be followed from the start of organic conversion to the end of the agreement.

All land will complete conversion and be registered as 'fully organic' before the end of the agreement.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out

above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A copy of the conversion plan agreed with the organic control body
- A fully completed viability plan and evidence land is improved permanent grassland or rough grazing If you have undertaken a viability assessment with your application, you must start your organic conversion process and submit a copy of the conversion plan (agreed with the organic control body) if requested. You will need to supply a valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option on your annual payment claim if requested. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will not request the above information if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim.

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Improved and semi-improved grassland

To qualify as improved or semi-improved grassland, **at least 2** of the following need to apply.

- Cover of both ryegrass and white clover is more than 10%
- The sward is not species rich (15 or fewer species per square metre, including grasses)
- There is a low cover (less than 30%) of wildflowers and sedges, excluding white clover, buttercup, injurious weeds Permanent ineligible features may be eligible as part of the option area if registered with a control body.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OR2: Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the organic conversion (unimproved permanent grassland) option.

How much will be paid

£50 per hectare (ha) per year for up to 2 years

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier Whole parcel

Only on:

- land registered as 'in conversion' with a Defra-licensed organic control body by 15 May in the year when the option starts in the agreement
- unimproved permanent grassland and rough grazing that is below the moorland line

Where this option cannot be used

- On parcels that have previously been registered with an organic control body by the applicant
- On parcels for which the applicant has previously received conversion aid

Related Mid-Tier options

The Organic management, unimproved permanent grassland option (OT2), should follow on from this option, when the organic conversion period is completed. Other Countryside Stewardship options and supplements relevant to grassland management may be used on the same land area where eligibility rules allow.

How this option will benefit the environment

This option supports conversion of unimproved grassland to organic management. If successful there will be an increase in the overall area of land registered and managed as organic.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Using the Conversion plan as agreed with an organic control body, for the land and associated stock, Organic standards will be followed from the start of organic conversion to the end of the agreement.

All land will complete conversion and be registered as 'fully organic' before the end of the agreement.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you employ best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out

above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A copy of the conversion plan agreed with the organic control body
- A fully completed viability plan and evidence land is improved permanent grassland or rough grazing

If you have undertaken a viability assessment with your application, you must start your organic conversion process and submit a copy of the conversion plan (agreed with the organic control body) if requested. You will need to supply a valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option on your annual payment claim if requested. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will not request the above information if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim.

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Unimproved grassland

To qualify as unimproved grassland, **at least 2** of the following need to apply.

- Cover of both ryegrass and white clover is less than 10%
- The sward is species rich (more than 15 species per square metre, including grasses)
- There is a high cover (more than 30%) of wildflowers and sedges, excluding white clover, creeping buttercup or injurious weeds Non-agricultural features or areas may be eligible as part of the option area if registered with a control body.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OR3: Organic conversion – rotational land

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the the organic conversion (rotational land) option.

How much will be paid

£175 per hectare (ha) per year, for up to 2 years

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier Whole or part parcel Rotational

Only on:

- land registered as ‘in conversion’ with a Defra-licensed organic control body by 15th May in the year when the option starts in the agreement
- arable land, temporary grassland or on permanent grassland where cultivation is part of the conversion plan

Where this option cannot be used

- On parcels that have previously been registered with an organic control body by the applicant
- On parcels for which the applicant has previously received conversion aid

Related Mid-Tier options

The Organic management, rotational land option (OT3), should follow on from this option when the organic conversion period is completed. Other Countryside Stewardship options and supplements for rotational land and arable land may be used on the same land area, where eligibility rules allow.

How this option will benefit the environment

Helps to convert land under conventional management to organic management. If successful there will be an increase in the overall area of land registered and managed as organic.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Using the Conversion plan as agreed with an organic control body, for the land and associated stock, Organic standards will be followed from the start of organic conversion to the end of the agreement.

All land will complete conversion and be registered as 'fully organic' before the end of the agreement.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A copy of the conversion plan agreed with the organic control body
- A fully completed viability plan and evidence land is improved permanent grassland or rough grazing if you have undertaken a viability

assessment with your application, you must start your organic conversion process and submit a copy of the conversion plan (agreed with the organic control body) if requested. You will need to supply a valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option on your annual payment claim if requested. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will not request the above information if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim.

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item. Permanent ineligible features may be eligible as part of the option area if registered with a control body.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OR4: Organic conversion - horticulture

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the organic conversion - horticulture option.

How much will be paid

£400 per hectare (ha) per year, for up to 2 years.

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier Rotational
Whole or part parcel

Only on:

- land registered as 'in conversion' with a Defra-licensed organic control body by 15 May in the year when the option starts in the agreement
- arable land, temporary grassland or on permanent grassland where cultivation is part of the conversion plan

Where this option cannot be used

- On parcels that have previously been registered with an organic control body by the applicant
- On parcels for which you've previously received conversion aid

Related Mid-Tier options

The Organic management, – horticultural land option (OT4), should follow on from this option, when the organic conversion period is completed. Other Countryside Stewardship options and supplements relevant to arable and rotational land management may be used on the same land area where eligibility rules allow.

How this option will benefit the environment

It helps to convert rotational land used to produce vegetables or salads into organic status land. If successful there will be an increase in the overall area of land used to produce organic products.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

There will be at least 1 horticultural crop in each field parcel. There will be a maximum area of 20ha of this option in the agreement.

During the rotation at least 40% of the area entered for this option will be in horticultural production.

Using the Conversion plan as agreed with an organic control body, for the land and associated stock, Organic standards will be followed from the start of organic conversion to the end of the agreement.

All land will complete conversion and be registered as 'fully organic' before the end of the agreement.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- maintain the total hectareage (area) that was committed to at the beginning of the agreement for the whole of the agreement
- keep at least 40% of the area entered for this option in horticultural production with produce for human consumption at any single stage of the rotation

Keeping Records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A copy of the conversion plan agreed with the organic control body
- A fully completed viability plan and evidence land is improved permanent grassland or rough grazing

If you have undertaken a viability assessment with your application, you must start your organic conversion process and submit a copy of the conversion plan (agreed with the organic control body) if requested.

You will need to supply a valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option on your annual payment claim if requested. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will not request the above information if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim.

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item. Permanent ineligible features may be eligible as part of the option area if registered with a control body.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OR5: Organic conversion - top fruit

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the organic conversion - top fruit option.

How much will be paid

£450 per hectare (ha) per year, for up to 3 years.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on whole parcels on:

- land registered as 'in conversion' with a Defra-licensed organic control body
- parcels that are managed primarily for the production of top fruit (such as apples, pears and plums) and permanent bush crops (such as gooseberries and redcurrants)
- orchards fully stocked at the appropriate spacing for the species and variety of fruit tree or bush

Where this option cannot be used

- On parcels that you have previously registered with an organic control body
- On parcels for which you have previously received conversion aid
- On orchards that are used for the production of alcoholic drinks
- On orchards that are not in commercial production

Related Mid-Tier options

The Organic management, top fruit option (OT5), should follow on from this option when the organic conversion period is completed. Other Countryside Stewardship options and supplements relevant to orchard management may be used on the same land area where eligibility rules allow.

How this option will benefit the environment

Helps recently planted and traditional standard orchards (and permanent fruit or berry bushes) convert to organic management. If successful there will be an increase in the overall land area registered as organic, providing a range of environmental and public benefits.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

All trees will be protected from damage, including by animals. Newly planted trees will have a 1 metre (m) diameter circle around the base clear of vegetation for 3 years after planting.

Using the Conversion plan as agreed with an organic control body, for the land and associated stock, Organic standards will be followed from the start of organic conversion to the end of the agreement.

All land will complete conversion and be registered as 'fully organic' before the end of the agreement.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- protect trees to prevent damage from livestock and wild animals
- manage tree guards to prevent any damage to growing trees

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A conversion map showing the planting spacing and species within the orchard – you can mark this on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)
- Copies of fruit sale receipts to show that the orchards are in commercial production and not used for the production of alcoholic drinks
- Either a copy of the conversion plan agreed with the organic control body or, if not available, a fully completed viability plan
- Photographs of the trees entered into this option
- A valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option. We will not ask to see this if you have already sent it with your Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim.

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Permanent ineligible features may be eligible as part of the option area if registered with a control body.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OT1: Organic land management - improved permanent grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the organic land management - improved permanent grassland option.

How much will be paid

£40 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier

Whole parcel

Only on:

- land registered as 'fully organic' by a Defra-licensed organic control body
- improved and semi-improved permanent grassland
- arable land, where the land is to be reverted to permanent grassland as part of a Countryside Stewardship agreement

Related Mid-Tier options

Other Countryside Stewardship options and supplements relevant to grassland management may be used on the same land area where eligibility rules allow.

How this option will benefit the environment

Maintains land under organic management, providing a wide range of environmental and public benefits.

If successful associated benefits will increase as the organic area is maintained.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Organic standards will be followed for the duration of the agreement.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option at application and on their annual claim. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will not request this information if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim
- Records to show the land is improved or semi-improved grassland

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Improved and semi-improved grassland

To qualify as improved or semi-improved grassland, **at least 2** of these need to apply:

- cover of both ryegrass and white clover is more than 10%
- the sward is not species rich (15 or fewer species per square metre, including grasses)
- there is a low cover (less than 30%) of wildflowers and sedges, excluding white clover, buttercup, injurious weeds

Permanent ineligible features may be eligible as part of the option area if registered with a control body.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OT2: Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland option.

How much will be paid

£20 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier

Whole parcel

Only on:

- land registered as 'fully organic' by a Defra-licenced organic control body
- unimproved permanent grassland and rough grazing that is below the moorland line

Related Mid-Tier options

Other Countryside Stewardship options and supplements relevant to grassland management may be used on the same land area where eligibility rules allow.

How this option will benefit the environment

It maintains unimproved grassland under organic management, providing a wide range of environmental and public benefits.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Organic standards will be followed for the duration of the agreement.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option at application and on their annual claim. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will not request this information if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim
- Records to show the land is unimproved permanent grassland (see [Permanent grassland assessment form](#)) or rough grazing

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Unimproved grassland

To qualify as unimproved grassland, **at least 2** of these need to apply:

- cover of both ryegrass and white clover is less than 10%
- the sward is species rich (more than 15 species per square metre, including grasses)
- there is a high cover (more than 30%) of wildflowers and sedges, excluding white clover, buttercup, injurious weeds

Non-agricultural features or areas may be eligible as part of the option area if registered with a control body.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OT3: Organic land management - rotational land

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the organic land management - rotational land option.

How much will be paid

£65 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier

Whole or part parcel

Rotational

Only on:

- land registered as 'fully organic' by a Defra-licensed organic control body
- land parcels that have been cultivated in the preceding 7 years

Related Mid-Tier options

Other Countryside Stewardship options and supplements relevant to arable and rotational land management may be used on the same land area where eligibility rules allow.

How this option will benefit the environment

Maintains land under organic management, providing a wide range of environmental and public benefits.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Organic standards will be followed for the duration of the agreement.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option at application and on their annual claim - RPA will not request this information if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim
- Farm records to show that any permanent grassland parcels entered for this option have been cultivated within the previous 7 years

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Permanent ineligible features may be eligible as part of the option area if registered with a control body.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OT4: Organic land management - horticulture

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the organic land management - horticulture option.

How much will be paid

£200 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier

Whole or part-parcel

Rotational

Only on:

- land registered as 'fully organic' by a Defra-licensed organic control body
- land parcels that have been cultivated in the preceding 7 years

Related Mid-Tier options

Other Countryside Stewardship options and supplements relevant to arable and rotational land management may be used on the same land area where eligibility rules allow.

How this option will benefit the environment

Maintains land under organic management, providing a wide range of environmental and public benefits.

If successful you should see these benefits increase and the organic area maintained.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

There will be at least 1 horticultural crop in each field parcel. There will be a maximum area of 20ha of this option in the agreement.

During the rotation at least 40% of the area entered for this option will be in horticultural production.

Organic standards will be adhered to for the duration of the agreement.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- maintain the total hectareage (area) that was committed to at the beginning of the agreement for the whole of the agreement
- keep at least 40% of the area entered for this option in horticultural production with produce for human consumption at any single stage of the rotation

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out

above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option at application and on their annual claim
- An up-to-date conversion plan approved by an organic control body
- Farm records to show that any permanent grassland parcels entered for this option have been cultivated within the previous 7 years

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) will not request an organic certificate and schedule, or a conversion plan if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim.

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Permanent ineligible features may be eligible as part of the option area if registered with a control body.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OT5: Organic land management - top fruit

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the organic land management - top fruit option.

How much will be paid

£300 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on whole parcels only on:

- land registered as 'fully organic' by a Defra-licensed organic control body
- parcels that are managed primarily for the production of top fruit (such as apples, pears and plums) and permanent bush crops (such as gooseberries and redcurrants)
- orchards that are fully stocked at the appropriate spacing for the species and variety of the fruit tree or bush

Where this option cannot be used

- On orchards that are used for the production of alcoholic drinks
- On orchards that are not in commercial production

Related Mid-Tier options

Where eligibility rules allow, you can use other Countryside Stewardship options and supplements relevant to orchard management on the same land area.

How this option will benefit the environment

It maintains top fruit orchards under organic management, providing a range of environmental and public benefits.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

All trees will be protected from damage, including by animals. Newly planted trees will have a 1 metre (m) diameter circle around the base clear of vegetation for 3 years after planting.

Organic standards will be adhered to for the duration of the agreement.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- protect trees to prevent damage from livestock and wild animals
- manage tree guards to prevent any damage to growing trees

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option – we will not request this information if you have already supplied it for a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) claim
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Photographs of the trees entered into this option
- Copies of sales receipts for fruit crops

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Permanent ineligible features may be eligible as part of the option area if registered with a control body.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

OT6: Organic land management - enclosed rough grazing

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the organic land management - enclosed rough grazing option.

How much will be paid

£8 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier

Whole parcel

Only on:

- land registered as 'in conversion' or 'fully organic' by a Defra-licensed organic control body
- rough grazing in enclosed parcels that are:
 - less than 15ha
 - within a severely disadvantaged area (SDA)
 - above the moorland line

Where this option cannot be used

- On the same area as any other organic land management or conversion option

Related Mid-Tier options

The following options can be located on the same area as this option.

- [UP1 - Enclosed rough grazing](#)
- [UP2 - Management of rough grazing for birds](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

Maintains organic management of enclosed rough grazing parcels no greater than 15ha within the SDA and above the moorland line. This creates a wide range of environmental and public goods.

If successful applicants should see these benefits increase and organic management maintained.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Organic standards will be adhered to for the duration of the agreement. For land in conversion, comply with organic standards from the start of organic conversion to the end of the agreement.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out

above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A valid organic certificate and schedule for all the parcels entered into this option at application and on your annual claim
- For any land in conversion, either a copy of the conversion plan agreed with the organic control body or a fully completed viability plan

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Permanent ineligible features may be eligible as part of the option area if registered with a control body.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

PA1: Implementation plan

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the implementation plan item.

How much will be paid

£1,100 per plan

Where to use this item

- as a stand-alone agreement to aid an application
- only with written permission from Natural England

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful there will be a completed plan detailing how to carry out the work for an option and how to meet the requirements of that option.

Requirements

- produce an implementation plan following a brief from Natural England
- send a copy of the completed plan for approval by Natural England

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- a copy of the implementation plan
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Mid Tier manual](#) for more detail

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Creating an implementation plan

Make sure that the implementation plan follows a set format provided by Natural England. This format will depend on the option or items that the plan covers.

Use this item to fund a water management plan where capital items and land management options are needed to redirect or manage water running across the holding.

PA2: Feasibility study

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the feasibility study item.

How much will be paid

Up to 100% of actual costs.

Where to use this item

It is available as a stand-alone agreement to aid an application for Higher Tier.

It can only be used with written permission from Natural England to do so.

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful this item will help plan how to protect or manage habitats, features and species.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- produce and agree with Natural England a detailed specification for the feasibility study
- provide at least 3 written quotations for preparing the study, identifying associated costs - agree the selected quotation with Natural England
- commission the feasibility study from the selected provider and make sure that it is completed in line with the specification by an agreed date
- submit a copy of the completed feasibility study for approval by Natural England with the claim

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work

- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is not available
- a copy of the feasibility study

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- the 3 quotes for completion of the work

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Feasibility study format

Follow Natural England's set format for the feasibility study. The format will depend on the option or items that the study covers.

PA3: Woodland management plan

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the woodland management plan item.

How much will be paid

Threshold	Payment
First 100 hectares (ha)	£20 per ha (minimum payment £1000)
Over 100 ha	£10 per ha

The woodland management plan must cover all the woodland on the holding, including all newly planted woodland. The amount paid will be calculated on the entire eligible area of woodland on the holding. This calculation can include up to an additional 20% of newly planted woodland (this means woodland that is under 10 years old at the time of application). Areas over 20% will be deducted from the total area for payment but must still be covered in the management plan.

Where to use this item

Only on woodland.

Where this item cannot be used

On woodland:

- that is less than 3ha in total
- where there is already a Forestry Commission (FC) approved management plan and only minor changes are needed to meet the current UK Forestry Standard (UKFS)

How this item will benefit the environment

It will help with the cost of producing a management plan for existing woodland that complies with the standard set by UKFS.

A woodland management plan will help:

- develop and communicate objectives and work proposals for the woodland
- clearly demonstrate how a woodland area will be managed sustainably and monitored

Requirements

- produce a detailed 10 year management plan using the FC template (includes guidance), that complies with the standard set by UKFS
- make sure the plan covers all woodland on the holding or, for larger holdings, all woodland within the same landscape setting

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- Forestry Commission Woodland Management Plan approval letter
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Further information

See [Funding for woodland management plans](#) to find out more about the grant and how to apply.

RP1: Resurfacing of gateways

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the resurfacing of gateways item.

How much will be paid

£92 per gateway.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only in areas targeted to reduce water pollution from agriculture

Where this item cannot be used

- where there are archaeological or historic features identified in the HEFER
- where a public right of way passes through the gateway without relevant advice or consent from the Highways Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will provide a strengthened surface at the field gateway. This will reduce ponding on either side of the gateways caused by soil compaction. If successful there will be reduced surface runoff, soil erosion and risk of diffuse water pollution.

Requirements

- excavate the full width of the gateway by the full length which the gate opens into the field when it is at 90 degrees
- excavate to a minimum depth of 150mm or until there is a naturally occurring hard surface
- remove the excavated soil from the gateway area and spread it on the verges of the field track, allowing for drainage
- overlay the excavated area with a geotextile membrane, then fill with aggregate (hard core) to a minimum consolidated depth of 150mm

- all capital works carried out must meet the relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Do not:

- spread the excavated soil on any environmental or historic features as identified in the HEFER

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing gateway before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, applicants must seek advice or consent from the Highways Authority if a public right of way passes through the gateway. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents or permissions with your payment claim.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following item:

- [RP2 - Gateway relocation](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Materials and area of resurfacing

When carrying out the work:

- the area to be resurfaced should be appropriate for the size of the gateway and the type of traffic that will move through it
- compact each layer of hard core well down before adding another layer, making sure each layer is no more than 150mm thick
- advice should be taken from the Environment Agency (EA) if road planings, waste or recycled materials will be used as hard core

Further information

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See more information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP2: Gateway relocation

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the gateway relocation item.

How much will be paid

£340 per gateway.

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants where all of the following apply:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- where a gateway is acting as a conduit for water movement
- to move gateways associated with farm machinery or livestock

Where this item cannot be used

Without relevant advice or consent if the existing or new gateway provides access to:

- a historic routeway
- a Public Right of Way
- a highway
- a byway open to all traffic (BOAT)

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will move the gateway to a suitable location where it will not act as a pathway for water runoff. This will prevent polluted surface water from leaving fields through gateways and help to reduce risk of soil erosion and diffuse pollution.

Requirements

You must:

- leave the existing gate posts where they are, keeping any existing stone or slate posts that are traditional landscape or historic features

- re-route the existing trackways associated with the gateway and make good the disused sections
- gap up the old gateway using materials that match the character of the rest of the boundary
- use new hanging and shutting posts in the new gateway
- carry out all capital works to the relevant [British Standards](#) - see copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

Before you apply you must get consents and advice from:

- the local planning authority (if the new gateway provides access to public highways or byways open to all traffic)
- the Highways Authority (if a public right of way passes through the existing or new gateway)
- a historic environment specialist (if the gateway is on a historic routeway)

You do not need to provide these with your application, but you will need to send consents or permissions with your payment claim.

You must keep the following records and supply them with your annual payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work
- consents and/or advice for works if required (as listed above)

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work (in addition to the ones listed above)
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

You can use this item on the same area as the following items:

- [BN1 - Stone-faced bank repair](#)
- [BN2 - Stone-faced bank restoration](#)
- [BN3 - Earth bank creation](#)
- [BN8 - Hedgerow supplement - casting up](#)
- [BN10 - Hedgerow supplement - top binding and staking](#)
- [BN11 - Planting new hedges](#)
- [FG1 - Fencing](#)
- [FG2 - Sheep netting](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to reduce surface water flows

You may need to carry out other work to reduce surface water runoff, including:

- relieving compaction
- cultivating crops across slopes
- using temporary water storage areas to capture surface flows
- positioning new trackways where they do not attract surface water flows
- positioning cross-drains along the track if new trackways cannot be created

How to maintain the local character

Restore the old gateway so that it blends in with the rest of the boundary. For example, new hedging should match the species mix of the existing hedge.

Further information

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP3: Watercourse crossings

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the watercourse crossings item.

How much will be paid

£300 per crossing.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only in areas targeted to reduce water pollution from agriculture

Where this item cannot be used

- where there are environmental, archaeological or historic features identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency or Local Planning Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

Providing a watercourse crossing for livestock and machinery will reduce the disturbance to the watercourse, which will help reduce sedimentation.

Requirements

- construct a ford at least 4m wide
- include a semi-circular, straight or oblique group of toe stones keyed into the riverbed on the downstream edge to form a gravel trap
- key the stones down to at least 600mm below the existing level of the bed or below the known scour level (whichever is deeper)
- make sure the stones do not stand clear of the water during low summer flows and that they do not form a weir
- make sure the approach slope gradient is no steeper than 1 in 4
- make sure that livestock cannot access the sides of the ford approaches

- include rock revetment to protect the ford approaches on the river side
- protect the base of the entrance and the exit ramp, (to avoid bankside erosion) with one of the following:
 - rock armouring using cobble-sized rocks to create as flat a surface as possible and filling any gaps with coarse gravel or hardcore
 - coarse gravel or hardcore:
 - with treated retaining boards (50mm by 230mm) along the ramp (parallel to the river flow) and spaced 1m apart
 - hold the boards in position with treated posts (100mm by 100mm) that are 1m apart
 - drive the posts into the bank and trim them at an angle of 1 in 4 (parallel to the slope)
 - drive the posts at least 50mm below the line of the boards to avoid tripping
 - compact the bed of the ramp to provide a stable footing for livestock
- all capital works carried out must meet the relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Applicants must obtain Flood Defence Consent on a main river and contact the local planning authority about the plans before applying for this item. A

copy of any advice or consent received from the EA or the local planning authority should be provided with the claim.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the [FG15 - Water gates](#) item.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to choose a location

It is generally best to build watercourse crossing points at existing stock crossing locations, as the banks are usually less steep.

Agreement holders should choose a site that needs the minimum amount of excavation work. This will produce less spoil, cause less disruption and reduce the amount of sediment entering the watercourse.

The crossing should not be constructed on a watercourse bend, as this can lead to silt deposition on the inside of the bend and erosion on the outside.

Further information

Further information about watercourse crossings is available from the Rivers Trust.

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP4: Livestock and machinery hardcore tracks

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the livestock and machinery hardcore tracks item.

How much will be paid

£33 per metre (m).

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants in one of the following:

- in areas targeted to reduce water pollution from agriculture and with the support of Natural England or a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer
- in combination with options for the management and restoration of habitats or features with the support of a Natural England adviser

Where this item cannot be used

- To repair potholes or upgrade existing tracks and farm drives
- On historic or archaeological features or areas of existing wildlife interest identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map or the Historic Environment Farm Environmental Record (HEFER)
- Without relevant advice or consents from the Highways Authority, if the proposed route is a Public Right of Way

How this item will benefit the environment

New farm tracks reduce soil compaction and erosion caused by livestock and machinery. They also help reduce channelling of surface runoff and the risk of sediment and other pollutants entering a watercourse.

Requirements

You must:

- make sure all capital works meet the relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Hardcore tracks

- Excavate a trench at least 2.4m wide and at least 150 millimetres (mm) deep, or down to a naturally occurring hard surface
- Profile the edge of the track with the excavated soil
- Overlay the area with a geotextile membrane if the base of the trench lies on subsoil (a geotextile membrane is not needed if the base is bedrock or chalk)
- Fill the trench with stone or hardcore to a depth of at least 150mm, and compact it
- Finish the top of the track with a finer material (of 18mm to dust) to a depth of 25 to 50mm, and compact it into a convex camber
- Direct any track runoff to a ditch or other stable drainage outlet, or divert it on to grassland

Hardcore tracks using concrete sleepers

- Excavate a trench following the instructions above and in addition:
- Invert the concrete sleepers and lay them slightly proud of the ground
- Lay the sleepers directly on to a level, firm surface and butt them up against each other to form a track (a geotextile membrane is not required)

Hardcore tracks on peaty soils

- Excavate a trench 2.4m wide and at least 300mm deep, or 500mm on deep peats
- Dig out soft pockets in the profile, drain them, fill them with well compacted hardcore and cap them with clay
- Lay a geotextile membrane to the full width of the track, folding up the sides of the trench
- Lay the membrane on to a surface that will not puncture the material
- Allow at least 300mm for any overlap of the membrane
- Fill the trench to within 50mm of the top with stone or hardcore (from 40mm to dust)
- Profile and compact the track to produce a convex camber
- Top off the track with a wearing course (18mm to dust) to a depth of 25 to 50mm, and compact it to produce a convex camber

- Make sure the geotextile membrane is fully covered – if necessary grass turf may be used to prevent exposure of the membrane at the edge of the track

Do not:

- use general, ungraded building rubble

Keeping records

Where you are using this item on a public right of way, consult the local highways authority (LHA) before you apply to get any advice or consent which you need. You do not need to send this with your application, but you will need to send any consents with your payment claim.

You must send the following with your application:

- written support from a CSF officer or Natural England adviser

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed
- any consents or permissions connected from the local highways authority (LHA)

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work (in addition to the ones stated above)
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

You can use this item on the same area as the [RP5 - Cross drains](#) item.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose a location

It is best to:

- construct the tracks alongside field boundaries rather than across the middle of the field - this will help preserve the appearance of the landscape
- avoid placing the tracks where they will cause runoff or lead to erosion
- camber the tracks so water sheds continuously off them
- use cross drains or bunds if the tracks cannot be cambered
- use cross drains, if necessary, on sloping tracks or tracks that lead on to a highway

When to add a geotextile membrane

You do not need to use a geotextile membrane for all types of soil. It is not usually needed on firm shale and some limestone or chalk soils except on a steep slope. Clay soils and peats will need a greater depth of stone to make up the track layers.

Tracks used by machinery may need a geotextile membrane and base layer of stone, depending on the type of soil. Concrete sleepers alone are not adequate for machinery tracks.

How to maintain the tracks

You should replace and compact any material lost to potholes and erosion. You should keep the track dry and firm and deal with any problems as soon as they appear.

Permanent ineligible features

Constructed farm tracks may be classed as permanent ineligible features and excluded from area payment schemes.

Further information

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides

farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP5: Cross drains

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the cross drains item.

How much will be paid

£245 per drain.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- where a farm track is acting as a conduit for water runoff or pollution
- in farmyards to redirect clean water

Where this item cannot be used

- to manage or redirect heavily polluted effluents and slurries
- without relevant advice or consent if track is identified as a historic routeway in the HEFER

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will provide a drain to intercept and conduct surface runoff away from farm tracks and yards. The drain will help reduce channelling of surface runoff and the risk of sediment and other pollution entering a watercourse.

Requirements

- position the cross drain so it catches the water on the uphill side of the track or yard and transfers it to an outfall where it will not cause new erosion or runoff issues
- redirect water from the cross drain to a stable drainage outlet such as a ditch, culvert or other outfall - low flows can be directed to a field or field margin

- construct the drain either by digging a partially covered channel to collect sediment and redirect surface water, or by constructing a low hump to direct surface flows
- maintain drains and drainage outfalls or the areas around humps by removing built-up sediment or other clogging materials
- either construct an open channel:
 - excavate a channel across the width of the track or in a yard to a depth of at least 100mm and 100mm to 250mm wide
 - line the channel with concrete and install a gridded top that must be at least 150mm wide
- or construct a raised hump:
 - excavate a foundation trench across the track or yard to a depth of at least 300mm
 - fill it with concrete
 - key in kerbstones across the trench so they protrude 60 to 100mm above the surrounding surface
- all capital works carried out must meet the relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Do not:

- direct any runoff towards any biodiversity, historic or archaeological features (identified on the FER, the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER), or damage them in any other way
- allow polluted water from drains to reach a watercourse or pond

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start
- written advice from a historic environment specialist if the track is a historic routeway

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP1 - Resurfacing of gateways](#)
- [RP4 - Livestock and machinery hardcore tracks](#)
- [RP7 - Sediment ponds and traps](#)
- [RP11 - Swales](#)
- [RP15 - Concrete yard renewal](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Using this item with other measures

Agreement holders should use this item with other measures, such as buffer strips, sediment traps, swales and dams, to slow the velocity of water across the land and prevent pollutants travelling to a watercourse. Follow best practice for reducing soil erosion and increasing water infiltration in fields.

How to choose a site for the drain

Any water draining from the surrounding land should be diverted before it flows on to the track or yard. This can be done by using breaks such as hedges, ditches or buffers.

Cross drains should be placed at intervals across sloping tracks. The number of drains will increase with the length or steepness of the slope. The distance between the drains will vary according to the site, but they must be close enough to collect heavy surface flows.

How to manage drain outfall

Outfall from the drains should be directed to a specially created temporary water storage area. This will allow water to infiltrate the ground and will protect existing watercourses. It is essential to do this if the water is likely

to be polluted (e.g. if livestock use the track or yard). Direct low flows to a well-managed, tussocky grass field margin. Additional capital items (for example, silt traps or swales) can be used to create a temporary water storage area.

How to maintain structures

The structures should be checked for a build-up of sediment or other clogging pollutants after heavy rainfall. They should also be checked after agricultural activities have taken place that are likely to shift soil to the track (e.g. the movement of muddy machines or livestock).

Where to position tracks

If possible, position tracks so they do not run directly downhill or carry pollutants directly between farmyard or fields and watercourses.

Consider using this item when using item [RP4 - Livestock and machinery hardcore tracks] in a place where runoff is still likely to be a problem.

Further information

Improve the management of water on the land by using [rural sustainable drainage systems](#).

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP6: Installation of piped culverts in ditches

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the installation of piped culverts in ditches item.

How much will be paid

£340 per culvert.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted to reduce water pollution from agriculture

or:

- in combination with options for the management and restoration of habitats or features with the support of a Natural England adviser

Where this item cannot be used

- to replace an existing culvert structure
- where it may damage an environmental, historical or archaeological feature identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER
- where it will restrict the movement of migratory fish or eels
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency (EA) or flood defence consenting authority

How this item will benefit the environment

This watercourse crossing will provide access for farm machinery or livestock. This will reduce the disturbance to the watercourse which will help reduce sedimentation and bacterial levels in the water.

If successful there will be:

- an adequate flow of water
- runoff of expected flows diverted under a track so farm machinery and livestock can cross
- farm machinery or livestock crossing tracks safely

Requirements

- install a concrete pipe at least 450mm in diameter following the manufacturer's instructions
- ensure that pipes have a positive joint to preserve alignment
- make sure that the pipe lengths give a useable width at ground level that is appropriate for the traffic using the crossing:
 - minimum width of 4m for wheeled traffic
 - less than 4m acceptable for livestock footpaths and bridleways
- set the pipes on a firm bed and in true alignment
- make sure that the pipe gradient approximates to that of the ditch bed
- make sure that the pipe invert (the level of the inside bottom of the pipe) at the upstream end is fractionally below the bottom of the true ditch bed
- grade the ditch bed downstream if any deepening is needed to accommodate the culvert
- maintain the culvert for the duration of the agreement, removing debris that builds up so as to maintain flow
- where the above standard specifications for the culvert are not suitable for the weight of machinery using the crossing, applicants must obtain advice from a drainage or bridge engineer and complete the works in accordance with their advice - applicants are responsible for ensuring the culvert does not collapse
- ensure that all work:
 - meets relevant [British Standards](#), that is culverts must be constructed using concrete pipes that comply with BS 5911 and BS EN 1916, pipework must be laid in accordance with BS 8000 - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance
 - complies with the [culvert design and operation guide \(C689\)](#)

Do not:

- place any resulting spoil on environmental, historic or archaeological features as identified on the FER, the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed
- if required, advice from a drainage or bridge engineer

Before applying, applicants should contact the Environment Agency and flood defence consenting authority if required for advice and gain any consents or permissions needed. You do not need to provide this consent with your application, but you will need to submit this consent with your payment claim.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as [RP4 - Livestock and machinery hardcore tracks](#).

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Consider location and alignment

- avoid active river areas, particularly meander bends
- avoid depositional areas

- make the crossing perpendicular to the river
- consider floodplain crossings
- reduce the risk of pollution (such as the release of fine sediments) to protected species and their habitats
- where necessary, minimise erosion by installing protection measures (such as stone pitching or slabs) downstream of the culvert and on the sides of the ditch

Embedding and maintaining culverts

- pack a stone-free filling tightly at the sides of the pipe and at least 300mm above it
- build up the filling in layers up to 150mm thick, making sure it is thoroughly consolidated before adding the next layer
- follow the manufacturer's guidance on how deep to cover backfill
- leave the finished backfill surface so it is crowned above the surrounding levels

Consider using a concrete pad to stabilise the bridge or track over the culvert. Make sure the pad is at least 150mm thick, adding an extra 300mm if the total depth of fill cover over the pipes is less than its diameter.

Try using sloping earth ends as headwalls where appropriate, with the slopes no steeper than 1 in 5. There should be a 1m extension on either end of the culvert beyond the required width of expected traffic.

Further information

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#)

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP7: Sediment ponds and traps

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the sediment ponds and traps item.

How much will be paid

£10 per square metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- in conjunction with a Feasibility Study or a CSF commissioned design plan for ponds or traps over 25 square metres

Where this item cannot be used

- to collect dirty water, effluents and slurries
- on historic or archaeological features or areas of existing wildlife interest identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER
- where it will restrict the movement of migratory fish or eels
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency (EA), Local Planning Authority or flood defence consenting authority

How this item will benefit the environment

A sediment pond or trap will provide an area where muddy run-off from fields or tracks is allowed to pond so sediment will settle out. This will help reduce the risk of sediment and other pollutants entering a nearby watercourse.

Requirements

- ensure that all work meets relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

For sediment ponds or traps (less than 25 square metres)

- excavate to an appropriate depth, creating gently sloping banks
- spread any excess soil thinly across the land, away from the excavated pond area

For larger sediment ponds or traps (greater than 25 square metres):

- follow the requirements set out in the [Feasibility Study \(PA2\)](#) or CSF design plan (Water-Holding Feature Management Plan).

Do not:

- place spoil on any historic or archaeological feature or wildlife area identified on the FER, the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start
- a copy of the Feasibility Study or CSF design plan (Water-Holding Feature Management Plan) for ponds or traps over 25 square metres

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the Environment Agency, Local Planning Authority and where relevant the Internal Drainage Board to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. You do

not need to provide this consent with your application, but you will need to submit this consent with your payment claim.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following options and items:

- [SW1 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land](#)
- [SW2 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on intensive grassland](#)
- [SW4 - 12m to 24m watercourse buffer strip on cultivated land](#)
- [SW7 - Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input](#)
- [SW8 - Management of intensive grassland adjacent to a watercourse](#)
- [SW11 - Riparian management strip](#)
- [WD3 - Woodland edges on arable land](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Using this item with other measures

This item should be used with other farm measures to reduce surface runoff and water pollution. Good soil management will encourage the filtration of surface water and minimise runoff. This will reduce the need for sediment ponds on the farm.

How to construct barriers

The CSF design plan (Water-Holding Feature Management Plan) may provide site-specific information, including where to place barriers and how to construct them.

Creating multiple ponds or traps

It is likely that several ponds or traps will be needed for successful reduction of sediment loads to the watercourse.

Checking ponds and traps for silt

Sediment ponds and traps can collect a considerable amount of silt and need to be regularly checked and de-silted.

Further information

The management of water on the land can be improved by using [rural sustainable drainage systems](#).

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP8: Constructed wetlands for the treatment of pollution

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the constructed wetlands for the treatment of pollution item.

How much will be paid

50% of costs.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- to treat field and farmyard diffuse runoff
- in conjunction with a Feasibility Study or a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) commissioned design plan

Where this item cannot be used

- to treat slurry, silage liquor, heavily fouled water, or concentrated pesticide spills and washings (as defined as such under the Nitrate Action Plan Regulations, Slurry Silage and Agricultural Fuel Oil Regulations or Health and Safety Executive)
- on historic or archaeological features identified in the HEFER
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency (EA), or Internal Drainage Board

How this item will benefit the environment

It will create and maintain a wetland features to treat lightly fouled or polluted water, generated from normal agricultural activities. This will help reduce the risk of sediment and other pollutants entering a nearby watercourse.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- complete works according to the specification set out in the Implementation Plan or Feasibility Study and as agreed with a Natural England adviser
- follow the instructions set in a management plan (agreed with a Natural England adviser) for constructing and maintaining the wetland area
- get 3 quotes for completion of the work

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely successful applicants will not be allowed to:

- place spoil on any environmental, historic or archaeological feature

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- photographs of site before works start
- a copy of the Feasibility Study or CSF design plan (Water-Holding Feature Management Plan)
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is not available
- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the Environment Agency, Local Planning Authority and where relevant the Internal Drainage Board to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. You do

not need to provide this consent with your application, but you will need to submit this consent with your payment claim.

Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- the 3 quotes for completion of the work

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Specification

A detailed specification will be produced, tailored to the site. A likely design would be a treatment structure built in at least 3 stages.

Stage 1 - The first stage is to create an open pond to act as a sediment trap without much wildlife value. The pond should be accessible to farm machinery for routine maintenance.

Stage 2 - The second stage should have some planting to encourage settlement and remove nutrients.

Stage 3 - The third stage should be a shallow wetland that is heavily vegetated to reduce pollutants in the water such as:

- nitrates or ammonia
- biological oxygen demand (BOD)
- faecal indicator organisms (FIOs)

Throughout each stage:

- restrict livestock access to reduce the risk of eroding or degrading the treatment area
- build on a non-permeable substrate (made up of 20% clay) or line the area so that there is a permanent pool of water for most of the year
- avoid building on sandy, gravelly and excessively wet soil in order to prevent contact with groundwater before treatment
- build gentle slopes with a gradient of no more than 1 in 4, the edges should provide good wildlife habitat and act as a safety feature
- make sure the pond edges are undulated to provide more edge habitat

- make sure outlet pipes are larger than inlet pipes to prevent water backing up along the system
- obtain a waste exemption if excavated material is to be removed (this information should be included in the agreed management plan)

Manage outfall

- ensure any outfall of water is of high enough quality before it is discharged into the local watercourse

Applicants will need to agree acceptable water quality standard with EA before directing any outfall.

Further information

CSF operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. Find out more about [CSF support](#).

Read the [constructed wetland user guide](#) produced by the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust for further help carrying out this option.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP9: Earth banks and soil bunds

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the earth banks and soil bunds item.

How much will be paid

£155 for each unit (100m of bund).

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture or to help address flood risk
- on sites identified in either a Feasibility Study, an Implementation Plan or a CSF commissioned design plan

Where this item cannot be used

- on historic or archaeological features or areas of wildlife value as identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency (EA), or Local Planning Authority, or Internal Drainage Board

How this item will benefit the environment

An earth bank or soil bund can be used to:

- slow the movement of water, protecting streams and rivers from pollutants
- slow flows during high rainfall and reduce downstream flooding
- control water levels to aid raised water levels for habitat creation and restoration

Requirements

- complete the construction as set out in the Feasibility Study, Implementation Plan or CSF design plan (Water-Holding Feature Management Plan)

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start
- a copy of the Feasibility Study or CSF design plan (Water-Holding Feature Management Plan)

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the Environment Agency, and where relevant the Internal Drainage Board to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. you do not need to provide this consent with your application, but you will need to submit this consent with your payment claim.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following options and items:

- [RP7 - Sediment ponds and traps](#)
- [RP11 - Swales](#)

- [SW1 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land](#)
- [SW2 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on intensive grassland](#)
- [SW3 - In-field grass strips](#)
- [SW7 - Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Pick a location

Position bunds or banks on land that can support damp, vegetated habitat. Ideally on:

- tracks
- small, lightly contaminated yards
- hard standing
- the bottom of slopes

This item also works on grassland and arable fields, as single entities or to support buffer strips.

Design and construction

Details of the design and construction of the earth bank or soil bund will be in the management plan. Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- form infiltration basins into 'V', 'U' or 'C' shapes
- measure bunds in a continuous length of 100m per unit with up to a 250m² runoff store
- dig down 0.8m in depth
- grade side slopes to no more than 1 in 3
- ensure half the stored water can empty within 24 hours
- flatten the soil when damp to strengthen the structure
- plant grass species in banks that can withstand wet and dry conditions
- establish vegetation on the basin floor to reduce clogging
- build bay silt traps where soil erosion is high to stop the basin from clogging

- regularly remove excess sediment from banks and bunds, reapplying it back to the field (contact the Environment Agency to check if a waste exemption is required)

To enhance buffer strips

- place soil bunds at the field edge of buffer strips, to slow runoff
- build bunds 300mm to 500mm high by 600mm to 1000mm wide
- place larger bunds where complex field slopes divert runoff to pinch points

Establishing soil bunds

Compact down soil bunds and then sow a seed mixture at a rate of 24g/m². Form the seed mix from grass, legumes and wildflowers, e.g.:

- creeping red fescue (70%)
- smooth meadow-grass (20%)
- creeping bent (10%)

Building weirs and outlets

Weirs and outlets can be built into the design as they can discharge more water than pipes and are less likely to block up.

The water should be directed on to stones or boulders to slow flow for piped overflows, or weirs in ditches and ponds.

Further information

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP10: Silt filtration dams or seepage barriers

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the silt filtration dams or seepage barriers item.

How much will be paid

£75 per unit.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in ditches in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture and for the reduction of flood risk
- in conjunction with a Feasibility Study, an Implementation Plan or a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) commissioned design plan agreed with Natural England

Where this item cannot be used

- on historic or archaeological features or areas of existing wildlife interest identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER
- where it will restrict the movement of migratory fish or eels
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency (EA) or Internal Drainage Board

How this item will benefit the environment

Silt filtration barriers and seepage barriers will slow the movement of water in ditches, to allow pollutants to settle out. This will help improve water quality and may reduce downstream flooding.

Requirements

Complete the constructions as set out in the approved Feasibility Study, Implementation Plan or CSF design plan (Water-Holding Feature Management Plan).

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start
- a copy of the Feasibility Study, Implementation Plan or CSF design plan (Water-Holding Feature Management Plan)

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from EA and where relevant the Internal Drainage Board to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents or permissions with your payment claim. Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following item:

- [RP11 - Swales](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

The Feasibility Study, Implementation Plan or CSF design plan should include site-specific guidance for locating and constructing the barriers. However, it is likely that several barriers will be required for successful slowing of flows throughout the length of the water course.

Design and construction

The design of the structure and the materials used will depend on the conditions set out in the plan. A range of materials could be used which include:

- timber piling or horizontal planks (with gaps between the boards to allow water flow)
- stone filled gabions
- recycled plastic drainage material, for example Aquadyne
- willow stakes and woven branches for a more natural appearance
- dams that allow for overflows in the centre (this prevents scouring of the ends of the barrier or dam)

Using willow stakes will help anchor the structure, as they may grow. This style of construction may not last very long so allow time for repair or reconstruction during the agreement.

The main function of the barrier is to slow and filter water flow through ditches or temporary water-holding features, rather than dam and hold water. Other capital items are available to dam or hold water.

Remove trapped silt

Trapped silt should be monitored and removed at least once a year. It must only be disposed of in areas that have been set out in the agreement. The maintenance must be done carefully and regularly to avoid polluting sensitive bodies of water downstream or sensitive habitats on land.

Use this item with other measures

This item should be used as part of a package of measures to reduce surface water runoff and related water pollution problems on farm.

Further information

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP11: Swales

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the swales item.

How much will be paid

£5.95 per square metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture

Where this item cannot be used

- to collect dirty water, effluents, or slurries
- on historic or archaeological features or areas of existing wildlife interest identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER
- where it will restrict the movement of migratory fish or eels
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency (EA), or Local Planning Authority, or Internal Drainage Board

How this item will benefit the environment

A swale (channel) will collect surface runoff water or lightly contaminated water from farmyards or tracks. The collected water is conveyed to a watercourse or stored to infiltrate into the ground.

This item will help to reduce runoff and risk of soil erosion and water pollution. Swales can also slow water flows during heavy rainfall and reduce downstream flooding.

Requirements

- either follow the requirements set out in the Feasibility Study or CSF design plan (Water-Holding Feature Management Plan)

- or construct the swale as follows:
 - construct a channel along a contour or on a slope gradient of no more than 2 degrees
 - mark the layout of the swale on the ground
 - excavate the swale bed to a depth of 750mm
 - stockpile the topsoil separately, to use on the bed and side slopes of the swale
 - construct the side slopes with a gradient of no more than 1 in 3
 - excavate a further 150 to 250mm and place the topsoil on the bed
 - establish a dense grass sward on the bed and sides of the swale

Do not:

- place any excavated spoil on historic or archaeological features or areas of wildlife value identified on the FER, the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start
- water holding feature Management plan, Feasibility or Implementation Plan(s) if required

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the Environment Agency, Local Planning Authority and where relevant the Internal Drainage Board to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. You do

not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents or permissions with your payment claim.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following options and items:

- [RP10 - Silt filtration dams or seepage barriers](#)
- [RP12 - Check dams](#)
- [SW1 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land](#)
- [SW2 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on intensive grassland](#)
- [SW4 - 12m to 24m watercourse buffer strip on cultivated land](#)
- [SW7 - Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input](#)
- [SW8 - Management of intensive grassland adjacent to a watercourse](#)
- [SW11 - Riparian management strip](#)
- [WD3 - Woodland edges on arable land](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Use this item with other measures

This item should be used with other farm measures to reduce surface runoff and water pollution. Good soil management will encourage the filtration of surface water and minimise runoff.

Use check dams or silt barriers

Capital items such as check dams or silt filtration barriers can be used in swales to help slow water flow and encourage infiltration.

How to prepare a seed mixture

To establish the sward, for best results sow a seed mixture at a seed rate of 25g per square metre. The mixture should be a multi-species grass mix, such as creeping red fescue (70%), smooth meadow-grass (20%) and creeping bent (10%).

Further information

The management of water on the land can be improved by using [rural sustainable drainage systems](#).

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP12: Check dams

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the check dams item.

How much will be paid

£42 for each dam.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- in conjunction with a Feasibility Study or a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) commissioned design plan

Where this item cannot be used

- where it will restrict the movement of migratory fish or eels
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency (EA) or Internal Drainage Board

How this item will benefit the environment

Check dams will slow the movement of water in small natural streams and ditches. They will slow surface water, allowing sediment and other pollutants to settle out, helping to improve water quality and reduce downstream flooding.

Requirements

- follow the requirements set out in the Feasibility Study or CSF Design Plan

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start
- a copy of the Feasibility Study or CSF design plan (Water-Holding Feature Management Plan)

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the Environment Agency and where relevant the Internal Drainage Board to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents or permissions with your payment claim.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP11 - Swales](#)
- [SW1 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land](#)
- [SW2 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on intensive grassland](#)
- [SW4 - 12m to 24m watercourse buffer strip on cultivated land](#)
- [SW7 - Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input](#)
- [SW8 - Management of intensive grassland adjacent to a watercourse](#)
- [SW11 - Riparian management strip](#)
- [WD3 - Woodland edges on arable land](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Use several dams

It is likely that several dams will be needed to manage water flows successfully. On small streams, a series of multiple dams should be used that are between 5 to 7 times wider than the channel. This will prevent woody debris becoming dislodged during floods.

Check the dams for silt

The dam must be checked and de-silted regularly to prevent it collecting large amounts of silt.

Design and construction

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- construct the dam from local soils with a high clay content, timber or stone, as appropriate to the local landscape
- excavate a trench 200 mm deep across the width of the swale
- build up the check dam using 100mm to 600mm grade broken stone, wooden boards, gabions or earth to a height of 500 to 750 mm above the floor of the swale
- build the check dam at the down slope end of the trench and leave the upslope end of the trench empty
- side slopes of the check dam must be a gradient 1 in 2
- check dams must be built into the sides of the swale to avoid water bypassing the structure
- at least 1m to 2m downstream must be protected to dissipate energy from the dam
- place an overflow in the centre of the dam to prevent any scouring of the ends of the dam

Further information

The management of water on the land can be improved by using [rural sustainable drainage systems](#).

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See [guidance about CSF support](#) for further information.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP13: Yard - underground drainage pipework

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the yard - underground drainage pipework item.

How much will be paid

£5.50 per metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer

Where this item cannot be used

- on covered or indoor yards
- on environmental, historic or archaeological features identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER
- without relevant advice, consents or permissions from the Environment Agency (EA), or Local Planning Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will improve existing outdoor yards to reduce the risk of runoff and water pollution.

Requirements

- install 100mm or 150mm (internal diameter) drains
- excavate trenches that are at least the width of the pipe's outside diameter plus 300mm
- lay pipes on clay or sand that is at least 100mm thick

- to avoid settlement of solids or semi-solid material in dirty water drains, lay pipes to a fall of:
 - no less than 1 in 60 for 100mm internal diameter pipes
 - no less than 1 in 100 for 150mm internal diameter pipes
- place inspection pits at no more than 90m apart in straight lines
- use only uPVC pipes with sealed joints, and jointed according to the manufacturer's instructions
- when the pipe is laid, backfill to at least:
 - 600mm in areas without traffic
 - 900mm in areas with traffic
- use compacted excavated material such as smooth stone, clay or sandy soil for backfill and remove any surplus
- where it is not possible to backfill to 600mm or 900mm in areas with traffic then the pipes must be wrapped in plastic sheeting and encased in at least 150mm of concrete
- ensure that all work meets relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the EA and Local Planning Authority to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents/permissions with your payment claim. Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP5 - Cross drains](#)
- [RP14 - Yard inspection pit](#)
- [RP15 - Concrete yard renewal](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

The existing uncovered yards should be made from:

- concrete
- hard core
- tarmac
- bare earth

Further information

The Rivers Trust has further guidance on [dirty water separation](#).

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP14: Yard inspection pit

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the yard inspection pit item.

How much will be paid

£200 per unit.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer

Where this item cannot be used

- on covered or indoor yards
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency (EA)

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will improve existing outdoor yards to reduce the risk of runoff and water pollution.

Requirements

- ensure that all work meets relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance
- build an inspection pit or a catch pit:
 - make sure the internal area of the pit is at least 0.36 square metres
 - make sure the pit opening is at least 600mm in diameter
 - build the pit onto a concrete base that is at least 250mm thick, with block walls rendered internally and externally
- construct the pit walls with:
 - solid concrete blocks at least 200mm thick

- engineering brickwork at least 200mm thick
- proprietary precast reinforced concrete
- proprietary plastic or uPVC liner with a concrete surround at least 150mm thick
- make sure block walls are rendered internally and externally
- install all proprietary items according to the manufacturer's instructions to support the weight of traffic going over it
- design the cover and frame to carry a load appropriate to its situation, e.g. in high traffic areas this must be at least 10 kilo newtons per square metre
- embed the cover and frame securely so it is level with or is below the surrounding surface
- build at least 10m from a slurry or silage store if this item has an open grating

Inspection pits:

- the inspection pit channel must be benched half round, equal in diameter to the largest inlet pipe and extending the full length of the pit
- the side connections must discharge in the direction of flow of the main channel

Catch pits:

- install a pluggable catch pit and sump (at least 450mm deep with a submersible pump) at the point where clean drainage water leaves the yard
- monitor the drainage water for contaminants

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from EA to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. Consent may be required if the works are designed to transfer slurry or silage effluent and need to meet water resources control of water pollution regulations. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents or permissions with your payment claim. Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP5 - Cross drains](#)
- [RP13 - Yard - underground drainage pipework](#)
- [RP15 - Concrete yard renewal](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

The existing uncovered yards should be made from:

- concrete
- hard core
- tarmac
- bare earth

More detailed information about using this item is available through CSF. Applicants may also be able to request an infrastructure audit, slurry and manure handling plan, or pesticide handling or washdown facilities design plan.

Further information

The Rivers Trust has further guidance on [dirty water separation](#).

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See [guidance about CSF support](#) for further information.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP15: Concrete yard renewal

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the concrete yard renewal item.

How much will be paid

£27.14 per square metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water and air pollution from agriculture
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming officer

Where this item cannot be used

- On covered or indoor yards
- Manure, silage or slurry stores
- Areas housing livestock
- On environmental, historic or archaeological features identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map or the Historic Environment Farm Environmental Record (HEFER)
- Without relevant advice or permission from the Local Planning Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

It improves or upgrades existing outdoor (uncovered) yard drainage to reduce foul drainage volumes and runoff, makes cleaning easier and reduces the risk of water and air pollution.

Requirements

You must:

- construct an upgraded concrete base to facilitate cleaning and manage yard run-off, whilst not increasing the risk of silage or manure effluent loss
- construct the base with concrete (a minimum of 150 millimetres (mm) thick) on compacted and blinded hardcore that is at least 150mm thick
- reinforce the concrete base to minimise cracking and distribute the loads exerted by livestock or farm vehicles
- lay the concrete in bays and treat all joints with sealant that is resistant to effluent damage
- only fully load the concrete when it achieves its design strength (equivalent to 28 day strength)
- make sure that all work meets relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Do not:

- roof over (even at your own expense) an outside yard receiving aid through this item

Keeping records

Before you apply, you must check with the Local Planning Authority to see if you need consent to carry out the planned work.

You must send the following with your application:

- written support from a CSF officer

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- any consents or permissions from the Local Planning Authority
- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work (in addition to the ones stated above)

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

You can use this item on the same area as the following items:

- [RP5 - Cross drains](#)
- [RP13 - Yard - underground drainage pipework](#)
- [RP14 - Yard inspection pit](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

You can use this item:

- in high traffic areas or in livestock movement and loafing areas
- on uncovered outdoor yards made of concrete, hardcore, tarmac or bare earth
- to reduce foul drainage volumes and runoff, make cleaning easier and reduce the risk of water and air pollution.
- to help separate clean and dirty water

Get more advice

More detailed information about using this item is available through Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF). You may also be able to request an infrastructure audit or a slurry and manure handling plan.

Keep clean and dirty water separate

Do not let foul or dirty water contaminate clean water. Plan how to manage any additional runoff from the impermeable concrete area. You may need to restructure some clean and dirty drains, which may include adding:

- cross drains
- catchpits

- gulleys
- kerbs
- sleeping policemen

Further information

The Rivers Trust has further guidance on [dirty water separation](#).

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP16: Rainwater goods

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the rainwater goods item.

How much will be paid

£11.40 per metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture

Where this item cannot be used

- for guttering and downpipes on proposed new buildings
- on covered or indoor yards

How this item will benefit the environment

New guttering and downpipes (rainwater goods) will prevent the discharge of clean water on to fouled yard areas, which will help reduce risk of water pollution.

Requirements

- install new guttering and downpipes on existing farm yard buildings
- direct clean water from rainwater goods into a clean water drain
- ensure that all work meets relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP13 - Yard - underground drainage pipework](#)
- [RP14 - Yard inspection pit](#)
- [RP15 - Concrete yard renewal](#)
- [RP17 - Storage tanks underground](#)
- [RP18 - Above ground tanks](#)
- [RP19 - First flush rainwater diverters and downpipe filters](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Listed and historic buildings

This item could be detrimental if used close to a historic farmstead or listed building. The nature and historic value of the existing surfaces should be taken into consideration. Get advice on whether listed building consent is needed.

Further information

Read more on:

- [implementing a water management plan](#)
- [effective use of water on dairy farms](#)

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#)

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP17: Storage tanks underground

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the storage tanks underground item.

How much will be paid

£350 per cubic metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer

Where this item cannot be used

- without relevant advice or permission from the Local Planning Authority
- on historic or archaeological features

How this item will benefit the environment

The underground storage tank will collect and contain rainwater and help to keep clean and dirty water separate. This will provide free clean water, which may be suitable to use for a number of tasks around the farm such as yard washing, instead of wasting potable water supplies.

Requirements

- agree with a CSF officer where to install the tank and pump
- follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing the tank and pump
- use tanks made from either glass-reinforced plastic (GRP) or pre-cast concrete
- backfill with concrete to cover the tank and make good
- ensure that all work meets relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the Local Planning Authority to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents or permissions with your payment claim. Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP16 - Rainwater goods](#)
- [RP18 - Above ground tanks](#)
- [RP19 - First flush rainwater diverters and downpipe filters](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Installing the storage tank

The work normally includes:

- installing the tank and pump
- a site excavation
- creating a hardstanding or concrete base for the tank
- installing connecting pipework

Water management

Throughout the work make sure that foul or dirty water does not contaminate the clean water collected.

Applicants must also check if restrictions apply to using harvested rainwater in your supply chain. Contact the farm assurance scheme and purchasers of produce.

High water table

These tanks are not suitable in ground with a high water table unless further structural work is undertaken to prevent such tanks from floating. Seek advice from the manufacturer.

Historic and archaeological features

- get listed building consent if used close to a historic farmstead or listed building, as this option may have negative effects on it
- consider the effect of the option on the fabric and setting of the historic buildings, as well as the nature and historic value of the existing surfaces

Dirty water

This item is not intended to be used for collecting dirty water, effluents and slurries.

Further information

Read more on:

- [implementing a water management plan](#)
- [effective use of water on dairy farms](#)

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#)

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP18: Above ground tanks

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the above ground tanks item.

How much will be paid

£100 per cubic metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming officer

Where this item cannot be used

- without relevant advice or permission from the Local Planning Authority
- on historic or archaeological features

How this item will benefit the environment

The above ground storage tank will collect and contain rainwater and help to keep clean and dirty water separate. This will provide free clean water, which may be suitable to use for a number of tasks around the farm such as yard washing, instead of wasting potable water supplies.

Requirements

- agree with your CSF officer where to install the tank and pump
- install a new above-ground storage tank on hardstanding or concrete following the
- ensure that all work meets relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the Local Planning Authority to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents/permissions with your payment claim. Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP15 - Concrete yard renewal](#)
- [RP16 - Rainwater goods](#)
- [RP17 - Storage tanks underground](#)
- [RP19 - First flush rainwater diverters and downpipe filters](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Installing the storage tank

There are no generic specifications for above-ground storage tanks since they are pre-made tanks supplied as fit for purpose, but the work normally includes:

- installing the tank and pump
- creating a hardstanding or concrete base for the tank
- installing connecting pipework

Water management

Throughout the work make sure that foul or dirty water does not contaminate the clean water collected.

Applicants must also check if restrictions apply to using harvested rainwater in your supply chain. Contact the farm assurance scheme and purchasers of produce.

Historic and archaeological features

- get listed building consent if used close to a historic farmstead or listed building, as this item may have negative effects on it
- consider the effect of the item on the fabric and setting of the historic buildings, as well as the nature and historic value of the existing surfaces

Dirty water

This item is not intended to be used for collecting dirty water, effluents and slurries.

Further information

Guidance on [implementing a water management plan](#).

Guidance about the [effective use of water on dairy farms](#).

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP19: First flush rainwater diverters and downpipe filters

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the first flush rainwater diverters and downpipe filters item.

How much will be paid

£125 per unit.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- with a rainwater harvesting system
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming officer

Where this item cannot be used

- without relevant advice or permission from the Local Planning Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

It diverts and filters potentially contaminated roof water to keep leaves, debris and other contaminants out of diverters, clean water drains and water storage tanks. This will help provide clean water that can be used for a number of tasks around the farm such as yard washing, instead of wasting potable water supplies.

Requirements

- install individual rainwater diverters and filters, wall-mounted diverters or stand-alone diverters (depending on the volumes to be treated) according to the manufacturer's guidelines
- make sure that contaminated water is not diverted to a clean water drain or discharged to ditches or watercourses

- ensure that all work meets relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the Local Planning Authority to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents/permissions with your payment claim. Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP16 - Rainwater goods](#)
- [RP17 - Storage tanks underground](#)
- [RP18 - Above ground tanks](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Improve water quality

- collect rainwater from roofs and buildings and use it for tasks around the farm such as yard washing - fitting a first flush rainwater diverter is critical to good quality water
- know that water diverters improve water quality, reduce tank maintenance and protect pumps by preventing the first flush of water, which may contain contaminants from the roof, from entering the tank
- use downpipe filters to keep leaves, debris and other contaminants out of diverters, clean water drains and water storage tanks - the work includes the supply and installation of downpipe filters

Agreement holders must also check if restrictions apply to using harvested rainwater in your supply chain. Contact the farm assurance scheme and purchasers of produce.

Historic and archaeological features

- get listed building consent if used close to a historic farmstead or listed building, as this item may have negative effects on it
- consider the effect of the item on the fabric and setting of the historic buildings, as well as the nature and historic value of the existing surfaces

Further information

Guidance on [implementing a water management plan](#).

Guidance about the [effective use of water on dairy farms](#).

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP20: Relocation of sheep dips and pens

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the relocation of sheep dips and pens item.

How much will be paid

£3,675 per unit.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer

Where this item cannot be used

- to build new, permanent sheep dips and holding pens on a farm where there are no existing dipping facilities
- to replace existing equipment in the same location
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency (EA) or Local Planning Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will install replacement sheep dips in new locations. Pollution from sheep dips can cause damage to people and aquatic wildlife. Relocating sheep dips can help reduce the risk of diffuse water pollution.

Requirements

- install a new sheep dip bath and holding pens
- dip baths must be impermeable, have no drain outlet and must comply with the [Groundwater Protection Code](#)
- dip baths and drain pens must be installed at least:

- 10m from watercourses (including streams, ditches, land drains and wetlands)
- 30m from watercourses that drain into protected conservation sites (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs))
- 50m from any spring, well or borehole
- meet relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Do not:

- install the dip baths and pens on a slope, or at the top of one, where there is a risk that spillage might drain to a watercourse, road or track

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing site and dipping facilities before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the EA and Local Planning Authority to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents or permissions with your payment claim.

Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP22 - Sheep dip drainage aprons and sumps](#)
- [RP23 - Installation of livestock drinking troughs \(in draining pens for freshly dipped sheep\)](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to get a permit to discharge sheep dip

Agreement holders will need an [environmental permit](#) to discharge sheep dip to land. A variation to an existing permit may also be required if the location of the discharge area has changed.

How to construct the dip baths

The most effective dip baths should:

- be circular or rectangular
- be of one-piece construction
- be UV-resistant if they are made of plastic
- have splash screens and lips, if needed, to prevent splashing
- have a roof to prevent clean water from yards, roofs or land running into them

More information is available on [designing dip baths](#)

How to construct the drain pens

The most effective drain pens should:

- be large enough to hold sheep for at least 10 minutes after dipping
- have properly sealed floors and built-in slopes (allowing excess dip to drain back to the bath, rather than soaking into the ground, soil or a surface water drain)
- have concrete areas that are impermeable, with watertight sealed joints
- have a filter or trap to prevent dirt and dip draining back into the bath

How to avoid polluting the water supply

The back-siphoning of dip during filling can lead to water pollution. Make sure the hose for filling the bath:

- is not submerged in the bath
- has a double check valve to prevent back-siphoning
- is not used for domestic water supply purposes

How to protect the historic environment

Agreement holders should avoid using this item:

- close to a historic farmstead or listed building (get advice on listed building consent)
- on sites of archaeological or historic importance as identified in the HEFER (get advice on Scheduled Monument consent from Historic England, before using this item on such sites) Agreement holders should also consider the character of the landscape when constructing new fencing lines. This particularly applies in designated landscapes or historic parkland.

Agreement holders must consult Natural England if intending to install the dip on an SSSI.

Further information

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP21: Relocation of sheep pens only

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the relocation of sheep pens only item.

How much will be paid

£1,830 per unit.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer

This item can also be used to move a static holding pen used in conjunction with a mobile sheep dip.

Where this item cannot be used

- to build new, permanent sheep dip facilities on a farm where there are no existing dipping facilities
- to replace existing equipment in the same location
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency or Local Planning Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will install new sheep dipping pens in new locations. Pollution from sheep dips can cause damage to people and aquatic wildlife. Relocating sheep pens can help reduce risk of diffuse water pollution.

Requirements

- new sheep holding pens must be installed at least:
 - 10m from watercourses (including streams, ditches, land drains and wetlands)

- 30m from watercourses that drain into protected conservation sites (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs))
- 50m from any spring, well or borehole
- install new pens and comply with the [Groundwater Protection Code](#)
- meet relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Do not:

- install the pens (or any dip baths) on a slope, or at the top of one, where there is a risk that spillage might drain to a watercourse, road or track

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing site and current dipping facilities before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the EA and Local Planning Authority to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents/permissions with your payment claim. Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP20 - Relocation of sheep dips and pens](#)
- [RP22 - Sheep dip drainage aprons and sumps](#)
- [RP23 - Installation of livestock drinking troughs \(in draining pens for freshly dipped sheep\)](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to get a permit to discharge sheep dip

Agreement holders will need an [environmental permit](#) to discharge sheep dip to land. A variation to an existing permit may also be required if the location of the discharge area has changed.

How to construct the drain pens

The most effective drain pens should:

- be large enough to hold sheep for at least 10 minutes after dipping
- have properly sealed floors and built-in slopes (allowing excess dip to drain back to the bath, rather than soaking into the ground, the soil or a surface water drain)
- have concrete areas that are impermeable, with watertight sealed joints
- have a filter or trap to prevent dirt and dip draining back into the bath

How to protect the historic environment

This item should not be used:

- close to a historic farmstead or listed building (get advice on listed building consent)
- on sites of archaeological or historic importance as identified in the HEFER (get advice on Scheduled Monument consent from Historic England, before using this item on such sites)

Agreement holders should also consider the character of the landscape when constructing new fencing lines. This particularly applies in designated landscapes or historic parkland.

Agreement holders must consult Natural England if intending to install the dip on an SSSI.

Further information

Follow this guidance when [designing dip baths](#).

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#)

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

RP22: Sheep dip drainage aprons and sumps

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the sheep dip drainage aprons and sumps item.

How much will be paid

£18.25 per square metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer

This item can be used to move a static holding pen used in conjunction with a mobile sheep dip.

Where this item cannot be used

- build new, permanent sheep dips facilities on a farm where there are no existing dipping facilities
- replace existing equipment in the same location
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency or Local Planning Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

It will install a new sheep dip drainage apron and sump in new locations. Pollution from sheep dips can cause damage to people and aquatic wildlife. Relocating sheep dips and pens can help reduce risk of diffuse water pollution.

Requirements

- design the drainage aprons to redirect drainage water from the pen area back to the dip bath
- the apron must be made of impermeable concrete
- design the residue sump to catch debris, such as wool and faeces, and prevent it from re-entering the dipping tank
- construct the sump of engineering brick walls set on a concrete base
- install a drainage apron and sump which complies with the [Groundwater Protection Code](#)
- meet relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing site and current dipping facilities before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the EA and Local Planning Authority to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents/permissions with your payment claim. Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- for Mid Tier and Capital Grants, written support from a CSF officer

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP21 - Relocation of sheep pens only](#)
- [RP23 - Installation of livestock drinking troughs \(in draining pens for freshly dipped sheep\)](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to get a permit to discharge sheep dip

Agreement holders will need an [environmental permit](#) to discharge sheep dip to land. A variation to an existing permit may also be required if the location of the discharge area has changed.

Where to install drain pens

New drain pens should be located at least:

- 10m from watercourses (including streams, ditches, land drains and wetlands)
- 30m from watercourses that drain into protected conservation sites (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs))
- 50m from any spring, well or borehole

Dip baths and pens should not be installed on a slope, or at the top of one, where there is a risk that spillage might drain to a watercourse, road or track.

How to get best results

Drain pens should preferably have a roof to prevent clean water from yards, roofs or land running into them.

How to protect the historic environment

Agreement holders should avoid using this item:

- close to a historic farmstead or listed building (get advice on listed building consent)
- on sites of archaeological or historic importance as identified in the HEFER (get advice on Scheduled Monument consent from Historic England, before using this item on such sites)

Agreement holders should also consider the character of the landscape when constructing new fencing lines. This particularly applies in designated landscapes or historic parkland. Agreement holders must consult Natural England if intending to install the dip on an SSSI. How to construct the drain pens

The most effective drain pens should:

- be large enough to hold sheep for at least 10 minutes after dipping
- have properly sealed floors and built-in slopes (allowing excess dip to drain back to the bath, rather than soaking into the ground, the soil or a surface water drain)
- have concrete areas that are impermeable, with watertight sealed joints
- have a filter or trap to prevent dirt and dip draining back into the bath

Further information

Follow this guidance when [designing dip baths](#)

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP23: Installation of livestock drinking troughs (in draining pens for freshly dipped sheep)

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the installation of livestock drinking troughs (in draining pens for freshly dipped sheep) item.

How much will be paid

£68 per unit.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer

This item can be used to move a static holding pen used in conjunction with a mobile sheep dip.

Where this item cannot be used

- in conjunction with the installation of new permanent sheep dip and holding pens on a farm where there are no existing dipping facilities
- to replace existing equipment in the same location
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency or Local Planning Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will install new livestock drinking troughs in relocated sheep dip facilities. Pollution from sheep dips can cause damage to people and aquatic wildlife. Relocating sheep dips and pens can help reduce risk of diffuse water pollution.

Requirements

- install the water trough on a level hard base in either the draining pen or a fenced area
- the trough must be made of galvanised steel, concrete, spray-moulded glass-reinforced cement (GRC) or polyethylene
- connect the trough to a water supply or supply water from a bowser (if using mains water supply, applicants must comply with the [Water Supply \(Water Fittings\) Regulations 1999](#))
- make sure that pipework is medium-density blue polyethylene (with an external diameter of at least 25mm)
- make sure all joints on the pipework are watertight and made of brass or plastic
- bury the pipework below cultivation depth, to at least 600mm, or as determined by the local water supplier
- meet relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing site and current dipping facilities before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the EA and Local Planning Authority to check if consent is required to carry out the planned work. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents/permissions with your payment claim. Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP20 - Relocation of sheep dips and pens](#)
- [RP21 - Relocation of sheep pens only](#)
- [RP22 - Sheep dip drainage aprons and sumps](#)
- [RP28 - Roofing \(sprayer washdown area, manure storage area, livestock gathering area, slurry stores, silage stores\)](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Sheep dip, baths and pens

For more details on installing dip baths and pens, and on discharging sheep dip, please refer to [RP20 - Relocation of sheep dips and pens](#), [RP21 - Relocation of sheep pens only](#) and [RP22 - Sheep dip drainage aprons and sumps](#).

How to protect the historic environment

This item should not be used:

- close to a historic farmstead or listed building (get advice on listed building consent)
- on sites of archaeological or historic importance as identified in the HEFER (get advice on Scheduled Monument consent from Historic England, before using this item on such sites)

Further information

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#)

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP24: Lined biobed plus pesticide loading and washdown area

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the lined biobed plus pesticide loading and washdown area item.

How much will be paid

£118 per square metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer

Where this item cannot be used

- within 10m of a watercourse
- within 50m of a spring, borehole or well
- within 250m of a borehole used to supply water for producing domestic food without prior agreement from the Environment Agency (EA)
- on historic or archaeological features or areas of wildlife value identified on the Farm Environmental Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER
- without relevant advice, consents or waste exemption from the Environment Agency (EA)

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will contain and collect sprayer and applicator washings and degrade them in a biobed. This will help prevent pesticides from entering drains or water bodies, which will help reduce the risk of water pollution.

Requirements

- meet the requirements of the T32 waste exemption
- meet relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Loading and washdown area

Install a concrete bunded loading area, holding tanks, and fixed pumps and pipes to remove washings from the tank, as follows:

- remove topsoil and excavate an area for the washdown area and tank
- remove or divert any field drains that cross the site
- cover the site with 140mm to 160mm of well compacted hardcore and at least 25mm of sand blinding
- lay a damp-proof membrane weighing at least 1200g
- lay a reinforced concrete slab at least 150mm thick to falls of at least 1:100
- construct a concrete bund around the perimeter of the slab, making sure that all concrete joints are sealed with a proprietary sealant
- make sure the bund is at least 100mm high, so that it can contain liquids
- make sure the concrete bunded area is as wide as the sprayer plus 2m, and as long as the sprayer plus 1.5m
- make sure the bunded concrete slab contains a slotted-cover type drain connected to a silt trap with a removable cover that has a nominal capacity of 250mm below the inlet
- alternatively, lay the concrete so it is sloping 4 ways to a drain in the centre of the slab - the drain should have a silt trap within it
- direct the drain containing the silt trap to a tank or chamber (no larger than 1500 litres) from which pesticide washings can be pumped and disposed of
- make sure the holding tank is made from seamless polyethylene, glass-reinforced plastic (GRP) or pre-cast concrete
- make sure the holding tank is sized according to local rainfall and the area of concrete (if there is no roof or cover)
- make sure the whole structure is impermeable

Biobed

To construct a below-ground biobed:

- excavate an area for the biobed
- remove and block off any field drains
- compact the sides of the earth bank to a slope of 30 to 35 degrees (about 1 in 1.5) towards the base
- lay an impermeable synthetic liner at least 1.2mm thick (pesticide grade) on top of a geotextile membrane underlay (190g per square m) and 25mm of sand blinding

To construct an above-ground biobed:

- use pre-cast or reinforced concrete and a 1.2mm thick liner, or an impermeable pesticide grade container
- follow the liner manufacturer's installation instructions

Any necessary holding tanks, pumps and pipes must then be installed for the below or above-ground biobed.

How to install a biobed outlet

To construct a biobed outlet (except for evaporation systems):

- either insert a drain through the liner to create a 100mm bonded outlet at the lowest point of excavation

alternatively:

- create an internal sump when digging the biobed pit
- lay the liner to incorporate the sump
- make sure the liner is not perforated
- insert a central, permeable, vertical access tube (0.5m in diameter) to allow water to flow into the sump base
- install a pump within the tube, operated by a float switch setting

place a ring of perforated drainage pipe into the base of the biobed on top of the liner to assist the pump flow

- install pumps to carry the treated discharge from the biobed to a vegetated area for irrigation; or pump it to a storage tank for irrigation or re-use

How to prepare the biomix

- mix one part peat-free compost, one part topsoil and 2 parts straw (wheat or barley) by volume
- allow the biomix to compost for 30 to 90 days before using it to fill the biobed to an effective depth of 1m, topping it up if there is any settlement
- use at least 1 cubic m of biomix for every 1000 litres of liquid treated in any 12 month period
- turf over the biomix (except for evaporation systems)
- lay perforated pipes to distribute pesticide washings across the surface

The biobed does not need a cover or roof, unless it is an evaporation system.

How to use evaporation systems (biobeds designed to work by evaporation)

- cover the biobed with roof sheeting, using side ventilation to allow evaporation to occur without rainfall entering the system
- prepare the biomix as detailed for a non-evaporation system, but with a 50:50 ratio of soil and straw, and without turving over it
- base the treatment volumes on evaporation calculations
- get advice on design and volume calculations from specialists with experience in these systems

Offset biobeds

- collect pesticide washings from an existing pesticide loading and washdown area in a storage tank
- pump them for treatment in the offset biobed

Drive-over biobeds

- construct a bunded drive-over grid above the biobed, with supporting foundations
- make sure the grid and its foundations are suitable for the loading of any equipment driven over the grid

Do not treat more than 15,000 litres of pesticide washings (excluding rainfall) in any 12 month period.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on re request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start
- documents associated with the [exemption for the treatment of waste in a biobed or biofilter](#) (exemption T32), issued by the EA

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the EA and obtain any consent that may be required to carry out the planned work. Applicants must check whether they are in a [Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1 area](#). You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents or permissions with your payment claim. Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as [RP28 - Roofing \(sprayer washdown area, manure storage area, livestock gathering area, slurry stores, silage stores\)](#).

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to get further design advice

[Further design advice](#) is available on how to size the loading and washdown area and holding tanks, and on pesticide washing volume calculations, from [Catchment Sensitive Farming](#) and in the Biobed Manual on the [Voluntary Initiative](#) website. Payment rate is £118 per square metre of the bunded area.

How to choose a location

The biobed should be constructed in an area set aside for pesticide loading and washing operations, and where there is no other traffic.

It can be constructed on the same area as the following features, even though they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme:

- farmyards
- areas of land, or farm buildings, not used for production

How to maintain the biobed

Add fresh, pre-composted biomix to the biobed every year to maintain 1m depth. Replace the biomix every 5 years. A [U10](#) or [U11 exemption](#) for spreading waste will be required to spread the biomix to land. Hazardous waste must not be treated in the biobed or biofilter.

What to do with pesticide washings

The pesticide washings from the loading and washdown area collected in the holding tank should be pumped before the tank reaches capacity using a pump float switch. Transfer the washings to the biobed for treatment.

How to main the slab, bund and pumps

Inspect the concrete slab and bund regularly and repair any damage or deterioration. The pumps will also need to be checked regularly to make sure they are operating properly.

Also ensure that:

- the area is not used for any purpose other than pesticide handling operations
- the concrete is not damaged so that the area becomes impermeable

- the storage tank does not overflow

Further information

More information about pesticide handling areas and biobeds, including sizing and volume calculations, is available from the [Voluntary Initiative](#).

[Catchment Sensitive Farming](#) (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. CSF provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#)

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP25: Lined biobed with existing washdown area

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the lined biobed with existing washdown area item.

How much will be paid

£77 per square metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer

Where this item cannot be used

- within 10m of a watercourse
- within 50m of a spring, borehole or well
- within 250m of a borehole used to supply water for producing domestic food without prior agreement from the Environment Agency (EA)
- on historic or archaeological features or areas of wildlife value identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER
- without relevant advice, consents or waste management licence from the Environment Agency (EA)

How this item will benefit the environment

A lined biobed will treat the pesticide residues that arise from pesticide handling activities. This will help prevent pesticides from entering drains or water bodies, which will help reduce the risk of water pollution.

Requirements

- meet relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance
- meet the requirements of the T32 waste exemption

Biobed

Follow the requirements as set out in [RP24 – Lined biobed plus pesticide loading and washdown area](#) under Biobed.

Do not treat more than 15,000 litres of pesticide washings (excluding rainfall) in any 12 month period.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start
- documents associated with the [exemption for the treatment of waste in a biobed or biofilter](#) (exemption T32), issued by the EA

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the EA and obtain any consent that may be required to carry out the planned work. Applicants must check whether they are in a [Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1 area](#). You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will

need to submit consents/permissions with your payment claim. Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as [RP27 - Sprayer or applicator load and washdown area](#).

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to choose a location

The biobed should be constructed in an area set aside for pesticide loading and washing operations, and where there is no other traffic.

It can be constructed on the same area as the following features, even though they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme:

- farmyards
- areas of land, or farm buildings, not used for production

How to maintain the biobed

Add a fresh, pre-composted biomix to the biobed every year to maintain 1m depth. Replace the biomix every 5 years. A waste exemption [U10](#) will be required to spread the biomix. Hazardous waste must not be treated in the biobed or biofilter.

What to do with pesticide washings

The pesticide washings collected in the holding tank should be pumped before the tank reaches capacity. Use a pump float switch to dispose of the washings (a T32 exemption will be required for this) or to transfer them to a biobed or biofilter for treatment.

Further information

More information about pesticide handling areas and biobeds, including sizing and volume calculations, is available from the [Voluntary Initiative](#).

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#)

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP26: Biofilters

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the biofilters item.

How much will be paid

£990 per unit.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture

Where this item cannot be used

- within 10m of a watercourse
- within 50m of a spring, borehole or well
- within 250m of a borehole used to supply water for producing domestic food without prior agreement from the Environment Agency (EA)
- on historic or archaeological features or areas of wildlife value identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER
- without relevant advice, consents or waste management licence from the Environment Agency (EA)

How this item will benefit the environment

The biofilter will degrade pesticide residues that arise from pesticide handling activities. This will help prevent pesticides from entering drains or water bodies, which will help reduce the risk of water pollution.

Requirements

Agreement holders will need to install a biofilter. This should be constructed either as set out in the approved Feasibility Study or Implementation Plan, or as described below and which to meet the T32 exemption.

To construct a biofilter applicants must:

- use 3 new, chemical-resistant impermeable containers - these will typically be 1000 litre intermediate bulk containers (IBCs) stacked vertically
- store pesticide washings in additional containers next to the IBCs, either before or after treatment
- alternatively, pump the washings directly from an underground storage tank that collects washings from a pesticide handling area
- cut the tops off the IBCs, leaving the corners intact
- insert wire mesh lining in the base of each one
- cover the lining with a permeable membrane
- install a layer (at least 10cm) of pea gravel over the membrane so that the drainage outlet to the container below is not blocked
- make a biomix by mixing one part peat-free compost, 1 part topsoil and 2 parts straw (wheat or barley) by volume
- allow the biomix to compost for 30 to 90 days before filling the IBCs
- fill the IBCs with biomix, leaving a 10cm gap at the top for piping
- allow the biomix to settle, then top up to a volume of at least 0.5 cubic metres of biomix in each one
- stack the 3 IBCs vertically into a tower on a flat concrete base
- if the biofilter is not covered, replace the top of the uppermost container to prevent rainfall from getting in
- install pumps, pipes and a hose to pump washings from the initial storage tank to the top biofilter container and on to the biomix through a piped ring distribution system
- allow the washings to flow by gravity through the pipes to the containers below
- pump discharge from the bottom container to a storage tank, or for direct irrigation through a perforated hose on a vegetated area
- build a concrete bund at least 100mm high around the biofilter
- meet the requirements of the T32 waste exemption
- meet relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Do not treat more than 15,000 litres of pesticide washings (excluding rainfall) in any 12 month period.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start
- documents associated with your [exemption for the treatment of waste in a biobed or biofilter](#) (exemption T32), issued by the EA

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the EA and obtain any consent that may be required to carry out the planned work. Applicants must check whether they are in a [Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1 area](#) with EA. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents/permissions with your payment claim.

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP27 - Sprayer or applicator load and washdown area](#)
- [RP28 - Roofing \(sprayer washdown area, manure storage area, livestock gathering area, slurry stores, silage stores\)](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to choose a location

The biofilter should be situated where it can be used safely, for example:

- away from thoroughfares
- on a flat concrete base
- against a wall or other surface where it will be well-supported

The biofilter can be placed in a farmyard or building or under a roof. It can also be placed on areas of land, or farm buildings, that are not used for production. For best results, it should be located close to the pesticide handling and washdown area.

How to maintain the biofilter

Fresh, pre-composted biomix should be added to the biofilter to maintain its depth. The biomix should remain moist, using irrigation if necessary. Care must be taken not to allow the container to overflow. The biomix should be replaced every 5 years. A [U10](#) or [U11](#) exemption for spreading waste will be required to spread the biomix. The biofilter should not be used to treat hazardous waste.

Further information

More information about pesticide handling areas and biobeds, including sizing and volume calculations, is available from the [Voluntary Initiative](#)

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP27: Sprayer or applicator load and washdown area

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the sprayer or applicator load and washdown area item.

How much will be paid

£40 per square metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer

Where this item cannot be used

- within 10m of a watercourse
- within 50m of a spring, borehole or well
- within 250m of a borehole used to supply water for producing domestic food without relevant advice from the Environment Agency (EA)
- on historic or archaeological features or areas of wildlife value identified on the Farm Environmental Record (FER), the Environmental Information Map or the HEFER

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will contain and collect washings from sprayers or applicators. These will then be degraded in a biofilter or biobed, which will help reduce the risk of water pollution.

Requirements

- follow the requirements as set out in [RP24 – Lined biobed plus pesticide loading and washdown area](#) under Loading and washdown area

- meet relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from the EA and obtain any consent that may be required to carry out the planned work. Applicants must check whether they are in a [Groundwater Source Protection Zone 1 area](#) with EA. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents or permissions with your payment claim. Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [RP26 - Biofilters](#)
- [RP28 - Roofing \(sprayer washdown area, manure storage area, livestock gathering area, slurry stores, silage stores\)](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to get further design advice

[Further design advice](#) is available on how to size the loading and washdown area and holding tanks and on pesticide washing volume calculations, from [Catchment Sensitive Farming](#) and in the Biobed Manual on the [Voluntary Initiative](#) website.

How to choose a location

The item should be constructed in an area set aside for pesticide loading and washing operations where there is no other traffic.

It can be constructed on the same area as the following features, even though they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme:

- farmyards
- areas of land, or farm buildings, not used for production

What to do with pesticide washings

The pesticide washings collected in the holding tank should be pumped before the tank reaches capacity using a pump float switch. To dispose of the washings transfer them to a biobed or biofilter for treatment (a [T32 waste exemption](#) will be required for this). Alternatively, pesticide washings can be disposed of via a registered waste carrier to a suitably permitted disposal site or to a permitted area approved by the Environment Agency on the farm.

How to main the slab, bund and pumps

The concrete slab and bund regularly and repair any damage or deterioration. The pumps will also need to be checked regularly to make sure they are operating properly.

Also ensure that:

- the area is not used for any purpose other than pesticide handling operations

- the concrete is not damaged so that the area becomes impermeable
- the storage tank does not overflow

Further information

More information about pesticide handling areas, biobeds and biofilters, including sizing and volume calculations, is available from the [Voluntary Initiative](#).

[Catchment Sensitive Farming](#) (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP28: Roofing (sprayer washdown area, manure storage area, livestock gathering area, slurry stores, silage stores)

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the roofing (sprayer washdown area, manure storage area, livestock gathering area, slurry stores, silage stores) item.

How much will be paid

£62 per square metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer

This item can be used for roofing a sprayer washdown area but only where a bunded concrete pad is being used and all pesticide washings drain to a holding tank (sump), without an associated drive-over biobed.

Where this item cannot be used

- to cover a livestock housing unit
- to cover a biobed
- to repair or replace existing roofing
- to cover concrete funded under [RP15 Concrete yard renewal](#) or concrete funded under a current Catchment Sensitive Farming agreement
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency or Local Planning Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will provide new roofing to reduce water pollution by preventing rainfall from getting into:

- sprayer washdown areas
- manure storage areas
- livestock gathering areas
- slurry and silage stores

Requirements

- build a roof structure impermeable to rainwater
- install guttering and drains to direct roof water to a clean water drain
- make sure that drainage works meet any building and local authority requirements
- meet the requirements of the [silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil \(SSAFO\) regulations 2010](#)
- meet relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from:

- the Environment Agency to check what is required as new and significantly altered stores may have to meet the [silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil \(SSAFO\) regulations 2010](#)
- the local planning authority, to check whether planning permission is required to carry out the planned works

You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents/permissions with your payment claim.

Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to get more detailed advice

Further design advice, such as an infrastructure audit, slurry and manure handling plan, or pesticide handling report, may be available from CSF.

How to separate clean and dirty water

Foul or dirty water should not be permitted to contaminate clean waste. Plan how to manage any additional runoff from the impermeable roofed area. The restructuring of clean and dirty drains may be required, or additional works such as:

- cross drains
- catch pits
- gulleys
- kerbs
- sleeping policemen

Make sure channels and pipes meet the relevant regulations

Any foul or dirty water (including slurry or manure residues), and any associated channels and pipes, should meet the SSAFO regulations. Channels and pipes should have a minimum design life of 20 years (with maintenance).

What this item can be used to cover

This item should be used within existing yard areas that lie between or immediately adjacent to existing infrastructure.

This item can cover:

- manure stores (proof will be needed that a pollution problem exists)
- yards where animals are handled, feed, drink or exercise
- slurry and silage stores (make sure the existing floors, walls and effluent collection are not a pollution risk - contact the EA for advice)
- silage self-feeding sites

It can be used over pesticide sprayer or applicator loading and washdown areas, providing:

- the roof covers the bunded wash-down area and the drain to the holding tank
- there is a minimum 1m overhang on each side
- the bunded area is a minimum of the sprayer transport width (with the booms folded) plus 2m, and the sprayer length plus 1.5m
- the foundations and structural supports are secure and do not breach the bund, so that no pesticide washings can escape

Side walls and shades can also be built with the roof, though only at the applicant's own expense and as long as it does not breach any consents or permits.

Further information

More information about separating clean and dirty water is available from the [Rivers Trust](#).

More information about pesticide handling areas and biobeds, including sizing and volume calculations, is available from the [Voluntary Initiative](#).

[Catchment Sensitive Farming \(CSF\)](#) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP29: Self-supporting covers for slurry and anaerobic digestate stores

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the self supporting covers for slurry stores item.

How much will be paid

£30.50 per square metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water and air pollution from agriculture
- for roofing an existing above ground circular store
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer

Where this item cannot be used

- for existing square or rectangular slurry or on-farm anaerobic digestate stores
- for floating covers
- to cover any structure other than a slurry or on-farm anaerobic digestate store
- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency (EA) or Local Planning Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will provide a self-supporting cover to an existing circular slurry or on-farm anaerobic digestate store. This will stop rainwater from entering slurry or anaerobic digestate stores and reduce the volume of dirty water that needs to be stored and spread. It will also improve air quality by reducing ammonia emissions.

Requirements

- install a self-supporting cover with a minimum design life of 20 years (with maintenance)
- install a rainproof, self-supporting cover, supported above the slurry or anaerobic digestate store and fastened by tensioners to the side of the tank
- make sure the tank is able to support the cover
- install the cover when the store is empty
- direct the rainwater away from the slurry or anaerobic digestate store into a clean water drain or rainwater harvesting system
- display appropriate signs to warn of the dangers of confined spaces and fragile covers
- meet the requirements of the [SSAFO regulations 2010](#) and [Nitrate Vulnerable Zone \(NVZ\)](#) requirements
- meet relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from:

- the Environment Agency, to check what is required as new and significantly altered stores may have to meet the [silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil \(SSAFO\) regulations 2010](#)

- the local planning authority, to check whether planning permission is required to carry out the planned works

You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents/permissions with your payment claim.

Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to get more detailed advice

[Further design advice](#) is available on how to size the loading and washdown area and holding tanks, and on pesticide washing volume calculations, from CSF.

Consult an engineer before using this item

Before work is carried out, a structural or civil engineer must check that the existing store is able to support a cover. A specialist supplier or tank manufacturer should be consulted.

Further information

More information about separating clean and dirty water is available from the [Rivers Trust](#).

More information on using covers on [circular slurry stores](#) is available.

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP30: Floating covers for slurry and anaerobic digestate stores and lagoons

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the floating covers for slurry stores and lagoons item.

How much will be paid

£5.60 per square metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water and air pollution from agriculture
- on existing slurry or on-farm anaerobic digestate stores or lagoons
- with support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer

Where this item cannot be used

- without relevant advice or consents from the Environment Agency (EA) or Local Planning Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

A floating cover for slurry and on-farm anaerobic digestate stores and lagoons will help to reduce the volume of dirty water that needs to be stored and spread. It will also improve air quality by reducing ammonia emissions.

Requirements

- install a floating cover with a minimum design life of 5 years (with maintenance)
- install a rainproof floating cover on a slurry or anaerobic digestate store or tank

- make sure the tanks or the lagoon's earth banks are able to support the cover and fastening implements
- install the cover when the store is empty
- direct the rainwater away from the cover into a clean water drain or rainwater harvesting system
- display signs to warn of the dangers of confined spaces and fragile covers
- secure the cover to avoid wind damage and to prevent rainwater running off and mixing with contaminated effluent
- place the cover on floats if needed
- meet the requirements of the [SSAFO regulations 2010](#) and [Nitrate Vulnerable Zone \(NVZ\)](#) requirements
- meet relevant [British Standards](#) - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, applicants must seek advice from:

- the Environment Agency, to check what is required as new and significantly altered stores may have to meet the [silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oil \(SSAFO\) regulations 2010](#)
- the local planning authority, to check whether planning permission is required to carry out the planned works

You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit consents/permissions with your payment claim.

Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- written support from a CSF officer

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to get more detailed advice

[Further design advice](#) is available on how to size the loading and washdown area and holding tanks, and on pesticide washing volume calculations, from CSF.

Regulations for slurry stores

The slurry stores should meet the SSAFO regulations which cover the design, construction and maintenance of the stores.

How to maintain the drains

Drains should take rainwater from the cover, making sure it does not mix with effluent, and transport it to clean water ditches and drains. A pump may be needed to help transport the water.

Further information

More information about separating clean and dirty water is available from the [Rivers Trust](#).

More information on using covers on [circular slurry stores](#) is available.

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP31: Equipment to disrupt tramlines in arable areas

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the equipment to disrupt tramlines in arable areas item.

How much will be paid

£1,500 per machine.

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier only:

- in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture
- on farms with crops or fields, identified as at risk of soil erosion in the Farm Environment Record (FER)
- to purchase one piece of equipment

You must have support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer to use this item.

How this item will benefit the environment

It will support the purchase of equipment that can loosen soil that has compacted in wheeled tramlines. This will help reduce surface runoff, risk of soil erosion damage and water pollution.

Requirements

You must:

- purchase a spiked or rotary harrow, or tine device that can have a direct loosening effect on compacted soil in the wheeled tramline area.

Make sure the device is built to attach directly to one of the following:

- a tractor
- a sprayer being towed behind a tractor
- a self-propelled sprayer

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the purchased equipment
- a delivery note with serial number for the equipment

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick a location

Areas most likely to benefit from this item include:

- fields that are connected to bodies of water at risk of failing water framework directive requirements due to diffuse water pollution from agriculture (DWPA)
- designated sites that are failing their condition assessment due to DWPA
- fields that are at risk of soil erosion:
 - as identified in the FER
 - where slopes are complex or are inclined at more than 3 degrees

Seek advice from an agronomist or farm adviser who holds a BASIS soil and water management certificate, or equivalent.

Choose the right equipment

Choose a device:

- that has a direct loosening effect on compacted soil within the wheeled tramline area, which will improve surface infiltration and increase surface roughness
- that creates diagonally offset holes ('pock marks') to infiltrate the topsoil to a depth of between 7.5 centimetres (cm) and 16.5cm

Where you select a rotary harrow, the wheel should be rimmed with spikes that are offset to each other and at a right angle to the direction of travel.

How to use the equipment

The equipment should be used:

- with correctly inflated tyres to reduce tyre compaction within the tramline area
- when machinery passes over the soil for the first time or soon after, such as during the first spray operation

Use this item with other measures

This item should be used with other measures that reduce soil erosion and water runoff. These items and options include:

- in-field grass areas
- double headlands to disconnect water pathways

Further information

You can find more information on [sustainable soil husbandry and the identification of soil erosion issues](#) online .

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP32: Small leaky woody dams

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the small leaky woody dams item.

How much will be paid

£461.39 for each dam

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier and Woodland Creation grants but only:

- in catchments targeted for flood risk measures
- for dams, in streams between 1 metre (m) and 2.99m
- where approved by the Environment Agency or Lead Local Flood Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

Leaky woody dams slow the movement of water and help push flows onto the floodplain during floods. This increases temporary storage of flood waters within water channels and out on to the floodplain, helping delay the passage of flood water downstream, allowing sediment to settle out, and reduce downstream flood risk.

Requirements

You must:

- follow the indicative drawings in the [Higher Tier manual Annex 2c](#) for maximum effectiveness
- construct the dam from logs large enough to span the water channel and out on to the floodplain to provide a stable and long-lasting structure
- secure the dam in line with the requirements of the Environment Agency or Lead Local Flood Authority
- align dams at right angles to channel banks to reduce bank scour
- build dams to allow low flows to pass unimpeded at all times

- site dams on slow flowing reaches of the water course that have on average 2m of floodplain on either side
- build dams to a height sufficient to encourage water to spread onto the floodplain upstream of the dam
- build dams in series (minimum 3 dams) at a spacing between dams of about 5 to 7 times the width of the channel
- make sure dams are not installed directly upstream of pinch points such as bridges or culverts that back up flows and are likely to swamp the dam
- check and maintain dams to keep the structure effective
- follow the requirements set out in any Feasibility Study or Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) Design Plan

Keeping records

Before you apply, you must seek advice from the Environment Agency and where relevant the Lead Local Flood Authority to check if you need consent to carry out the planned work.

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the completed works in place and installed
- any consents and permissions from the Environment Agency/Local Flood Authority

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start
- a copy of the Feasibility Study or woodland management plan or Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) design plan (Water-Holding Feature Management Plan), where applicable
- any consents or permissions connected with the work (in addition to the ones stated above)

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) for more detail.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Detailed design can vary and the siting of leaky woody dams in natural water courses will be dictated by local circumstances and availability of or easy access to import suitable materials to site. [Higher Tier manual Annex 2c](#) has details of indicative design of dams.

Check the dams for silt

You will need to check the dam regularly and de-silt it to prevent it collecting large amounts of silt.

Further information

You can improve the management of water on the land by using [rural sustainable drainage systems](#).

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for [further information on Catchment Sensitive Farming \(CSF\)](#) support.

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

RP33: Large leaky woody dams

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the large leaky woody dams item.

How much will be paid

£764.42 for each dam

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier and Woodland Creation grants but only:

- in catchments targeted for flood risk measures
- for dams in streams and river channels between 3 metres (m) and 5m
- where approved by the Environment Agency or Lead Local Flood Authority

How this item will benefit the environment

Leaky woody dams slow the movement of water and help push flows onto the floodplain during floods. This increases temporary storage of flood waters within water channels and out on to the floodplain, helping delay the passage of flood water downstream, allowing sediment to settle out, and reduce downstream flood risk.

Requirements

You must:

- follow the indicative drawings in the [Higher Tier manual Annex 2c](#) for maximum effectiveness
- construct the dam from logs large enough to span the water channel and out on to the floodplain to provide a stable and long-lasting structure
- secure the dam in line with the requirements of the Environment Agency or Lead Local Flood Authority
- align dams at right angles to channel banks to reduce bank scour
- build dams to allow low flows to pass unimpeded at all times

- site dams on slow flowing reaches of the water course that have on average 2m of floodplain on either side
- build dams to a height sufficient to encourage water to spread onto the floodplain upstream of the dam
- build dams in series (minimum 3 dams) at a spacing between dams of about 5 to 7 times the width of the channel
- make sure dams are not installed directly upstream of pinch points such as bridges or culverts that back up flows and are likely to swamp the dam
- check and maintain dams to keep the structure effective
- follow the requirements set out in any Feasibility Study or Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) Design Plan

Keeping records

Before you apply, you must seek advice from the Environment Agency and where relevant the Lead Local Flood Authority to check if you need consent to carry out the planned work.

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- photographs of the completed works in place and installed
- any consents and permissions from the Environment Agency/Local Flood Authority

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the existing site before work starts
- a copy of the Feasibility Study or woodland management plan or Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) design plan (Water-Holding Feature Management Plan), where applicable
- any consents and permissions connected with the work (in addition to the ones stated above)

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) for more detail.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Detailed design can vary and the siting of leaky woody dams in natural water courses will be dictated by local circumstances and availability of or easy access to import suitable materials to site. [Higher Tier manual Annex 2c](#) has details of indicative design of dams.

Check the dams for silt

You will need to check the dam regularly and de-silt it to prevent it collecting large amounts of silt.

Further information

The management of water on the land can be improved by using [rural sustainable drainage systems](#).

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for [further information on CSF](#) support.

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) or [Woodland Creation](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SB1: Scrub control and felling diseased trees

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the scrub control and felling diseased trees item.

How much will be paid

Payment rates

Method of removal	Stem diameter	Percentage covered per ha	Payment per ha
Machine cut	Less than 7cm	Under 50%	£260
Machine cut	Less than 7cm	50% and over	£520
Machine cut	7cm and above	Under 50%	£520
Machine cut	7cm and above	50% and over	£1,040
Manual cut	Not applicable	Under 50%	£980
Manual cut	Not applicable	50% and over	£1,680

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier only:

- to control or manage scrub with the agreement of Natural England (NE) or the Forestry Commission (FC)
- to remove immature trees that could spread disease and that cannot be economically felled with the agreement of the FC

You can use this item on the same area as [TE12: stump grinding](#) and [WD2: woodland improvement](#).

How this item will benefit the environment

It will restore or maintain priority habitats and protect historic or archaeological features. It will prevent disease spreading from infected sites to the wider environment.

Requirements

You must:

- when to carry out the work
- whether to cut by hand or machine
- what to do with stumps
- how to dispose of cut material
- how to control regrowth and injurious weeds
- how to fell all diseased trees within an agreed area
- to remove non-symptomatic trees to reduce the risk of disease (as agreed with the adviser)
- what biosecurity measures to use to avoid transferring disease to other sites

Keeping records

You must get any relevant consents before you apply for this item. This may include:

- a felling licence from the Forestry Commission
- consent from NE to use the item on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- consent from Historic England to use the item on a Scheduled Monument

You do not need to send the consents with your application, but you will need to send any that are required to with your payment claim.

You must keep the following records and supply them with your annual payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work
- a felling licence from the Forestry Commission

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- consent from NE to use the item on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- consent from Historic England to use the item on a Scheduled Monument
- any consents or permissions connected with the work (in addition to the ones listed above)
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- records of when the scrub control was carried out
- a record of any pesticide or herbicide treatments, including dates and locations
- a woodland management plan indicating the need for scrub control, if the scrub control takes place in woodland - this does not apply to diseased trees
- an Implementation Plan or Feasibility Study, if applicable, setting out the need for scrub control
- photographs of the trees/scrub, before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Related items

You can use this item on the same area as item [TE12 - Stump grinding](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Definitions of scrub, diseased trees and immature trees

Scrub means any woody shrubs, including European gorse, bramble and young trees. It does not include dwarf or western gorse, so this item cannot be used to control those species.

To be eligible under this grant, diseased trees are defined as immature larch infected with *Phytophthora ramorum* subject to a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN).

An immature tree is one that is up to 25 years old.

When to use this item

With this item, cut scrub or trees manually or with a machine. Manual removal is carried out on foot, with a clearing saw or chainsaw, and machine cutting from a cab, by a tractor fitted with a flail.

This item can be used:

- if scrub is encroaching on to species-rich grassland
- around archaeological sites or historic features
- if species that depend on managed scrub are present, for example turtle dove and brown hairstreak
- within woodland to create permanent or temporary open areas

How to remove scrub

To remove scrub:

- cut scrub to ground level
- don't disturb roots or leave protruding stems
- use item [TE12 - Stump grinding](#)
- keep the site free of scrub for the rest of the agreement

What to do with diseased trees

If you have an SPHN for diseased trees, they must follow the guidance in the SPHN. If there isn't an SPHN, fell all infected trees in the contract area and follow the FC's biosecurity guidance.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SB2: Scrub control - difficult sites

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the scrub control - difficult sites item.

How much will be paid

Up to 80% of actual costs.

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier only on sites that either:

- need specialist operations or machinery, with costs that cannot be covered by the scheme's fixed-rate scrub control payments - this includes sensitive habitats and areas with difficult or hazardous working conditions, such as steep slopes, bogs and islands, or
- have it as a requirement of an approved Forestry Commission [woodland management plan](#)

You can also use this item on the same area as [TE12: stump grinding](#) and [WD2: woodland improvement](#).

Where this item cannot be used

- To control dwarf and western gorse, as these are key parts of heathland
- To manage scrub by grazing

Requirements

You must:

- send at least 3 written quotations for completing the work to Natural England or the Forestry Commission - quotes must identify associated costs
- carry out scrub control during the autumn and winter
- follow guidance on what to do with any stumps and how to dispose of cut material
- control re-growth

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application:

- 3 quotes for completion of the work

You must keep the following records and supply them with your annual payment claim:

- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the completed work

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- records of when the scrub control was carried out
- a record of any pesticide or herbicide treatments, including dates and locations
- a Forestry Commission approved Woodland Management Plan or a Natural England approved implementation plan, if relevant
- photographs of site before works start
- item specification, if required

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Management

Cut scrub to ground level. Don't disturb the roots or leave protruding stems.

For stump removal use the [TE12 - Stump grinding](#).

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SB3: Tree removal

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the tree removal item.

How much will be paid

£144 per tree.

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier only if there is a net cost for the removal of timber, allowing for any timber sales.

How this item will benefit the environment

It will support the removal of trees, helping to restore open habitats or prevent damage to environmental features.

Requirements

You must agree a specification for the work with Natural England, including:

- the removal of trees in the agreed places and at the agreed times
- make sure that no trees are uprooted (or roots removed after felling) on historic or archaeological features
- the removal of felled trees from the site, leaving some wood stacked in the agreed areas

Keeping records

Before you apply, contact the Forestry Commission to see if you need a [felling licence](#) or an [environmental impact assessment](#).

You must keep the following records and send them with your annual payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work
- a copy of the advice from the Forestry Commission

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the trees to be removed

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SB4: Chemical bracken control

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the chemical bracken control item.

How much will be paid

£170 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this item

- Available for Higher Tier
- Whole and part-parcel
- Only in combination with a land management option

The most common such options include:

[LH1: Management of lowland heathland](#)

[LH2: Restoration of forestry and woodland to lowland heathland](#)

[LH3: Creation of heathland from arable or improved grassland](#)

[UP1: Enclosed rough grazing](#)

[UP2: Management of rough grazing for birds](#)

[UP3: Management of moorland](#)

[WD1: Woodland maintenance payments following woodland creation](#)

This supplement can also be used to control bracken on other options, such as on dry grassland, woodland (including the creation and maintenance of new woodland) or sand dunes.

How this item will benefit the environment

It is for chemically controlling bracken. This will restore or maintain high value natural habitats and their associated wildlife, protect archaeological features and help maintain or enhance the landscape's character.

Requirements

Agreement holders will need to agree with Natural England or, in woodland, the Forestry Commission, a specification for the work, including:

- the use of asulam or glyphosate to control bracken, providing this is within the approval for the product at the time of application

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- copies of the Implementation Plan or Feasibility Study, if one exists

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item

Bracken control

If the application is successful one of two approaches will be followed depending on the size and complexity of the bracken problem. There is no fixed threshold, but Natural England will help with the choice.

Large sites

On larger sites, particularly where major habitat restoration is involved, a Natural England approved Implementation Plan or Feasibility Study will be needed. This will include:

- areas to be controlled
- methods of control
- follow up treatments to control re-growth
- any risks to sites of archaeological or ecological importance, soil erosion risks or effects on the landscape (short and long term)

Small sites

On smaller, less complex sites an Implementation Plan or Feasibility Study may not be needed. On such sites a simple plan may suffice, one that includes a map showing areas to be treated and dates of control.

Environmental concerns

Make sure that the planned bracken control has a minimal negative effect on other environmental interests on the site. In general, chemical control causes less disturbance to archaeological sites, ground nesting birds and invertebrates than mechanical control. But it will kill other species of fern and may be more damaging to other plants around the site.

All herbicide applications (including aerial application) must follow the law and relevant codes of practice. [Natural England's bracken control guidelines](#) should also be followed.

Make sure any relevant consents are in place before carrying out the work. This includes [consent from the Environment Agency to spray near a watercourse](#).

If any areas are missed they will need to be sprayed in the following year.

Site regeneration

As the site regenerates, control any bracken regrowth or weeds such as nettle, thistle, dock or ragwort. More effective bracken control may result if combined with appropriate grazing, where possible, due to the effects of trampling.

Further information

Further information is available from:

- Symes, N. & Day, J. 2003. A practical guide to the restoration and management of lowland heathland, The RSPB, Sandy
- guidance on [habitat management for reptiles](#) from the ARC Trust
- Natural England's guide to [grazing management of lowland heathland](#)
- Natural England's guide to [protecting soils and the historic environment when restoring or re-creating lowland heathland](#)

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SB5: Mechanical bracken control

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the mechanical bracken control item.

How much will be paid

£169 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this item

- Available for Higher Tier
- Whole and part-parcel
- Only in combination with a land management option

The most common such options include:

[LH1: Management of lowland heathland](#)

[LH2: Restoration of forestry and woodland to lowland heathland](#)

[LH3: Creation of heathland from arable or improved grassland](#)

[UP1: Enclosed rough grazing](#)

[UP2: Management of rough grazing for birds](#)

[UP3: Management of moorland](#)

[WD1: Woodland maintenance payments following woodland creation](#)

This supplement can also be used to control bracken on other options, such as on dry grassland, woodland (including the creation and maintenance of new woodland) or sand dunes.

How this item will benefit the environment

This item is for mechanically controlling bracken. This will restore or maintain high value natural habitats and their associated wildlife, protect archaeological features and help maintain or enhance the landscape's character.

Requirements

Agreement holders will need to agree with Natural England or, in woodland, the Forestry Commission, a specification for the work.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- copies of the implementation plan or feasibility study, if one exists

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item

Bracken control

If the application is successful one of two approaches will be followed depending on the size and complexity of the bracken problem. There is no fixed threshold, but Natural England will help with the choice.

Large sites

On larger sites, particularly where major habitat restoration is involved, a Natural England approved Implementation Plan or Feasibility Study will be needed. This will include:

- areas to be controlled
- methods of control
- follow up treatments to control re-growth
- any risks to sites of archaeological or ecological importance, soil erosion risks or effects on the landscape (short and long term)

Small sites

On smaller, less complex sites an Implementation Plan or Feasibility Study may not be needed. On such sites a simple plan may suffice, one that includes a map showing areas to be treated and dates of control.

Environmental concerns

Make sure that the planned bracken control has a minimal negative effect on other environmental interests on the site. You should follow [Natural England's bracken control guidelines](#).

In general, mechanical control may cause more disturbance to archaeological sites, ground nesting birds and invertebrates than chemical control. During the nesting season make sure that birds are not nesting in the treated area.

Frequency

The site should be treated twice in year 1 and this repeated for at least three years, depending on the level of success achieved.

Site regeneration

As the site regenerates, control any bracken regrowth or weeds such as nettle, thistle, dock or ragwort. More effective bracken control may result if combined with appropriate grazing, where possible, due to the effects of trampling.

Further information

Further information is available from:

- Symes, N. & Day, J. 2003. A practical guide to the restoration and management of lowland heathland, The RSPB, Sandy
- guidance on [habitat management for reptiles](#) from the ARC Trust

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SB6: Rhododendron control

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the rhododendron control item.

How much will be paid

Slope of site	Rhododendron height	Payment
Level or gentle slope (0 to 11 degree incline)	Average height is less than 2.5m tall	£2,800 per hectare (ha)
Moderate slope (12 to 18 degree incline)	Between 2.5m to 4m tall	£3,200 per ha
Steep or very steep slope (19 degrees or more)	Average height is over 4m tall	£4,400 per ha

The higher rate will apply where the site is classed in 1 or more of these categories, for example if the site is on a steep slope with an average height of less than 2.5m.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier.

Where agreed with the Forestry Commission, the item can be used on the same area as [WD2: woodland improvement](#).

How this item will benefit the environment

It supports rhododendron control, reducing the negative effect this can have on a site.

Rhododendron reduces the biodiversity value of a site, hindering woodland regeneration and, once established, is difficult and costly to eradicate.

Rhododendron can also be a host for the fungus-like pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*, which affects larch.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- check the slope on the ground - it cannot be based solely on map contours
- destroy all rhododendron within the target area
- cut all live rhododendron material from the stump, allowing access for chemical spraying of any re-growth
- treat all stumps with a suitable herbicide on the day of being cut and in frost free and rain free conditions - rain should not be forecast for at least 6 hours
- dispose of cut material so that it allows access to stumps for chemical spraying of any re-growth
- control any injurious weed species, when the site regenerates, if there is a risk of spread to pasture land (used by grazing livestock or conserved for forage)
- chemically treat re-growth with a recommended herbicide - follow the manufacturer's guidance on application rates and safety requirements
- keep the operations in line with recommendations in the Forestry Commission practice guide [Managing and controlling invasive rhododendron](#)

Removing infected rhododendron

When removing rhododendron infected with *Phytophthora ramorum* or *Phytophthora kernoviae*, agreement holders must:

- clean or disinfect clothing, equipment and vehicles according to advice given in the [Forestry Commission biosecurity guidance](#)
- use disinfectants that have gone through a Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) safety assessment as well as an environmental assessment

Burning waste material

Agreement holders may need to discuss whether to burn cut waste material with their local Forestry Commission or Natural England adviser. If told to burn it, agreement holders must:

- agree in advance where the burn site will be

- build bonfires far enough away from trees (at least 10m from the crown of any tree) to avoid damaging them
- make sure that burning sites and piles of wood are not on patches of ground where they could damage species-rich grassland, anthills or other ecological or archaeological features
- clean up the site as soon as possible after burning - burning on a metal sheet reduces damage to the soil and makes it easier to remove ash from the site

What the management plan needs to include

When used on a woodland site the woodland management plan needs to both:

- identify rhododendron as being present
- identify rhododendron as posing a threat to successful management

These do not apply if rhododendron is being removed due to a tree health issue.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- an approved woodland management plan (unless the rhododendron is infected by *Phytophthora ramorum*, *Phytophthora kernoviae* or within 3km of an Statutory Plant Health Notice and a management plan is not needed)
- any bank statements, receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- Forestry Commission Management Plan approval letter, if required

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Assess the slope class

The payment rate depends on the slope of the site and height of the rhododendron.

Applicants can estimate the slope by eye but a clinometer will give a better assessment.

Contours on maps can give an indication of slope but applicants will need to check the slope on the ground.

Slope class	Type	Percentage incline (%)	Degree
1	Level	0 to 10	0 to 6
2	Gentle	11 to 20	7 to 11
3	Moderate	21 to 33	12 to 18
4	Steep	34 to 50	19 to 27
5	Very steep	over 51	over 28

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SP1: Difficult sites supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the difficult sites supplement.

How much is paid

£62 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only in combination with a land management option on whole parcels if either of these apply:

- where grazing management has been abandoned or is in danger of abandonment
- on parcels less than 1ha in area with stockproof traditional boundaries, including banks, hedges, walls or wet ditches (gateways must be less than 3.6m wide)

Where this supplement cannot be used

With [UP3 - Management of moorland](#)

The Isles of Scilly

In the Isles of Scilly it can be used in combination with a land management option on whole parcels if any of these apply:

- on arable land up to and including 0.4ha in area
- on arable fields up to and including 5ha in area that are sub-divided into small bulb fields no bigger than 0.4ha, and are bounded by granite walls or salt tolerant shrub hedges ('fences')
- on pastoral fields up to and including 2ha in area

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It supports the management of particularly difficult sites. It also retains small fields and their locally characteristic boundary pattern.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to keep boundaries and, where required, reintroduce grazing.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- confirmation that the eligibility requirements are met

Applicants will need to send the following with their application:

- map identifying access gateways - these can be marked on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

The detailed requirements for this supplement will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related supplements

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements:

- [GS15 – Haymaking supplement](#)
- [GS16 – Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [GS17 - Lenient grazing supplement](#)
- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP3 – Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 – Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP9 – Threatened species supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this supplement

The following section gives advice on carrying out this supplement successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this supplement

This supplement is available at the discretion of Natural England on sites that need an exceptionally high and sustained time and labour input.

Examples include sites:

- with very poor accessibility, remoteness or isolation, where it is very difficult to walk livestock or to transport livestock to the site
- with hazards to personnel and livestock within or next to the site, such as:
 - cliffs or extremely steep slopes or screes
 - sparse riverside land
 - islands
 - mineshafts
 - landslips
 - subsidence
 - gullies
 - with hazards to livestock, such as:
 - poisonous vegetation from which stock cannot be excluded
 - regular disturbance by dogs
 - urban fringe locations
 - where it is very difficult to locate stock within a site for welfare checks

Where this supplement cannot be used

The supplement is not intended for:

- mechanical vegetation control - supplements such as [GS15 - Haymaking supplement](#) or a capital item are more appropriate
- sites currently grazed to acceptable levels for nature conservation
- sites where grazing is not secured for the lifetime of the agreement
- small parcels which are not stockproof or are not managed individually

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SP2: Raised water level supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the raised water level supplement.

How much will be paid

£127 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Higher Tier

Only in combination with the one of following land management options:

- [GS6 - Management of species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS7 - Restoration towards species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS8 - Creation of species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS13 - Management of grassland for target features](#)
- [GS14 - Creation of grassland for target features](#)

And in combination with another land management option with the written confirmation of a Natural England specialist.

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It is for raising or maintaining water levels in ditches and adjacent land.

Suitable water levels will be maintained on the option the supplement's applied to.

Requirements

Agreement holders will need to raise and maintain high water levels using suitable water control structures, or maintain existing in-field wetness.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- consents or permissions connected with this work

You should also be aware that at the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic records:

- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this supplement will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related supplements

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements:

- [GS15 - Haymaking supplement](#)
- [GS16 - Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [GS17 - Lenient grazing supplement](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT11 - Wetland cutting supplement](#)
- [WT12 - Wetland grazing supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this supplement

The following section gives advice on carrying out this supplement successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this supplement

Pick the right location

This supplement can be used when the cost of raising or maintaining water levels is not covered by the underlying option.

The supplement usually requires active management of water levels. However, naturally wet sites (where groundwater levels are naturally high

or where levels are managed by a third party, such as the local internal drainage board) may also be suitable.

To justify the supplement the site wetness should both:

- be appropriate for the habitat or historic feature and any targeted species present
- lead to increased management costs which are not accounted for by the option (such as difficulties in sward management or livestock health implications)

When water levels are being actively managed, the land levels, topography, soils and underlying geology should be suitable for water level management. The site, either alone or combined with a group of sites, should form a natural hydrological unit.

Water management structures (such as sluices or bunds) may be needed to separate the site from neighbouring land - these may be available as capital items.

Unsuitable sites

Unsuitable sites include those where:

- the base option already includes the costs of water level management (such as the wet grassland and wetland options), unless the supplement is approved by a Natural England specialist
- the supplement increases the risk of flooding or waterlogging elsewhere
- the water supply lacks the quantity or quality to achieve the objectives
- raising water levels would damage priority habitats or species, or features of archaeological, historic or landscape value, unless approved mitigation measures can be taken
- the proposal would damage third party land or buildings, infrastructure or other assets unless approved mitigation measures are taken
- there are conflicts with public access or other uses of the area that cannot be resolved

Consents and permissions

Applicants should always consult the local land drainage authority about changes to water levels or restoration works that affect water courses or

the floodplain. This may be the local internal drainage board, the Environment Agency or the local authority.

Planning consent may be needed, such as for flood defence bank removal, or for the installation of bunds or embankments within the floodplain.

Applicants may also need the local planning authority's permission to divert a public right of way.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SP3: Bracken control supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the bracken control supplement.

How much will be paid

£153 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Higher Tier

Whole and part-parcel

Only in combination with a land management option. The most common such options include:

- [LH1 - Management of lowland heathland](#)
- [LH2 - Restoration of forestry and woodland to lowland heathland](#)
- [LH3 - Creation of heathland from arable or improved grassland](#)
- [UP1 - Enclosed rough grazing](#)
- [UP2 - Management of rough grazing for birds](#)
- [UP3 - Management of moorland](#)

This supplement can also be used to control bracken on other options, such as on dry grassland, woodland or sand dunes.

Where this supplement cannot be used

On the same area in the same year as the bracken control capital items:

- [SB4 - Chemical bracken control](#)
- [SB5 - Mechanical bracken control](#)

This supplement would normally be used in subsequent years, as a follow-up to these items.

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It controls the spread of, or removes, existing dense stands of bracken. This will maintain or restore biodiversity value and protect archaeological sites.

If successful the underlying vegetation will develop and spread, and will develop a diverse mosaic structure and composition, including undisturbed bare ground and varied vegetation types.

Successfully managing the remaining vegetation (usually by grazing or cutting) will reduce the chances of bracken spreading back. Locally characteristic plant communities and the species they support will expand or even colonise the site.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- control bracken so that cover is reduced to a set proportion by a set date
- only carry out chemical control on specifically identified areas
- use temporary grazing controls to protect vegetation regeneration
- graze to break up litter beds and damage young fronds to offer extra bracken control
- control any re-infestation during the term of the agreement
- carry out specific follow up cutting or grazing management tailored to their site

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- consents or permissions connected with this work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

Applicants will need to send the following with their application:

- a map of the extent of bracken - this can be marked on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Before applying, the applicant should get Environment Agency's consent if this is within a water catchment area. You do not need to provide these with your application, but you will need to submit any that are required with your payment claim.

The detailed requirements for this supplement will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related supplements

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements:

- [UP6 - Upland livestock exclusion supplement](#)
- [WD9 - Livestock exclusion supplement - scrub and successional areas](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

Further information

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SP4: Control of invasive plant species supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the control of invasive plant species supplement.

How much will be paid

£324 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Whole and part-parcel

Only in combination with an appropriate annual management option.

Where this supplement cannot be used

For rush control.

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It supports the active management and eradication of particularly severe infestations of invasive non-native species that are damaging a feature of interest, such as:

- Himalayan balsam
- Japanese knotweed
- floating pennywort and other invasive aquatic plants

Active management is needed to maintain or restore wildlife value or protect archaeological features.

If successful there should be a reduction in cover and density of non-native invasive species. Native plants and animals will re-establish the area cleared, returning a more natural balance to the habitat.

Requirements

Agreement holder are likely to need to:

- control the invasive species so that cover is reduced to a set proportion by a set date
- only carry out chemical control on specifically identified areas
- use temporary grazing controls to protect vegetation regeneration
- control any re-infestation during the term of the agreement
- carry out specific follow up cutting or grazing management tailored to their site

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices

The detailed requirements for this supplement will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related supplements

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements:

- [CT6 – Coastal vegetation management supplement](#)
- [GS15 – Haymaking supplement](#)
- [GS16 – Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [GS17 – Lenient grazing supplement](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement](#)
- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [SW14 – Nil fertiliser supplement](#)
- [UP4 – Management of moorland vegetation supplement](#)
- [UP5 – Moorland re-wetting supplement](#)

- [UP6 – Upland livestock exclusion supplement](#)
- [WD9 – Livestock exclusion supplement](#)
- [WT11 – Wetland cutting supplement](#)
- [WT12 – Wetland grazing supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this supplement

The following section gives advice on carrying out this supplement successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this supplement.

Non-native invasive species

Invasive non-native plants are species that:

- have been introduced to the UK either intentionally or unintentionally
- spread and damage the environment, the economy and health

Where this supplement can be used

Use this supplement when aiming to do more than just control an invasive species' spread and, if feasible, eradicate it. Exact details will be agreed with Natural England.

This supplement can also be used to control non-native invasive species in marginal areas (such as riverbanks, riparian habitats, ditches, channels, field margins, corners and ponds). This can only be done if there is a Countryside Stewardship land management option on that land parcel.

Where this supplement cannot be used

- to control [weeds listed in the Weeds Act 1959](#)
- to control bracken and gorse - use the appropriate supplement
- for complying with cross compliance requirements
- for rush infestations - if this is on land under a Countryside Stewardship option then apply for [GS16 - Rush infestation control supplement](#)

Controlling non-native invasive species

Invasive species can be controlled through a range of methods, including:

- containing a species in a limited area
- preventing (or slowing) its spread

- localised population reduction or eradication in particular areas

Alternative methods include cutting by hand or cutting mechanically, applying herbicide or an alternative agreed method, depending on the plant being controlled.

If the applicant has permission to spray herbicide make sure that the person spraying has the relevant qualifications and certifications.

When controlling and disposing of invasive non-native plants on land, specific legal responsibilities must be complied with, including:

- spraying with herbicide
- cutting and burning
- burying invasive plant material
- disposing of invasive plant and contaminated soil off site

Further information

Get more information on invasive weeds from:

the guide to [harmful weeds and invasive, non-native plants](#)

guidance on the [Wildlife and Countryside Act and landowners' responsibilities](#)

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SP5: Shepherding supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the shepherding supplement.

How much will be paid

£7 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this supplement

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on part-parcels on land where shepherding needs to be introduced, reintroduced or where significant changes to current practices are needed.

You must combine it with one of the following options:

- [CT1 - Management of coastal sand dunes and vegetated shingle](#)
- [CT2 - Creation of coastal sand dunes and vegetated shingle on arable land and improved grassland](#)
- [GS6 - Management of species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS7 - Restoration towards species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS8 - Creation of species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS9 - Management of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS10 - Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS11 - Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS12 - Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS13 - Management of grassland for target features](#)
- [GS14 - Creation of grassland for target features](#)
- [LH1 - Management of lowland heathland](#)
- [LH2 - Restoration of forestry and woodland to lowland heathland](#)
- [LH3 - Creation of heathland from arable or improved grassland](#)
- [UP2 - Management of rough grazing for birds](#)
- [UP3 - Management of moorland](#)
- [WT6 - Management of reedbed](#)
- [WT7 - Creation of reedbed](#)
- [WT8 - Management of fen](#)
- [WT9 - Creation of fen](#)
- [WT10 - Management of lowland raised bog](#)

How this supplement will benefit the environment

If successful there will be:

- improvements in the quality of vegetation
- overgrazing reduced in some areas and increased in others
- better habitats for birds, mammals and insects
- less damage to archaeological features and vulnerable soils and less poaching (trampling)
- more suitable conditions for threatened species to thrive
- improved visibility of historic and archaeological features

Requirements

You must:

- keep records of shepherding or herding activities on the agreed area

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- record of shepherding activity
- photographs of the management undertaken

Related supplements

You can locate this item on the same area as the following supplements:

- [GS15 – Haymaking supplement](#)
- [GS16 – Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [GS17 – Lenient grazing supplement](#)
- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP3 – Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 – Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 - Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [UP4 – Management of moorland vegetation supplement](#)
- [UP5 – Moorland re-wetting supplement](#)
- [UP6 – Upland livestock exclusion supplement](#)

- [WT12 – Wetland grazing supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this supplement

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

Only use this supplement in areas where you have agreed with Natural England that shepherding is needed to help improve the option land.

Use mineral licks or supplementary feed in agreed locations to help with stock management

Do not use this supplement where:

- boundaries are not proofed against livestock and they cannot be controlled effectively
- there is little or no shepherding available in the area
- the site is not grazed
- there is already a local practice, custom or regulation in place for shepherding

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SP6: Cattle grazing supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the cattle grazing supplement.

How much will be paid

£45 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier

Only with a land management option where cattle grazing is appropriate for delivering the aims of the option. In Mid-Tier with:

- [GS5 Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDA's](#)
- [GS6 Management of species rich grassland](#)
- [WD4 Management of wood pasture and parkland](#)
- [UP2 Management of rough grazing for birds](#)

In Higher Tier:

- with a land management option where cattle grazing is appropriate for delivering the aims of the option

Where this supplement cannot be used

With:

- [GS17 - Lenient grazing supplement](#)
- [SW14 - Nil fertiliser supplement](#)

Related Mid-Tier options

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements.

- [GS15 – Haymaking supplement](#)
- [GS16 – Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [WD7 - Management of successional areas and scrub](#)

How this supplement will benefit the environment

The more varied sward structure and better control of scrub, bracken and coarse vegetation will increase wildlife diversity. This will be particularly beneficial in wet areas and difficult sites such as steep slopes.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Cattle grazing on site throughout the year. In Mid-Tier, at least 60% of the grazing Livestock Units will be cattle.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this supplement, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Stock records to show grazing activity on parcels

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Type of cattle

Many cattle breeds or cross-breeds may be capable of meeting requirements:

- cattle with low nutritional requirements, such as dry suckler cows, are best for sites with fibrous herbage
- mature, placid cattle are best suited for sites where there are ground-nesting birds, as they reduce the risk of trampling

Timing

Graze different habitat types at different times of the year and with a range of cattle numbers.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SP7: Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly supplement.

How much will be paid

£279 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only:

- in the Isles of Scilly
- with a land management option where cattle grazing will help achieve the option's goals

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It is for the introduction of conservation grazing on the Isles of Scilly on land that is not currently grazed by cattle.

If successful there will be:

- a more varied sward structure that will increase wildlife diversity
- better control of scrub, bracken and coarse vegetation
- better grazing of wet areas and difficult sites such as steep slopes

Requirements

Agreement holders will need to graze cattle on the land with the option. Grazing needs to follow the stocking calendar agreed with Natural England.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- stocking calendar agreed with Natural England

The detailed requirements for this supplement will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related supplements

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements:

- [CT6 – Coastal vegetation management supplement](#)
- [GS15 – Haymaking supplement](#)
- [GS16 – Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP3 – Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 – Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WD9 – Livestock exclusion supplement – scrub and successional areas](#)
- [WT12 – Wetland grazing supplement](#)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SP8: Native breeds at risk supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the native breeds at risk supplement.

How much is paid

£94 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only on land in combination with a land management option. The species and breed used for grazing must be confirmed in writing by Natural England as being appropriate for achieving the option's aims.

[Native breed at risk](#) (NBAR) grazing livestock must be used that are either:

- registered pedigree purebreeding animals
- genetically-provable purebred progeny of registered pedigree purebreeding parents of the same eligible NBAR breed

Where this supplement cannot be used

- on common land and shared grazing areas
- in combination with [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It is for the conservation of genetic diversity in native breeds at risk.

The number of NBAR stock on the farm will increase or be maintained as agreed. This makes sure that the breeds will not become extinct in England.

Requirements

- state how many registered pedigree purebreeding NBAR livestock they will be keeping, or agreeing to keep, by the end of the agreement

- graze specific parcels with the breeds at risk in accordance with a stocking calendar

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- a monthly record of grazing animals at the parcel level
- unique individual animal movement identification numbers for each eligible animal
- any changes to the original documentation since submission of the application, such as replacement animals
- stocking calendar agreed with Natural England
- the unique individual permanent NBAR breed identification numbers for each eligible animal - either the pedigree registration number or birth notification number
- breed registration records and proof of animal provenance, parentage and availability for each animal

The detailed requirements for this supplement will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related supplements

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements:

- [CT6 – Coastal vegetation management supplement](#)
- [GS15 – Haymaking supplement](#)
- [GS16 – Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [GS17 – Lenient grazing supplement](#)
- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP3 – Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 – Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 – Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WD9 – Livestock exclusion supplement – scrub and successional areas](#)
- [WT12 – Wetland grazing supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this supplement

The following section gives advice on carrying out this supplement successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this supplement.

Breeds

The [UK NBAR list](#) shows the eligible breeds. Information on suitable breeds for different types of grassland and how to manage them is available at the [Grazing Animals Project](#).

On farms with mainstream breeds as well as NBAR livestock payment will be limited to an area of land sufficient to maintain the eligible NBAR livestock.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SP9: Threatened species supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the threatened species supplement.

How much will be paid

£120 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier in combination with a land management option where either:

- at least one threatened species is present on the site
- you can manage the site to create the right conditions to allow the reintroduction, re-colonisation or range extension of a named priority species

For Higher Tier only, the management work must have written support from a specialist.

In Mid Tier you can only use this option if it meets the relevant criteria (see below), you have written approval from RPA and it supports the management for brown hairstreak butterfly, corn bunting or turtle dove.

Using this supplement for Turtle Dove

Use this supplement with AB12 or OP3 as part of an Arable or Mixed Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package and include AB11 in the agreement with either BE3 or WD7 (to provide additional foraging areas and places to nest).

You can only use this supplement if your land is located (partly/wholly) within the following priority counties:

- Bedfordshire
- Berkshire
- Buckinghamshire
- Cambridgeshire

- Devon
- Dorset
- East Riding of Yorkshire
- East Sussex
- Essex
- Gloucestershire
- Hampshire
- Herefordshire
- Hertfordshire
- Isle of Wight
- Kent
- Leicestershire
- Lincolnshire
- Norfolk
- North Yorkshire
- Northamptonshire
- Nottinghamshire
- Oxfordshire
- Rutland
- South Yorkshire
- Suffolk
- Surrey
- Warwickshire
- West Sussex
- Wiltshire
- Worcestershire

Eligible SP9 area when being used with AB12 or OP3 for Turtle Dove

For each tonne -1000kilograms(kg) - of AB12 or OP3 you are using to supply summer supplementary feeding for turtle doves, you can claim 3.00ha of SP9. This supplement will help cover the substantially higher cost of the bespoke turtle dove seed mix as well as additional labour costs associated with maintaining a higher number of feeding areas, staggered feeding days and record keeping.

Minimum and maximum quantity of AB12 and OP3 to be used with SP9 for Turtle Dove

To be eligible to use the SP9 supplement with AB12 or OP3 to deliver summer supplementary feeding for turtle doves, all agreements must contain a minimum of 2 feeding areas (equivalent to 200kg of supplementary feeding using AB12 or OP3). In addition, use of this supplement with AB12 or OP3 is restricted to a maximum of 4 feeding areas per every 250ha of agreement land as follows:

Area in agreement (ha)	Maximum number of turtle dove feeding areas per agreement
less than 250 ha	4
250 to 499 ha	8
500 to 749 ha	12
750 to 999 ha	16
more than 1000 ha	20

Using this supplement for Brown Hairstreak

Use this supplement with BE3 Management of hedgerows and include a Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package in the agreement.

Eligible SP9 area when used with BE3 for Brown Hairstreak

For every 2,000 metres (m) of BE3 management of hedgerows, you can claim 1.00 ha of SP9 which is equivalent to £0.06 per metre. We adjust the amount of SP9 payable on a pro rata basis according to the length of BE3 which you are managing for brown hairstreak as follows.

Examples	Length managed	SP9 payable	Amount
A hedgerow that is 1000m in length is managed for brown hairstreak (as per	2000m of BE3/SP9 management	1.00ha of SP9 payable	£120/year

Examples	Length managed	SP9 payable	Amount
the BE3 and SP9 prescriptions) on both sides			
A hedgerow that is 1000m in length is managed for brown hairstreak (as per the BE3 and SP9 prescriptions) for 500m on one side and 300m on the other side	800m of BE3/SP9 management	0.40ha of SP9 payable	£48/year

There is no restriction on the amount of hedgerow that you can manage for brown hairstreak, provided the butterfly occurs on the holding.

Using this supplement for Corn Bunting

Use this supplement with AB10 Unharvested cereal headland as part of the Arable or Mixed Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package, and include AB12 or OP3 in the agreement.

For every 1ha of AB10 being managed for corn bunting you can claim 1 ha of SP9.

Where this supplement cannot be used

- For any work within the scope of standard options or capital items.

Related Mid Tier options

You can locate this supplement on the same area as all other supplements except:

- [SW14 – Nil fertiliser supplement](#)

How this supplement will benefit the environment

If successful, this will provide habitat for one or more threatened species

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

We will also check the aims and prohibited activities for the underlying / associated options. This supplement adds to or modifies those requirements.

Using this supplement for Turtle Dove

Summer supplementary feeding will use the following seed mix.

- 35% oilseed rape
- 35% white millet
- 10% canary seed
- 10% sunflower hearts
- 10% wheat

From 1 April until 30 September, there will be about 5kg of summer supplementary feeding mix spread once a week for 20 weeks at each feeding area. Each feeding area will supply 100kg during the feeding period.

There will be a feeding diary detailing:

- mixture used (weight of components and cost)
- dates of feeding
- amount of feed spread on each date
- total amount (kg) of supplementary feed fed during the feeding period
- the location of the feeding areas

Supplementary feeding locations will be on bare or sparsely-vegetated ground within 300m of suitable turtle dove nesting habitat (tall, thick hedges or areas of dense scrub), and ideally within close proximity to ponds.

The feeding locations will have patchy, short vegetation less than 15cm in height with a minimum of 30% (preferably 50-60%), bare ground from April

to September, as turtle doves will not forage within tall or dense vegetation.

Using this supplement for Brown hairstreak

Hedgerows in option BE3 will be cut on a 3-5 year rotation, with no more than a third of any hedgerow being cut in any one year. Suckering blackthorn growth will be allowed to develop from the hedgerow.

Using this supplement for Corn bunting

The underlying option AB10 will be a minimum of 24m wide and will be located within 200m of a strip or block of one of the following options, which provide insect-rich habitat for the parent birds to collect food for chicks.

- AB8 Flower rich margins
- AB1 Nectar Flower Mix
- OP4 Multi species ley

The underlying AB10 will be re-established in the same location each spring for at least 3 years.

The associated option AB9 Winter bird food or OP2 Wild bird seed mixture will be at least 48m wide. The seed mix will include 60% spring barley and will be re-established every year.

If undertaking AB6, this option will be retained until at least 14 August of the year following the harvest so that any late nesting attempts are not destroyed.

Prohibited Activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- use feed hoppers where managing AB12 for Turtle Dove
- use tailings in the feeding mix where managing AB12 for Turtle Dove

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you have not carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended Management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#) and [Prohibited activities](#)

Using this supplement for Turtle Dove

We recommend that you use the Turtle Dove feeding procedure / practice set out below.

Where to feed

Suitable feeding locations include cultivated fallows, sparsely vegetated field margins, farm tracks and areas of hard standing. You can locate the feeding locations in-field or at the field edge adjacent to boundaries.

Where the vegetation height is more 15 centimetres (cm) or the area of bare ground falls below 30%, manage the feeding location to maintain optimal ground conditions (by mowing or shallow cultivation) or move it. You can move feeding locations occasionally - where you need to do this, make sure you move them as short a distance as possible.

When to feed

Carry out turtle dove supplementary feeding for 20 weeks between 1 April and 31 August. While most turtle doves return to the UK from late April/early May onwards, it is recommended to start feeding a couple of weeks early to draw in other birds such as pigeons that will, in turn, signpost the feeding areas.

In addition, in years when turtle doves embark on their migration to Africa later, you can, where appropriate, extend feeding into September.

How much to feed each week

Feed 5kg once a week at each feeding location. You can vary the amount to be fed each week by up to 2kg per week to match demand as necessary.

How often to feed

Feed at least once a week unless there is visible evidence of uneaten seed starting to accumulate.

To make sure a continuous supply of seeds is available - as well as to minimise seed spoilage and consumption by non-target species - feed smaller amounts of seed more often, or alternatively, stagger feeding over a number of days. See example feeding programme below.

Field name	RLR field parcel number	Feeding period	No. of weeks to feed	How often to feed	Designated feeding day	Amount to feed each week kg	Total to be fed during feeding period
Abbey Field	TM12345678	1 April – 31 August	20	Once a week	Monday	5kg once a week	0.100 tonne
Blacklands	TM23456789	1 April – 31 August	20	Once a week	Wednesday	5kg once a week	0.100 tonne
Chapel Field	TM34567891	1 April – 31 August	20	Once a week	Friday	5kg once a week	0.100 tonne
Long Meadow	TM45678912	1 April – 31 August	20	Once a week	Sunday	5kg once a week	0.100 tonne
						Total supplementary feed to be fed during the feeding period	0.400 tonne

How to feed

Feed by hand or use equipment such as a slug pellet applicator, fertiliser spreader or purpose built supplementary feeding spreader to scatter the seeds thinly over a wide area. This helps to reduce the risk of attracting undesirable non-target species. As a guide, if you spread seed in a strip

measuring 50m by 5m wide this should achieve the best distribution of seeds.

Hygiene

To minimise the risk of disease and parasite transfer between birds using supplementary feeding areas, you should:

- avoid spreading the seed too thickly - this can encourage parasites harmful to turtle doves, as well as attract undesirable non-target species such as rats
- spin or scatter the mix only to avoid creating feed piles or long trails
- stop feeding, if there is a visible build-up of unused food, until seeds are no longer visible
- move feeding locations at least every other year to minimise pathogen build up

Using this supplement for Corn bunting

We recommend that you use the underlying option AB10 on a part or whole field scale.

Keeping Records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- priority species specialist report
- feeding diary

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SP10: Administration of group managed agreements supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the administration of group managed agreements supplement.

How much will be paid

£6 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only in combination with an annual management option. The agreement land must be common land or have shared tenure with 2 or more legal interests.

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It is for agreements with shared tenure. It supports good administration of these agreements.

A well-administered agreement group will meet regularly and keep suitable records.

Requirements

Register with the Rural Payments Agency

Agreement holders will need to [register with the Rural Payments Agency \(RPA\)](#) if they have not already done so. All participants in the agreement must be registered with the RPA and have their own Single Business Identifier. The agreement group must be separately registered.

Carry out the management as set out in the agreement.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- an up to date list of agreement participants - send revised versions to the RPA and Natural England within 30 days of any change
- any bank statements, receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- records documenting the activities and decisions of the group, association or committee - this includes records of meetings, constitution and agreement documentation and management of changes to the group membership or participants list
- a copy of a written internal agreement

The detailed requirements for this supplement will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related options

This supplement may be used with most land management options and other supplements but not with the organic conversion or organic land management options.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this supplement

The following section gives advice on carrying out this supplement successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this supplement.

Picking the right situation

This supplement can be used where a group rather than an individual manages agreement land. This will often apply where the agreement is on common land or where there is shared grazing.

Internal agreements

This internal agreement needs to state:

- the group's governance
- responsibilities for achieving the agri-environment agreement requirements
- how members will be paid

- the evidence that all participants and the group are registered as a business with the RPA

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW1: 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land option.

How much will be paid

£353 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier

On the edges of cultivated fields, between the productive part of the field and an existing feature or habitat (which must be identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER)), such as:

- hedgerows and hedge trees remnants of trees on former boundary lines
- stone walls
- woodlands
- ponds, ditches, rivers and streams

It can also be used next to:

- trackways that channel runoff water directly to a watercourse
- fence lines that form links between areas of wildlife habitat identified on the FER

Where this option cannot be used

- Overlapping a public right of way (such as a footpath or bridleway)

Related Mid-Tier options

The following options can be used on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OR4 - Organic conversion - horticulture](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)

- [OT4 - Organic land management - horticulture](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

A grass buffer strip may provide new habitat, protect existing landscape features, and improve water quality.

Next to existing features, it will provide habitat for wildlife, and form links or corridors between other habitats.

Next to a watercourse, it will also prevent pollutants, such as sediment and nutrients, from being transported in surface water runoff.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be a 4 to 6 metre (m) wide grass strip. Establish this during the first year and maintain for the period of the agreement. There will be an intact grass sward with no evidence of damage from vehicle or stock access routes.

During late summer, after the bird breeding season, cut part of the strip width next to the crop edge to provide some shorter vegetation.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Apply any fertilisers or manures
- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to weed wipe or spot treat injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, nettles or bracken
- Remove fallen timber or the limbs (including lower limbs) of any hedgerow trees that are over 30 centimetres (cm) in diameter at breast height.
- Cut the remainder of the strip (except to control woody growth)

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- once the strip has been established, cut between 1m and 3m of the strip next to the crop edge every year after 15 July
- only cut the remaining width to control woody growth (leaving aside areas containing fallen timber)
- where there are hedgerow trees over 30cm in diameter at breast height, leave fallen timber beneath the canopy, stacking any timber that obstructs management of the buffer strip

Keeping Records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Photographs of the strips

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Using this option on existing buffer strips

This option can be used on buffer strips that are already established, unless they are being paid for through another scheme. However, the buffer strip should be on land that can be cultivated (for example, it cannot be on a very steeply banked strip alongside a boundary).

Buffer strips established under Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) can continue to be managed under a new Countryside Stewardship agreement.

How to choose a site

To protect watercourses, create the buffer strip:

- next to the watercourse
- across the slope on long, steep slopes, to intercept runoff before it builds to a damaging flow

To benefit wildlife, select a location that links habitats, or that is next to:

- watercourses
- hedgerows (particularly hedges with mature hedgerow trees)
- stone walls
- remnants of trees on former boundary lines
- groups of trees in strips along the edge of woodland

To protect archaeological features, create the buffer strip beside:

- archaeological features located above the ground
- historic features
- metal parkland fencing

How to manage the buffer strip

- remove any subsoil compaction where required to prepare a seedbed, except on archaeological features
- control weeds and cut regularly in the first 12 to 24 months of establishment to encourage grasses to tiller
- avoid cutting when the soil is wet to prevent compaction
- the buffer strip should remain in place and not be re-sown for the duration of the agreement

The buffer strip can be partly covered by a hedge, as long as the hedge is located on land that is eligible for this option.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW2: 4m to 6m buffer strip on intensive grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the 4m to 6m buffer strip on intensive grassland option.

How much will be paid

£170 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier

On the edges of intensively managed, improved grassland fields that are:

- receiving more than 100 kilograms (kg) for every hectare (ha) of nitrogen per year in the form of fertilisers or manures.
- between the productive part of the field and a feature or habitat (which must be identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER)), such as:
 - hedgerows and hedge trees
 - remnants of trees on former boundary lines
 - stone walls
 - woodlands
 - ditches, rivers and streams

This option can also be used:

- next to trackways that channel runoff water directly to a watercourse
- next to fence lines that form links between areas of wildlife habitat identified on the FER

Where this option cannot be used

- Overlapping a public right of way (such as a footpath or bridleway)

Related Mid-Tier options

The following options can be used on the same area as this option.

- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides new habitat and protects existing landscape features. When placed next to existing features, it will protect water courses, provide habitat for wildlife, and form links or corridors between other habitats.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be a 4 to 6 metre (m) wide grass strip. Establish this during the first year and maintain for the period of the agreement. There will be an intact grass sward with no evidence of damage from vehicle or stock access routes.

During the summer, if the rest of the field is mown, leave the buffer strip un-cut.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Apply any fertilisers or manures
- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to weed wipe or spot treat injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, nettles or bracken
- Remove fallen timber or the limbs (including lower limbs) of any hedgerow trees that are over 30 centimetres (cm) in diameter at breast height
- Cut the buffer strip, except to control woody growth

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- leave an uncut buffer strip 4m to 6m wide around the edge of any fields that will be mown (livestock can graze this strip along with the aftermath)
- only cut the sward to control woody growth
- where there are hedgerow trees over 30cm in diameter at breast height, leave fallen timber beneath the canopy, stacking any timber that obstructs management of the buffer strip

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Input records showing that the grassland has received more than 100kg of nitrogen per ha per year

At the start of each claim year, you may be asked to take and submit the following photographic records.

- Photographs of the strips

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Using this option on existing buffer strips

This option can be used on buffer strips that are already established, unless they are required or being paid for through another scheme. Buffer strips established under Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) can continue to be managed under a new Countryside Stewardship agreement.

How to choose a site

To benefit wildlife, select a location that links habitats, or that is next to:

- watercourses
- hedgerows (particularly hedges with mature hedgerow trees)
- stone walls
- remnants of trees on former boundary lines
- groups of trees in strips along the edge of woodland

To protect archaeological features, create the buffer strip beside:

- archaeological features located above the ground
- historic features
- metal parkland fencing

How to manage the buffer strip

- Remove any subsoil compaction where required to prepare a seedbed, except on archaeological features
- Control weeds and cut regularly in the first 12 to 24 months of establishment to encourage grasses to tiller
- Avoid cutting when the soil is wet, to prevent compaction. You should consider using option SW11 - Riparian management strip - on sloping fields next to a watercourse where there is a risk of soil erosion, runoff or bankside trampling.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW3: In-field grass strips

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the in-field grass strips option.

How much will be paid

£557 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier

- Only on cultivated land identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER) as at risk of soil erosion or surface runoff
- Only on part parcels that are no more than 30% of the parcel area

Related Mid-Tier options

The following options can be located on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OR4 - Organic conversion - horticulture](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)
- [OT4 - Organic land management - horticulture](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

Grass areas or strips will help to reduce the quantity of sediment, nutrients and pesticides transported through surface runoff water, both within fields and from field to field.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be an in-field grass strip. Establish this during the first year and maintain for the period of the agreement. There

will be an intact grass sward with no evidence of damage from vehicle or stock access routes.

During late summer, after the bird breeding season, cut the entire strip to encourage a dense sward with a variety of grasses to grow.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Apply any fertilisers or manures
- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to weed wipe or spot treat injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, nettles or bracken
- Allow livestock access to the strip

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- establish or maintain a dense grassy area during the first 12 months of the agreement
- once it has been established, cut the entire area every year after 15 July

Keeping Records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to achieve the best results

Improve water infiltration on the grass strip through appropriate management of the adjoining land. Strips will trap sediment better if large volumes of overland flow are not coming from surrounding land.

This option can be used at the margins of fields that are vulnerable to erosion to capture sediment or materials carried in runoff water.

Creating breaks, such as hedgerows and woodland, on long, steep slopes will complement the grass strips.

How to choose a site

The grass strip should be created:

- on natural drainage pathways (for example, the bottom of a valley) to stop runoff water from creating rills and gullies
- on long, sloping fields, with the strip placed parallel to the slope and alternated with wide, cultivated strips to slow runoff water and trap sediment and organic material
- not overlapping a public right of way (such as a footpath or bridleway)

How to manage the grass strip

- Remove any subsoil compaction where required to prepare a seedbed, except on archaeological features
- Control weeds and cut regularly in the first 12 to 24 months of establishment to encourage grasses to tiller
- Avoid cutting when the soil is wet, to prevent compaction
- The buffer strip should remain in place and not be re-sown for the duration of the agreement

Where there is a need to implement this option on more than 30% of the parcel, you should consider instead using option SW7 - Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input to cover a larger area.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW4: 12m to 24m watercourse buffer strip on cultivated land

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the 12m to 24m watercourse buffer strip on cultivated land option.

How much will be paid

£512 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier:

- only on cultivated land identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER) as at risk of soil erosion or surface runoff
- only on land next to ditches, rivers or streams

Where this option cannot be used

- Overlapping a public right of way (such as a footpath or bridleway)

Related Mid-Tier options

The following options can be located on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OR4 - Organic conversion - horticulture](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)
- [OT4 - Organic land management - horticulture](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It establishes a grass buffer to help reduce the risk of potential pollutants, such as sediment, pesticides and nutrients (mainly phosphate), being transported to watercourses in surface water runoff. It may also provide habitat for wildlife, and form links between other habitats.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be a 12 to 24 metre (m) wide grass strip. Establish this during the first year and maintain for the period of the agreement. There will be an intact grass sward with no evidence of damage from vehicle or stock access routes.

During late summer, after the bird breeding season, cut the 6m of the buffer strip next to the crop to provide some shorter vegetation.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Apply any fertilisers or manures
- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to weed wipe or spot treat injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, nettles or bracken
- Allow livestock access to the strip
- Cut the remainder of the strip (except to control woody growth)

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out

above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose a site

Create the buffer strip adjacent to a watercourse across a long, steep slope, to intercept and slow runoff water before it builds to a damaging flow. Care should be taken to minimise the amount of water that is channelled along the edge of the buffer strip.

How to manage the buffer strip

- Remove any subsoil compaction where required to prepare a seedbed, except on archaeological features
- Control weeds and cut regularly in the first 12 to 24 months of establishment to encourage grasses to tiller
- Avoid cutting when the soil is wet, to prevent compaction
- The buffer strip should remain in place and not be re-sown for the duration of the agreement The buffer strip can be partly covered by a hedge, as long as the hedge is located on land that is eligible for this option.

Using this option on existing buffer strips

This option can be used on buffer strips that are already established, unless they are required or being paid for through another scheme. The buffer strip should be on land that can be cultivated (for example, it cannot be on a very steeply banked strip alongside a boundary). Buffer strips established under Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) can continue to be managed under a new Countryside Stewardship agreement.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW5: Enhanced management of maize crops

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the enhanced management of maize crops option.

How much will be paid

£133 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

- Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier
- Whole parcel
- Rotational
- Only on land where maize is grown

Where this option cannot be used

- On parcels identified in the Farm Environment Record (FER) as at high risk of soil erosion or surface runoff

Related Mid-Tier options

The following options can be located on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It reduces the risk of soil erosion and surface runoff in fields where maize is grown. It will slow runoff water before it builds to a damaging flow, and remove sediment, organic material, nutrients and chemicals carried in the water.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

In the autumn, the maize crop will be harvested by 1 October. Then, a quick growing cover crop will be established by 15 October to provide a dense cover crop during the winter.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices

At the start of each claim year, you may be asked to take and submit the following photographic records.

- Photographs of the option area taken on 2 October

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Choice of cover crop

- A mix or a single crop can be used Crops should be suitable for winter sowing, fast growing, and frost tolerant to provide adequate cover over winter
- A mixture of seeds, such as vetch, phacelia, barley or mustard, can be sown. The choice of cover crop will depend on herbicide selected and the rates of application for the previous crop
- Choice of cover crop will also depend on the crops grown in the rotation

How to establish the cover crop

- Remove any areas of soil compaction but do not subsoil on archaeological features
- Sow the cover crop (within 2 weeks of harvesting and no later than 15 October)
- establish by drilling or broadcasting
- Sow at a suitable seed rate to provide a dense cover and protect from soil erosion
- Nutrients should only be used in line with crop requirements. No more than the recommended amount of slurry or manure should be applied for either the maize or the crop that follows it
- Nutrient input must be based on an approved fertiliser management recommendation system ([Nutrient Management Guide RB209](#) or similar)

Using this option next to a watercourse

For fields next to a watercourse, options SW1 – 4 to 6 metre (m) buffer strip on cultivated land, or SW4 - 12 to 24m watercourse buffer strip on cultivated land should be considered. These field margin options will help to capture any sediment or organic materials carried in the runoff water.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW6: Winter cover crops

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the winter cover crops option.

How much will be paid

£114 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier Whole or part parcel Rotational Only on one of the following:

- cultivated land that is vulnerable to nitrate leaching (land that is within a designated NVZ area)
- cultivated land, draining directly to a watercourse, that is identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER) as at risk of soil erosion or surface runoff

Related Mid-Tier options

The following options can be located on the same area as this option.

- [HS3 - Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on historic and archaeological features](#)
- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OR4 - Organic conversion - horticulture](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)
- [OT4 – Organic land management - horticulture](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

Cover crops help to reduce nitrate leaching on land that would normally be left bare or down to stubbles during winter. It may also reduce the risk of potential pollutants, such as sediment and nutrients, being carried to neighbouring watercourses.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Establish as soon as possible after the harvest (by early autumn at the latest), a suitably fast growing cover crop, providing a dense cover over the winter period. Destroy the cover crop in late winter, no more than 6 weeks before establishing the following spring crop.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Apply any fertilisers or manures

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose the right location

This option should be used on vulnerable soil types, particularly light sandy soils within nitrate vulnerable areas. Use the [run-off and soil erosion risk assessment form](#) to identify fields at moderate or higher risk of surface run-off or soil erosion. You can then mark these fields on your Farm Environment Record map. You don't have to use this form. You can use your own document if it gives enough information to meet the requirements

Choice of cover crop

- a mix or a single crop can be used, but crops should be suitable for winter sowing, fast growing (to mop up N) and frost tolerant to provide adequate cover over winter
- a mixture of seeds, such as rye, vetch, phacelia, barley or mustard, can be sown, or other crops such as ryegrass or tillage radish, but the choice of cover crop will depend on herbicide selected and the rates of application for the previous crop
- choice of cover crop will also depend on the crops grown in the rotation

How to manage the crop

- Remove any areas of soil compaction but do not subsoil on archaeological features
- Establish the cover crop by 15 September, so it can take up soil nitrate before winter drainage water leaches it below the depth of the developing plant
- Establish by drilling or broadcasting
- Sow at a suitable seed rate to provide a dense cover and protect from soil erosion
- Destroy the cover crop in late January or February, before it is too well developed – if left too late nitrate leaching may increase the following winter
- Cover crop destruction may include an application of glyphosate prior to destruction by cultivation for the following crop

Using this option next to a watercourse

On fields next to a watercourse that are at risk of soil erosion and runoff, applicants should also consider creating grass buffer strips. They will help to capture any sediment or organic materials carried in runoff water.

Options SW1 - 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land, SW4 - 12m to 24m

watercourse buffer strip on cultivated land, or other grass buffer options may be used

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW7: Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input option.

How much will be paid

£311 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part parcels but only on one of the following:

- cultivated land that is identified in the Farm Environment Record (FER) as at risk of soil erosion or surface runoff
- cultivated land that has been identified as important for buffering sensitive habitats

You must have support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer to use this option and must meet **one** of the following conditions.

- You are following a recommended fertiliser management system to plan nutrient inputs across the farm
- You plan to adopt a recommended fertiliser management system within 18 months of the start of the agreement
- You qualify as a low intensity farmer

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SW14 - Nil fertiliser supplement](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

A dense grass sward in arable fields at risk of soil erosion or surface runoff will stabilise the soil, reduce nutrient losses, and buffer sensitive habitats, such as designated aquatic habitats. It will also reduce surface runoff, which may help to reduce the risk of flooding.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be a diverse grass sward, with at least 5 species in the seed mix, established if necessary in the first year of the agreement, with minimum bare ground.

During spring and summer, graze the sward and/or cut with cuttings removed in late summer after the bird breeding season.

There will be no livestock on the sward during the autumn and winter.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to weed wipe or spot treat injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, nettles or bracken
- Apply any manure or fertiliser between 15 August and 1 February
- Apply any livestock manures with more than 100 kilograms (kg) of total nitrogen per ha per year- where you do not use livestock manures, you can use nitrogen fertiliser to supply no more than 50kg per ha of total nitrogen per year
- Supplementary feed except for mineral blocks (non-energy based)

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- where it is necessary to reseed, establish a grass sward by 1 October using a seed mixture of at least 5 species (see the 'What to sow' section below)
- from year 2, manage the sward by grazing and/or cutting to achieve an average sward height of between 5 centimetres (cm) and 15cm in November - remove all cuttings
- exclude all livestock from 1 October to 15 March
- make sure that, by year 2, less than 10% of the area is bare ground
 - check for breeding birds before operating machinery or carrying out other activities which may disturb breeding birds or damage their nests. The breeding season tends to run from mid-March until mid-July, but it can start earlier and finish later, depending on the species and the weather

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application.

- Written support from a CSF officer

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- Evidence that you are using a recommended fertiliser management system or that you are at low intensity farmer

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose the right location

Use this option in targeted areas to reduce diffuse water pollution. You can also use it to buffer sensitive habitats (such as aquatic habitats designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) that are under significant threat from diffuse water pollution. For further advice on where to use this option, refer to national and regional targeting guidelines. This option will not be suitable:

- if it will have a damaging effect on sites of archaeological interest
- on sites with pests (for example, rabbits, mink, thistles and ragwort) that are not under control, and that prevent land management or threaten the established vegetative cover

Where you use this option to buffer sensitive habitats, you can combine it with SW14 - Nil fertiliser supplement.

How to manage the sward

- When preparing a seedbed, remove any subsoil compaction, except on archaeological features
- Control weeds and cut regularly in the first 12 to 24 months of establishment to encourage grasses to tiller
- Where cutting, avoid doing so when the soil is wet, to prevent compaction
- Remove any cuttings that will otherwise damage the sward
- Avoid supplementary feeding, except with mineral blocks

What to sow

Tailor the choice of grass species to the soil type and cutting regime. The following species will grow in most conditions and can form part of a basic grass seed mixture:

- timothy (but use with care it is tussocky, vigorous and can become dominant)
- cocksfoot (but use with care it is tussocky, vigorous and can become dominant)
- crested dogstail
- red fescue
- smooth stalked meadow grass

You can increase the environmental benefits by adding wild flowers. Where you add wild flowers, make sure that the grass mixture is not too vigorous. Use fairly robust flower species, such as:

- ox-eye daisy
- black knapweed
- bird's-foot-trefoil
- common sorrel

Catchment Sensitive Farming

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. You can find more information on [CSF support](#) online.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW8: Management of intensive grassland adjacent to a watercourse

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of intensive grassland adjacent to a watercourse option.

How much will be paid

£202 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on whole parcels on grassland that meets each of the following requirements.

- Sloping fields that drain directly into a watercourse
- It receives more than 200 kilograms (kg) per ha of nitrogen per year
- It is identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER) as at risk of soil erosion or surface runoff, or has been identified as important for buffering sensitive habitats

You must have support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer to use this option and must also meet **one** of the following conditions:

- you are following a recommended fertiliser management system to plan nutrient inputs across the farm
- you plan to adopt a recommended fertiliser management system within 18 months of the start of the agreement
- you qualify as a low intensity farmer

Where this option cannot be used

- On parcels within a severely disadvantaged area (SDA)

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SW14 - Nil fertiliser supplement](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

Reducing stocking density and fertiliser inputs on improved grassland will help reduce soil compaction, surface run-off and risk of diffuse pollution to the watercourse. Reducing surface runoff may help to reduce the risk of flooding. The option may also reduce the risk of nitrate loss to ground and surface water if it is used with SW14 - Nil fertiliser supplement.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be a diverse grass sward, with at least 5 species in the seed mix, established if necessary in the first year of the agreement, with minimum bare ground

During spring and summer, graze the sward and/or cut (removing all cuttings) in late summer after the bird breeding season. There will be no livestock on the sward during the autumn and winter.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to weed wipe or spot treat injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, nettles or bracken
- Apply any manure or fertiliser between 15 August and 1 February
- Apply any livestock manures with more than 100kg of total nitrogen per ha per year- where you do not use livestock manures, you can use nitrogen fertiliser to supply no more than 50kg per ha of total nitrogen per year

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- where it is necessary to reseed, establish a grass sward by 1 October using a seed mixture of at least 5 species (see the section [What to sow](#) below)
- from year 2, manage the sward by grazing or cutting to achieve an average sward height of between 5 centimetres (cm) and 15cm in November
- where cutting, cut the sward after 15 July – remove all the cuttings
- make sure that, by year 2, less than 10% of the area is bare ground
- check for breeding birds before operating machinery or carrying out other activities which may disturb breeding birds or damage their nests. The breeding season tends to run from mid-March until mid-July, but it can start earlier and finish later, depending on the species and the weather.

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application.

- Written support from a CSF officer

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at parcel level, including associated invoices
- Stock records to show grazing activity on each parcel
- Evidence that you are using a recommended fertiliser management system or that you are a low intensity farmer
- Input records showing that the grassland has received more than 200kg of nitrogen per ha per year

Additional Guidance and Advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose the right location

You should use this option in targeted areas to reduce diffuse water pollution. You can also use it to buffer sensitive habitats (that is aquatic habitats designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) that are under significant threat from diffuse pollution. For further advice on where you can use this option, read the national and regional targeting guidelines.

This option will not be suitable:

- if it will have a damaging effect on sites of archaeological interest
- on sites with pests (for example, rabbits, mink, thistles and ragwort) that are not under control, and that prevent land management or threaten the established vegetative cover

Where you use this option to buffer sensitive habitats, you can combine it with SW14 - Nil fertiliser supplement.

How to manage the sward

- Where you are required to reseed, remove any subsoil compaction except on archaeological features
- Control weeds and cut regularly in the first 12 to 24 months of establishment to encourage grasses to tiller
- Where cutting, avoid doing so when the soil is wet, to prevent compaction
- Remove any cuttings that will otherwise damage the sward
- Do not apply manure or fertiliser between 15 August and 1 February
- Avoid supplementary feeding, except with mineral blocks

What to sow

Where you are required to reseed, tailor the choice of grass species to the soil type and cutting regime. The following species will grow in most conditions and can form part of a basic grass seed mixture:

- timothy (use with care as this is tussocky, vigorous and can become dominant)

- cocksfoot (use with care as this is tussocky, vigorous and can become dominant)
- crested dogstail
- red fescue
- smooth stalked meadow grass

You can increase the environmental benefits by adding wildflowers. If you add wildflowers, make sure that the grass mixture is not too vigorous. Use fairly robust flower species, such as:

- ox-eye daisy
- black knapweed
- bird's-foot-trefoil
- common sorrel

Catchment Sensitive Farming

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. You can find more information on [CSF support](#) online.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW9: Seasonal livestock removal on intensive grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the seasonal livestock removal on intensive grassland option.

How much will be paid

£88 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier Whole parcel Only on grassland that meets each of the following requirements.

- It drains directly to a watercourse
- It receives more than 100 kilograms (kg) per hectare of nitrogen per year
- It is identified on the Farm Environment Record (FER) as at risk of soil erosion or surface runoff, or has been identified as important for buffering sensitive habitats or species

Where this option cannot be used

- On parcel within a severely disadvantaged area (SDA)

Related Mid-Tier options

- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

Livestock will be removed at particular times of the year from fields adjacent to a watercourse that are prone to waterlogging, compaction or poaching. This will help improve soil structure, reduce surface runoff and risk of diffuse pollution to the watercourse. Reducing surface runoff may help to reduce the risk of flooding.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

There will be no livestock present on the parcel for 5 and a half consecutive months during the autumn and winter. This closed period must include December to mid-March.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Stock records to show grazing activity on each parcel
- Input records showing that the grassland has received more than 100kg of nitrogen per hectare per year

Additional guidance and advice

- The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Storing manures and moving livestock

We recommend that you do not:

- store manure on the site
- cause soil damage on other parcels by removing livestock from the site
- apply any fertilisers or manures from 15 August to 31 January

as doing so might breach cross compliance and other regulations.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW10: Seasonal livestock removal on grassland in SDAs next to streams, rivers and lakes

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the seasonal livestock removal on grassland in SDAs next to streams, rivers and lakes option.

How much will be paid

£36 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

- Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier
- Whole parcel
- Only on grassland that meets each of the following requirements:
 - permanent grassland that drains directly into a watercourse and is prone to waterlogging, compaction or poaching, where it is important to remove livestock during the winter
 - in a severely disadvantaged area (SDA) and below the moorland line

Related Mid-Tier options

The following options can be located on the same area as this option.

- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 - Organic conversion - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 - Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

Livestock will be removed at particular times of the year from fields next to a watercourse that are prone to waterlogging, compaction or poaching. This option will help improve water quality by reducing the input of nutrients and sediment to streams, rivers and lakes caused by surface runoff and the leaching of nutrients from adjacent farmland.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

There will be no livestock present on the parcel between the 1 October and 15 March

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Stock records to show grazing activity on each parcel

You will need to send the following with your application.

- Evidence that the parcel is prone to waterlogging, compacting or poaching and drains directly to a watercourse. The location of affected

parcels can be marked on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Storing manures and moving livestock

You are recommended not to:

- store manure on the site
- cause soil damage on other parcels by removing livestock from the site
- apply any fertilisers or manures from 15 August to 31 January

as doing so might breach cross compliance and other regulations.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW11: Riparian management strip

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the riparian management strip option.

How much will be paid

£440 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier Part parcel Only on land that meets each of the following requirements:

- it is located next to ditches, rivers or streams
- it is grazed

Where this option cannot be used

- Adjacent to any other grassland option or adjacent to woodland
- On moorland or unenclosed land
- On designated open access land
- On Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) unless approved by Natural England

Related Mid-Tier options

The following options can be located on the same area as this option.

- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It prevents livestock access to the watercourse and provides a buffer strip. This will help reduce bankside erosion and the transport of pollutants to the watercourse. It will also provide habitat for wildlife and form links between other habitats. As the scrub develops, it may also help to shade and cool the watercourse.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be a riparian strip (at least 4 metres (m) wide), preventing livestock accessing the watercourse. This area will provide suitable habitat by being uncut, except to ensure that woody growth does not cover the whole area. There will be evidence that any invasive species are being controlled.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Apply any fertilisers or manures
- Apply pesticides, except for herbicides to weed wipe or spot treat injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, nettles or bracken

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- make sure the riparian strip is between 4m and 12m wide (it can be wider than this but you cannot claim payments for anything over 12m)
- control all invasive non-native species, such as Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed or Himalayan balsam
- cut only to control woody growth so that it does not exceed 80% of the total area

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may

have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- SSSI approval where appropriate

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose a site

This option should be used in targeted areas to reduce diffuse water pollution, in particular where livestock access to the watercourse is causing a significant water quality issue.

How to manage the strip

Use permanent fencing to exclude livestock from the strip and watercourse. Include a gate in the fence to provide access to the site for management. Capital grants are available in Mid-Tier for a variety of fencing and water supply capital items.

High tensile wire should be used rather than netting if the fence alongside the strip is likely to be flooded. This will help to reduce the chance of debris snagging and therefore will withstand more flood pressure.

Invasive or non-native weeds should be controlled in a way that is not harmful to the stream.

Woody species such as alder, willow and sallow should be encouraged, but not permitted to cover the strip completely. Trees or scrub must be controlled if they start to dominate the strip. This should be carried out in small stages and patches by:

- making scalloped indents along the field or riparian edges
- cutting back isolated sections of larger trees

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW12: Making space for water

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the making space for water option.

How much will be paid

£640 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option lasts for 20 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme. This is because the work needs a high level of change.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part parcels on arable, temporary grassland or improved permanent grassland that meets all of the following conditions:

- the site, either alone or as part of a group application, forms a natural hydrological unit
- the Environment Agency have provided written support
- the site is identified in a relevant Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) strategic river restoration plan, or [River Basin Management Plan](#)

To use this option you must also meet one of the following conditions:

- be following a recommended fertiliser management system to plan nutrient inputs across the farm
- plan to adopt a recommended fertiliser management system within 18 months of the start of the agreement
- qualify as a low intensity farmer

Where this option cannot be used

- On land already receiving funding for Ecological Focus Areas (EFAs) declared for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS)

Features that can be included in this option

Over the life of the agreement the features present on the land may change or move. The following features can be included even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- new areas of water (rivers, streams, becks and brooks, ponds, standing water), bare ground, cobble, gravel
- increased areas of water (rivers, streams, becks and brooks, ponds, standing water)

How this option will benefit the environment

It will help water flow in a winding course across floodplains, flooding temporarily to restore river and wetland habitats. This will also reduce the risk of high energy flows and soil erosion, and allow water to drain freely back into the river channel.

If successful there will be:

- new areas of river and wetland habitats appearing, such as new channels, temporary ponds in old channels and wet grassland
- gradual erosion and movement of the river bed and river banks
- deposits of gravel, sand and silt appearing in the river channel and on the floodplain after a flood

Requirements

You must:

- prepare the land to receive additional floodwater from the watercourse next to it and allow the river and water to move freely in the floodplain
- establish grassland
- follow grazing or cutting requirements, including exclude livestock at certain times
- limit manure and fertiliser applications

The agreement will set out what you cannot do. It is likely you will not be allowed to:

- use pesticides other than for control of injurious weeds or invasive species

- create new tracks for vehicle access
- undertake land forming and earthworks, works to river banks or bed, flood defences or bank protection and drainage works other than as set out in the agreement
- carry out supplementary feeding

Keeping records

Before you apply, get advice from the Environment Agency and any consent or approval that you need. You do not need to send this with your application, but you will need to send it with your annual payment claim.

You must send the following with your application:

- a map of permitted access routes – you can mark these on any map, including the Farm Environment Record (FER)
- SSSI strategic river restoration plan or river basin management plan

You must send the following with your annual payment claim:

- support from the Environment Agency

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any bank statements, receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected to the work
- a record of all management activity on the option area for each parcel
- a monthly record of the numbers of livestock grazing each parcel
- photographs of works completed on shingle banks, river channels, flood defences or bank protection, or any completed land forming or earth works
- evidence that you are using a recommended fertiliser management system or that you are a low intensity farmer

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements in the same area as this option:

- [BE3 – Management of hedgerows](#)

- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP9 – Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 – Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose the right location

In most cases you will need professional advice to choose the right location for this option. It is usually in areas where flooding and river movement is the most active. Marginal land next to river SSSIs that require restoration for river habitats and species is suitable. In some circumstances this option may be suitable for land next to priority habitat rivers.

You cannot use this option where there is an existing obligation to carry out the works or management required, for example as a planning condition or as compensation.

This option aims to restore natural river movement which in most cases is likely to make the land ineligible for BPS. You should check with the RPA before claiming BPS on the land under this option.

Consents and permissions

You will need advice and relevant consents from the Environment Agency, Natural England and the local authority before you can carry out any work.

Feasibility studies

You will need a Feasibility Study to assess the feasibility of restoring the river on the site. A feasibility study can be funded.

Capital works plan

You will need a capital works plan to set out how to alter the current course of the river. It should include the engineering requirements to remove flood banks or bank protection. Funding is available to help support the development of an implementation plan and to carry out major preparatory works.

Get help to carry out this option

In some cases you may need to hire a specialist project or site manager to act as a clerk of works to help carry out this option.

Access routes and managing flood risk

You may need new routes or bridges to access and maintain the site. Do not locate these where they will affect future river movement or temporary flooding. You must identify escape routes and refuge areas for people or livestock to use during floods.

Work with neighbouring farms

You may need to work with neighbouring farms to manage land within the hydrological unit and make sure you can access the land.

Further information

Whole-river restoration strategies have been developed for rivers designated as SSSIs. This option can be used to help implement them. Read more about [restoring designated rivers in England](#) on the River Restoration Centre website.

[River Basin Management Plans](#) are drawn up for river basin districts in England, Wales and Scotland as a requirement of the water framework directive.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW13: Very low nitrogen inputs to groundwaters

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the very low nitrogen inputs to groundwaters option.

How much will be paid

£251 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Whole parcel

Only on improved grassland that meets each of the following requirements:

- the area receives more than 200kg of nitrogen per ha per year
- the area is specified as a priority Water Framework Directive (WFD) groundwater failure within the Countryside Stewardship targeting, for which this option is a priority
- this option must be applied to all land parcels within the target area

To use this option an applicant must also meet one of the following conditions:

- be following a recommended fertiliser management system to plan nutrient inputs across the farm
- plan to adopt a recommended fertiliser management system within 18 months of the start of the agreement
- qualify as a low intensity farmer

How this option will benefit the environment

It will reduce nutrient input to grassland in highly targeted locations to help slow or reverse nutrient levels in groundwater. This will be targeted to help specific designated sites and Water Framework Directive Protected Areas.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- graze or cut for hay or silage to get an average sward height of between 5cm and 15cm in November
- make sure bare ground covers less than 10% of the total area by year 2

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely agreement holders will not be allowed to:

- plough, cultivate or re-seed
- supplementary feed except for the provision of mineral blocks (non-energy based)
- use pesticides or herbicides, except to spot-treat or weed-wipe to control injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles or bracken
- apply manures or fertilisers except when the parcel is cut, and limit this to either 12 tonnes of well-rotted farmyard manure per ha per year or up to 50kg of nitrogen per ha per year

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected to the work
- records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel
- a monthly record of the number of livestock grazing the land
- evidence that a recommended fertiliser management system is used or evidence to support low intensity farmer claim

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related options

The following options can be located on the same area as this option:

- [BE3 – Management of hedgerows](#)
- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – rotational land](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)
- [WT3 – Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following section gives advice on carrying out this option successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this option.

How to choose the right location

This option is only available in targeted areas. The targeting is restricted to specified areas to improve the quality of groundwater feeding into at risk (nitrogen-limited) designated sites and failing groundwater drinking water protected areas.

This option will also be restricted to areas where grassland is the major agricultural land use, ie at least 80% of land is grassland receiving more than 200 kg nitrogen per hectare per year.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW14: Nil fertiliser supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the nil fertiliser supplement.

How much will be paid

£131 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this supplement

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on whole or part parcels:

- greater than 1ha
- in combination with either SW7 - Arable reversion to grassland with low fertiliser input or SW8 - Management of intensive grassland adjacent to a watercourse

You must have support from a Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) officer to use this supplement and must also meet **one** of the following conditions.

- Be following a recommended fertiliser management system to plan nutrient inputs across the farm
- Plan to adopt a recommended fertiliser management system within 18 months of the start of the agreement
- Qualify as a low intensity farmer

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It helps to reduce the risk of nitrate loss to ground and surface water by reducing nutrient inputs to zero.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be no fertiliser or manure applied to the parcel.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Apply any fertilisers or manures

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application.

- Written support from a CSF officer

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Evidence that you are using a recommended fertiliser management system or that you are a low intensity farmer

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) operates in parts of the country where there are water quality issues linked to farming. The scheme provides farmers with free advice and training. See guidance for further information on [CSF support](#)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW15: Flood mitigation on arable reversion to grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the flood mitigation on arable reversion to grassland option.

How much will be paid

£488 per ha

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part parcels, only on arable or temporary grassland that meets all of the following:

- the site, either alone or as part of a group application forms a natural hydrological unit
- you have written support from the Environment Agency or Lead Local Flood Authority and where relevant Internal Drainage Board
- a Natural England adviser or a person nominated by NE has endorsed your application

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- ditches, dykes, drains and streams that are less than 4m wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways, as long as the requirements can still be met
- bracken
- areas of scrub, rock outcrops, and boulders up to 0.1 ha

How this option will benefit the environment

It will intercept and slow surface runoff from rainfall events and provide space for water from streams and rivers to be stored during a flood event to help manage flood risk. It can be used in three ways:

- to slow down surface runoff on land outside the floodplain by creating temporary storage behind suitable structures such as low earth bunds and modified field-boundaries, or enhanced hollows and depressions
- to enable the re-connection of the river with the floodplain in areas that will not attract funding from an Environment Agency (EA) flood scheme or option [SW12 - Making space for water](#). Flood water will be allowed to spread across the land and naturally subside
- to reconnect the river and floodplain in association with specific Priority River Habitats and SSSIs where the Making Space for Water option is targeted

If successful there will be new areas of temporary water storage both in the floodplain and outside it that help delay peak flood flows reaching communities and infrastructure at risk of flooding.

Requirements

You must:

- prepare the land to receive additional surface runoff or flood water
- establish grassland
- limit manure and fertiliser applications

Do not:

- use pesticides, including herbicides, except to spot treat or weed wipe or to control injurious weeds or invasive non-natives
- undertake land forming and earthworks, works to river banks or bed, flood defences or bank protection and drainage works other than as set out in the agreement

Keeping records

Before you apply, you should contact the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authority and where relevant Internal Drainage Board for advice and any consent/approval that is required. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit it with your payment claim.

You must send the following with your claim:

- written support from the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authority and Internal Drainage Board (where relevant)

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with any work
- field operations at the parcel level including soil loosening to remove compaction, clearance of flood debris, de-silting of bunded areas, reseeding
- dates and photographs of flooding
- NE endorsement
- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate a number of other options and supplements on the same area as this option. You should discuss and agree these with your adviser

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose the right location

In most cases you'll need professional advice to choose the right location for this option. Each situation will have different priorities.

Slowing down surface runoff – a CSF Water Management Plan or a [PA1 Implementation Plan](#) may be sufficient. In complex applications you may need more advice, such as a [PA2 Feasibility Study](#). Your NE Adviser can guide you to possible sources of relevant advice.

You'll need a feasibility study for reconnecting the river and flood plain – this could be funded using [PA2](#) but could also be provided by another project. This study should explore the options and provide evidence for the recommended solution. You can use capital items where major preparatory works are required to restore a priority habitat or priority species.

You cannot use the option where there is an existing obligation to carry out the works or management required, for example, as a planning condition or as compensation.

You'll need a Capital Works Plan to set out how to alter the current course of the river. It should include the engineering requirements to implement the option.

Consents and permissions

You will need advice and relevant consents from the Environment Agency for land adjacent to main rivers, Lead local Flood Authority for other land and the Internal drainage Board in your area.

Get help to carry out this option

In some cases you may need to hire a specialist project or site manager to act as a clerk of works to help carry out this option.

Access routes and managing flood risk

You may need new routes or bridges to access and maintain the site. You should not locate these where they will affect future river movement or temporary flooding.

Identify escape routes and refuge areas for people or livestock to use during floods.

Work with neighbouring farms

You might need to work with neighbouring farms to manage land within the hydrological unit and make sure you can access the land.

Further information

Whole-river restoration strategies have been developed for rivers designated as SSSIs. You can use this option to help implement them. You can read more about [restoring designated rivers in England](#) on the River Restoration Centre website.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessments are being developed for all land in England, contact your local EA Adviser for more information.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

SW16: Flood mitigation on permanent grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the flood mitigation on permanent grassland option.

How much will be paid

£256 per ha

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part parcels, only on permanent grassland that meets all of the following:

- the site, either alone or as part of a group application forms a natural hydrological unit
- the Environment Agency or Lead Local Flood Authority and where relevant Internal Drainage Board have provided written support
- a Natural England adviser or a person nominated by NE has endorsed the application

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- ditches, dykes, drains and streams that are less than 4m wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways, as long as the requirements can still be met
- bracken
- areas of scrub, rock outcrops, and boulders up to 0.1ha

How this option will benefit the environment

It will intercept and slow surface runoff from rainfall events and provide space for water from streams and rivers to be stored during a flood event to help manage flood risk. It can be used in three ways:

- to slow down surface runoff on land outside the floodplain by creating temporary storage behind suitable structures such as low earth bunds and modified field-boundaries, or enhanced hollows and depressions
- to enable the re-connection of the river with the floodplain in areas that will not attract funding from an Environment Agency (EA) flood scheme or option [SW12: Making space for water](#). Flood water will be allowed to spread across the land and naturally subside
- to reconnect the river and floodplain in association with specific Priority River Habitats and SSSIs where the Making Space for Water option is targeted

If successful there will be new areas of temporary water storage both in the floodplain and outside it that help delay peak flood flows reaching communities and infrastructure at risk of flooding.

Requirements

You must:

- prepare the land to receive additional surface runoff or flood water
- establish grassland
- limit manure and fertiliser applications

Do not:

- use pesticides, including herbicides, except to spot treat or weed wipe or to control injurious weeds or invasive non-natives
- undertake land forming and earthworks, works to river banks or bed, flood defences or bank protection and drainage works other than as set out in the agreement

Keeping records

Before you apply, you should contact the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authority and where relevant Internal Drainage Board for advice and any consent/approval that is required. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit it with your payment claim.

You must send the following with your claim:

- written support from the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authority and Internal Drainage Board (where relevant)

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with any work
- field operations at the parcel level including soil loosening to remove compaction, clearance of flood debris, de-silting of bunded areas, reseedling
- dates and photographs of flooding
- NE endorsement
- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate a number of other options and supplements on the same area as this option. You should discuss and agree these with your adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to choose the right location

In most cases you will need professional advice to choose the right location for this option. Each situation will have different priorities.

Slowing down surface runoff – a CSF Water Management Plan or a [PA1 Implementation Plan](#) may suffice. In complex applications you may need further advice, such as a [PA2 Feasibility Study](#). Your NE Adviser can guide you to possible sources of relevant advice.

Reconnecting the river and flood plain will need a feasibility study – this could be funded using [PA2 Feasibility Study](#) but could also be provided by another project. This study should explore the options and provide evidence for the recommended solution. Capital items may also be used where major preparatory works are required to restore a priority habitat or priority species.

The option must not be used where there is an existing obligation to carry out the works or management required, for example as a planning condition or as compensation.

You will need a Capital Works Plan to set out how to alter the current course of the river. It should include the engineering requirements to implement the option.

Consents and permissions

You'll need advice and relevant consents from the Environment Agency for land adjacent to main rivers, Lead local Flood Authority for other land and the Internal drainage Board in their areas.

Get help to carry out this option

In some cases you may need to hire a specialist project or site manager to act as a clerk of works to help carry out this option.

Access routes and managing flood risk

You may need new routes or bridges to access and maintain the site. Do not locate these where they will affect future river movement or temporary flooding.

You must identify escape routes and refuge areas for people or livestock to use during floods.

Work with neighbouring farms

You might need to work with neighbouring farms to manage land within the hydrological unit and make sure you can access the land.

Further information

Whole-river restoration strategies have been developed for rivers designated as SSSIs. You can use this option to help implement them. Read more about [restoring designated rivers in England](#) on the River Restoration Centre website.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessments are being developed for all land in England, contact your local EA Adviser for more information.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE1: Planting standard hedgerow tree

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the planting standard hedgerow tree item.

How much will be paid

£8.80 per tree.

Where the item is available

Available for Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Where to use this item

In hedgerows on agreement land

How this item will benefit the environment

Hedgerow trees provide shelter, food, nesting sites and song posts, as well as stepping stones between woodland habitats, and make a valuable contribution to the landscape.

Requirements

- carry out work between 30 September and 31 March when the hedge is still dormant
- plant into gaps in the hedge - if there is no suitable gap then plant into a notch cut into the hedgerow
- plant each tree in a pit deep and wide enough to contain the full depth and width of the root system
- plant native species at least 2 metres tall
- plant trees in irregular spacing with at least 20m between them to allow for full crown development
- tag each tree with a brightly coloured durable material
- drive a clearly visible stake into the hedgerow on either side of the tree
- stake and tie each tree securely, using material appropriate to the size and species of the tree
- use rubber flexible and adjustable tree ties to prevent wind damage

- maintain stakes and ties until the tree is established
- remove ties when the tree is established and no longer needs support
- prevent livestock and wild animal damage
- control weeds until the trees have established
- replace any dead trees in the following planting season

Do not:

- plant beneath or within 20m of overhead power lines or other overhead and underground services
- let tree guards damage the growing tree

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- the date, location and method of any weed control undertaken
- the dates of planting
- details of age, height and species planted
- photograph of the location of where each tree will be planted

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Applicants will have to send the following with their application:

- a record of where hedgerow trees are to be planted - this can be marked on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used with the following items:

- [BN5 - Hedgerow laying](#)
- [BN6 - Hedgerow coppicing](#)
- [BN7 - Hedgerow gapping-up](#)
- [BN11 - Planting new hedges](#)
- [TE6 - Tree guard \(tube and mesh\)](#)
- [TE7 - Tree guard \(wood post and rail\)](#)
- [TE8 - Tree guard \(wood post and wire\)](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out the item successfully but does not form a part of the requirements for this item.

Plant the trees

Planting should not be undertaken:

- during frost
- during a drought
- in waterlogged ground

When planting:

- only use native trees already present in the local area
- space the trees far enough to let crowns develop without competing or producing too much shade
- space far enough apart so the gaps between trees can be easily trimmed with a mechanical flail
- use irregular spacing to create a more natural landscape - look at the local landscape to see what is appropriate

Make the trees visible

The biggest threat to young hedgerow trees is flailing. Hand-trimming a hedge 1m either side of young trees is an effective way to make them more visible. Also warn machine operators to look out for them.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE2: Planting standard parkland tree

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the planting standard parkland tree item.

How much will be paid

£24.50 per tree.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

- [WD4 - Management of wood pasture and parkland](#)
- [WD5 - Restoration of wood pasture and parkland](#)
- [WD6 - Creation of wood pasture](#)

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful new standard trees will be established in wood pasture and parklands, replacing lost trees or restoring sustainable populations.

Requirements

- plant each tree in a pit deep and wide enough to contain the full depth and width of the root system
- plant native species at least 2 metres tall with enough spacing to allow for full crown development
- replace dead trees in the following planting season
- carry out work between 1 November and 31 March
- stake and tie each tree securely, using material appropriate to the size and species of tree
- prevent wind damage by using flexible rubber and adjustable tree ties
- maintain stakes and ties until the tree is established
- remove ties when the tree is established and no longer needs support
- protect trees from livestock and wild mammals
- control weeds until the trees have become established.

Do not:

- plant trees beneath or within 20m of overhead power lines, or other overhead and underground services
- let tree guards damage the growing tree

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the site where trees will be planted before works start
- the date location and method of any weed control undertaken
- the dates of planting
- details of age, height and species planted

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related items

This item can be used with the following items:

- [TE6 - Tree guard \(tube and mesh\)](#)
- [TE7 - Tree guard \(wood post and rail\)](#)
- [TE8 - Tree guard \(wood post and wire\)](#)
- [TE8 - Tree guard \(wood post and wire\)](#)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE3: Planting fruit trees

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the planting fruit trees item.

How much will be paid

£22.50 per tree.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier

Only with:

- [BE3 - Management of hedgerows](#)
- [BE4 - Management of traditional orchards](#)
- [BE5 - Creation of traditional orchards](#) (Higher Tier only)

How this item will benefit the environment

It will ensure the continuation of fruit trees in hedgerows where it is characteristic of the local landscape.

Requirements

- apple, pear and cherry trees must be at least 2 years old and have a well-branched head supported by 2m of clear stem
- plum or damson trees must be at least 2 years old and have 1.5m of clear stem
- maiden fruit trees must be 1-year-old grafted trees with a single stem
- rootstocks must be:
 - M25 for apples
 - seedling pear for pears
 - Brompton or Myrobalan B for plums
 - F12.1 for cherries
- plant bare-rooted fruit trees between November and March, while they are not in leaf

- remove all grass and weeds in a 1m diameter circle around each tree station before planting
- plant the trees in a pit deep and wide enough to contain the full depth and width of the root system with room to spare
- make sure the tree's graft union is at least 75mm above ground level
- stake standard trees and tie them securely (maiden trees can be established successfully without staking)
- tie the tree to the stake above the grafting union so that it is held firmly upright but some movement is allowed
- use flexible and adjustable rubber tree ties to prevent wind damage
- maintain the stakes and ties until the tree is established, loosening the ties if they cut into the tree
- remove the ties once the tree is established and no longer requires support
- protect the trees from grazing animals
- make sure guards allow access to the tree for:
 - carrying out formative pruning
 - applying mulch
 - clearing vegetation around the base
- replace planted trees that die in the following planting season
- at the end of the agreement, there must be a living tree in good condition

Do not:

- fasten guards to the tree itself
- allow guards to cause damage to the growing tree

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the planting location before works start
- please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Mid Tier manual](#) for more detail

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Related Mid Tier items

This item can be used with the following items:

- [TE6 - Tree guard \(tube and mesh\)](#)
- [TE7 - Tree guard \(wood post and rail\)](#)
- [TE8 - Tree guard \(wood post and wire\)](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out the item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Weed control

Weed control is essential to successful fruit tree planting. To reduce competition for water and nutrients, keep a 1m diameter circle around the tree clear of all vegetation for at least the first 3 years after planting.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE4: Supply and plant tree

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the supply and plant tree item.

How much will be paid

£1.28 per tree.

Payment for creating new woodland

You can be paid up to £6,800 per hectare (ha) if you use this item to create new woodland.

Payments for restocking after a tree health issue

If you are restocking woodland where trees have been infected by *Chalara fraxinea* or *Phytophthora ramorum* you will be paid up to the following amounts.

Restock tree species	Ancient woodland site	Other
Native	£3,500 per ha	£2,750 per ha
Non-native	£1,750 per ha	£2,250 per ha

Support is only available if trees are infected by *Chalara fraxinea* or *Phytophthora ramorum*.

The Forestry Commission (FC) or the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) must confirm cases of *Chalara fraxinea*.

Phytophthora ramorum infected larch and sweet chestnut has to be confirmed by a statutory plant health notice (SPHN).

Where to use this item

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier, Woodland Tree Health and Woodland Creation grants on:

- bare land (any land that has not been woodland for at least 10 years before the date of application)
- woodland (following felling due to a plant health disease)
- hedgerows

You can use this item to plant single trees, clumps of trees, hedgerows or woodlands.

It's also available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Capital Grants, with Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) approval only, for:

- planting tree shelter belts for ammonia capture from slurry or digestate stores, livestock housing or free-range areas for poultry or pig to improve air quality
- tree shelter belt to be planted within 20 metres (m) of the livestock building or the slurry or digestate stores and/or in the entire ranging area for free range poultry or pigs

Where this item cannot be used

- If tree planting could damage areas of ecological, archaeological or historic interest
- To plant woodland for producing Christmas trees or biomass
- For restocking woodlands following a conditional felling licence (except where this has been issued for tree health reasons)
- To plant ash trees

How this item benefits the environment

It will help create a range of environmental and social benefits that:

- supports wildlife, particularly when new woodland links habitats or creates a protective buffer
- reduces the risk of floods, improves water quality and prevents soil erosion
- is resilient and can adapt to climate change
- enhances the landscape
- improves air quality by trees capturing ammonia emissions from livestock, slurry and digestate, reducing the impact on sensitive habitats and species and on human health

Requirements

Prepare a woodland creation plan

When creating new woodland you must prepare a woodland creation plan (included in the application) that states the following.

- Planting objectives
- Species to be used
- Planting density (the number of trees per hectare)
- Percentage of open space and means of protection (fencing or individual tree guards as appropriate)
- Areas to be planted and any areas of open space within the woodland (provide a map showing this information)

Creating or restocking woodland

If you are planting trees to create new woodland or to restock woodland you must follow the requirements in the table below.

Dimensions	Create new woodland	Create new woodland to improve water or air quality or reduce flood risk	Restock after a tree health issue	Plant tree shelter belt/area under Mid Tier or Capital Grant	
Minimum agreement size	3ha	1ha	0.25ha	**	
Minimum block size	0.5ha	0.1ha	0.1ha	**	
Minimum width	20 metres (m)	10m	20m	Width of livestock shed or store and/or free	**depends on source of ammonia and effectiveness of capture by trees - see below

Dimensions	Create new woodland	Create new woodland to improve water or air quality or reduce flood risk	Restock after a tree health issue	Plant tree shelter belt/area under Mid Tier or Capital Grant	
					range area **
Minimum depth					20m** or free range area
Minimum stocking density	*1100 stems per ha (sph)	1,600sph	*1100sph	Main canopy 1100 sph Backstop canopy 2500 sph	*In exceptional circumstances, where there will be a specific biodiversity benefit, you may be able to use a reduced stocking density of 400sph.
Maximum internal open space	20%	20%	20%	0	
Maximum individual glade area (after canopy closure)	0.5ha	0.5ha	0.5ha		
Maximum linear open space width (after canopy closure)	20m	20m		0	

Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations

(For Mid Tier and Capital grants only. For Higher Tier this is part of the Woodland Creation and Maintenance Grant application)

1. Check whether you need a forestry Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) based on your location and size of planting area, by referring to the guidance in the link below. Generally:

a) planting less than 0.5ha will never require an EIA as this does not meet the definition of 'afforestation'

b) planting between 0.5ha and 2ha will typically not require an EIA application to be made, unless there is a statutory designation on the site (for example, Site of Special Scientific Interest), or other environmental sensitivity (for example, local archaeology)

c) planting more than 2ha will typically require an EIA application

2. Where relevant apply to the [Forestry Commission for an EIA decision](#) for afforestation

Tree planting for capturing ammonia emissions to improve air quality

1. Prepare a tree planting plan designed to capture ammonia from livestock housing, slurry or digestate stores (tree shelter belts) and/or ranging area for free range pig or poultry

Request advice from your [Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer](#), only available if you are in a High Priority Area for Water or Air Quality

You will need CSF approval for your application for tree planting for improving air quality. This is only available if you are in a high priority area for water quality. CSF approval will be based on the effectiveness of the proposed tree planting for capturing ammonia emissions from a slurry/digestate store, livestock housing and/or free range poultry/pigs, in order to reduce the impact of ammonia on sensitive habitats and species.

Use [guidance and tree calculator for ammonia mitigation](#)

2. Plant the tree shelter belts and/or ranging area based on the design plan with size, spacing and species recommended in the advice and guidance provided, to be effective for capturing ammonia emissions.

You must:

- supply, plant and weed young trees
- use tree species appropriate for the soil and climatic conditions that support the planting objectives
- select planting stock that complies with the [Forest Reproductive Material Regulations 2002](#) (where applicable) and is appropriate in size and stock type to site and prevailing conditions
- create a suitable planting position by spraying herbicide in advance, scarifying in lines or preparing a bare patch of land (screefing) with a spade
- use a planting method that helps survival, with roots fully inserted in the ground with the root collar at ground level - the tree must be firmed in without damaging the stem
- protect young trees by attaching a 0.6m spiral secured with a cane (first check and agree this with an adviser, not required for conifer planting)
- plant trees when dormant and attach the spiral guard immediately
- maintain spirals until the trees are big enough to no longer need protection
- stop livestock and other grazing animals from damaging the trees - use protective fencing or individual guards as needed (if using tree shelters, these will replace spiral guards)
- remove the spiral and cane when no longer needed and dispose of or recycle them in line with waste disposal regulations
- replace all dead plants in the following planting season (each grant funded tree must be alive and in good condition by the end of an agreement)

Keep trees weed-free

You must protect trees must from competing weeds for 3 years, or until they are big enough not to be threatened by competition from weeds.

You can do this by using suitable mulch, an appropriate herbicide or weeding by hand. You must follow relevant laws and codes of practice if spraying.

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim.

- Photographs of the completed work

You must keep the following records and supply them on request.

- Any consents or permissions connected with the work
- Receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable

You do not need a woodland creation plan for planting:

- following a tree health issue
- single trees
- in hedgerows

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the planting site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Related items

You can use this item on the same area as the following items.

- [FG1 - Fencing](#)
- [FG2 - Sheep netting](#)
- [FG4 - Rabbit fencing supplement](#)
- [FG5 - Fencing supplement - difficult sites](#)
- [FG9 - Deer fencing](#)
- [FG12 - Wooden field gate](#)
- [FG14 - Badger gate](#)
- [FG15 - Water gates](#)
- [TE5 - Supplement for use of individual tree-shelters](#)

Speak to a Forestry Commission adviser about locating other options on a site.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful but they are not requirements for this item.

Selecting tree species

Select a tree species for the site that suits the management objectives, local soil, and current and predicted climate conditions. Use the [FC tree species selection tool](#) to find the right species and estimate yield class.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE5: Supplement for use of individual tree-shelters

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the supplement for use of individual tree-shelters item.

How much will be paid

£1.60 per unit.

Where to use this item

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier, Mid Tier, and Capital Grants:

- only with Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) approval for planting tree shelter belts or pig/poultry free ranging areas for improving air quality)
- only on woodland and CS Capital Grants as a supplement to the tree planting capital item [TE4](#)

Where this item cannot be used

On its own or with any other option, supplement or item other than item TE4.

How this item will benefit the environment

It provides tree shelters to protect young, establishing trees from damage by browsing animals.

Requirements

You must:

- put up a tree shelter immediately after the tree is planted
- make sure each shelter is flush with the ground to keep out small animals such as mice and voles
- secure each shelter with a 25 millimetres (mm) by 25mm wooden stake, placed in an upright position

- check shelters regularly, maintaining them until the tree or shrub is established
- design and support shelters so they last for at least 5 years
- dispose or recycle shelters and stakes according to relevant waste disposal regulations

The shelter protects trees from grazing animals and the height of the animal determines which shelter to use, for example for:

- roe, muntjac or chinese water deer use 1.2m shelters
- fallow, red or sika deer use 1.8m shelters
- hares and rabbits use 1.2m tree shelter or smaller if available

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them on request.

- Any consents or permissions connected with the work
- Receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the planting site. If you are applying for Higher Tier, you should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE6: Tree guard (tube and mesh)

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the tree guard (tube and mesh) item.

How much will be paid

£4 per guard.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier

Only on trees within a parcel managed with one of the following options:

- [BE3 - Management of hedgerows](#)
- [BE4 - Management of traditional orchards](#)
- [BE5 - Creation of traditional orchards](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [WD4 - Management of wood pasture and parkland](#)
- [WD5 - Restoration of wood pasture and parkland](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [WD6 - Creation of wood pasture and parkland](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [WD7 - Management of successional areas and scrub](#)
- [WD8 - Creation of successional area and scrub](#) (Higher Tier only)

Where this item cannot be used

With the following items:

- [TE7 - Tree guard \(wood post and rail\)](#)
- [TE8 - Tree guard \(wood post and wire\)](#)

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful this item will protect trees from damage caused by grazing animals and wild animals.

Requirements

- erect tree guards at least 1.5 metres high and made of a tree tube and stake

- use chicken wire to prevent animals from grazing or rubbing against the tree - barbed wire can be fastened around the chicken wire to provide extra protection.
- the design of the tree guard must allow access for:
 - carrying out formative pruning
 - applying a mulch
 - clearing vegetation around the base of each tree

Do not:

- fasten guards to the tree
- attach guards so that they rub against, constrict or damage the tree in any way

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of existing trees to be protected

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#) or [Higher Tier](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Related Mid Tier items

This item can be used with the following items:

- [TE1 - Planting standard hedgerow tree](#)
- [TE3 - Planting fruit trees](#)
- [TE2 - Planting standard parkland tree](#) (Higher Tier only)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE7: Tree guard (wood post and rail)

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the tree guard (wood post and rail) item.

How much will be paid

£59.50 per guard.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier

Only on trees within a parcel managed with one of the following options:

- [BE3 - Management of hedgerows](#)
- [BE4 - Management of traditional orchards](#)
- [BE5 - Creation of traditional orchards](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [WD4 - Management of wood pasture and parkland](#)
- [WD5 - Restoration of wood pasture and parkland](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [WD6 - Creation of wood pasture and parkland](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [WD7 - Management of successional areas and scrub](#)
- [WD8 - Creation of successional area and scrub](#) (Higher Tier only)

Where this item cannot be used

With the following items:

- [TE6 - Tree guard \(tube and mesh\)](#)
- [TE8 - Tree guard \(wood post and wire\)](#)

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful this item will protect trees from damage caused by grazing animals and wild animals.

Requirements

- erect tree guards at least 2m high which have:
 - 4 treated timber corner posts
 - 5cm diameter top and middle rails

- a bottom rail if grazing animals are likely to get underneath the guard
- posts placed so that grazing animals cannot reach within 0.5m of the tree stem
- a single strand of barbed wire along the top rail to prevent animals rubbing against the guard
- sheep netting or 3 strands of taut plain or barbed wire should be fastened:
 - to the corner posts between the middle and top rails
 - between the middle rail and the bottom rail
- use sheep netting instead of barbed wire between the middle rail and the bottom rail if sheep are likely to graze the parcel
- the design of the tree guard must allow access for:
 - carrying out formative pruning
 - applying a mulch
 - clearing vegetation around the base of each tree

Do not:

- fasten guards to the tree
- attach guards so that they rub against, constrict or damage the tree in any other way

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of existing trees to be protected

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#) or [Higher Tier](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Related Mid Tier items

This item can be used with the following items:

- [TE1 - Planting standard hedgerow tree](#)
- [TE3 - Planting fruit trees](#)
- [TE2 - Planting standard parkland tree](#) (Higher Tier only)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE8: Tree guard (wood post and wire)

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the tree guard (wood post and wire) item.

How much will be paid

£84 per guard.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier and Higher Tier

Only on trees within a parcel managed with one of the following options:

- [BE3 - Management of hedgerows](#)
- [BE4 - Management of traditional orchards](#)
- [BE5 - Creation of traditional orchards](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [WD4 - Management of wood pasture and parkland](#)
- [WD5 - Restoration of wood pasture and parkland](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [WD6 - Creation of wood pasture and parkland](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [WD7 - Management of successional areas and scrub](#)
- [WD8 - Creation of successional area and scrub](#) (Higher Tier only)

Where this item cannot be used

With the following items:

- [TE6 - Tree guard \(tube and mesh\)](#)
- [TE7 - Tree guard \(wood post and rail\)](#)

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful this item will protect trees from damage caused by grazing animals and wild animals.

Requirements

- erect tree guards at least 1.5 m high with posts placed far enough apart that grazing animals cannot reach within 0.5m of the tree stem
- the design of the tree guard must allow access for:

- carrying out formative pruning
- applying a mulch
- clearing vegetation around the base of each tree
- tree guards need to be constructed in one of two ways, either:
 - with at least 3 treated timber corner posts, and top and bottom rails that are 5cm in diameter
 - with sheep netting attached between the top and bottom rails
 - increase the height of the guard if needed, using longer posts and an additional strand of wire strung above the sheep netting
 - wrap 2 strands of plain or barbed wire spirally around the guard to prevent animals from rubbing against it
- or alternatively:
 - use at least 2 stakes placed at least 0.5m apart
 - one stake must be at least 1.5m high, and the other at least 0.5m high
 - use strong weld mesh wire, at least 1.5m high, wrapped around and securely fastened to the outside of the stakes at least 0.25m from the trunk
 - to prevent the trunk rubbing against the metal, either bend the vertical strands of the wire mesh so they face outwards; or push a piece of rubber tubing slit lengthways on to the top of the wire circle
 - wrap 2 strands of barbed wire spirally around the guard to prevent livestock from rubbing against it

Do not:

- fasten guards to the tree
- attach guards so that they rub against, constrict or damage the tree in any other way

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of existing trees to be protected

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#) or [Higher Tier](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs during and after work has been completed

Related Mid Tier items

This item can be used with the following items:

- [TE1 - Planting standard hedgerow tree](#)
- [TE3 - Planting fruit trees](#)
- [TE2 - Planting standard parkland tree](#) (Higher Tier only)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE9: Parkland tree guard - welded steel

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the parkland tree guard - welded steel item.

How much will be paid

£170 per tree.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only with:

- [WD4 - Management of wood pasture and parkland](#)
- [WD5 - Restoration of wood pasture and parkland](#)
- [WD6 - Creation of wood pasture](#)

Requirements

- install a tree guard in accordance with the specification agreed with Natural England
- provide sufficient clearance so that grazing animals cannot reach the stem of the tree

Do not:

- fasten guards to the tree itself
- allow guards to rub against, constrict, or cause damage to the tree

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the trees to be guarded
- item specification, if required

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work
- a detailed specification if required

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Using tree guards

Use metal tree guards to protect standard trees from vandalism, mowing, livestock and wild animals in parkland and areas with public access.

Use guards traditional to the area.

This item cannot be used to replace existing guards to maintain the parkland's character.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE10: Coppicing bankside trees

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the coppicing bankside trees item.

How much will be paid

£52 per tree.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only on trees along a streamside or riverbank that are not currently managed under a regular coppicing programme.

How this item will benefit the environment

The coppicing of bankside trees increases the longevity and health of these features, provides valuable habitat and habitat corridors in river valley and wetland landscapes and in the right location can help stabilise river and ditch banks.

Requirements

- coppice trees between 1 September and 1 March
- cut trees between 7.5cm and 15cm above ground level
- protect cut stools from livestock, deer and rabbits to allow re-growth
- control the growth of nettle, thistle, dock, ragwort and other weed species; any herbicide applications must be by spot treatment or weed wiping only

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the trees to be coppiced

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Picking the right location

This item can be used for individual or small groups of trees along a streamside or riverbank.

It can be used to bring trees into a coppicing programme or for the selection of single stems to grow on to become mature trees.

The short-term visual impact on the landscape should be considered when determining the percentage of trees to be coppiced along any stretch of watercourse.

Management

Angle cuts away from the centre of the crown when coppicing to allow water to run off.

Cut material can be disposed of by stacking in piles on site, removing it from the site, or burning. Leave material in as large pieces as possible and do not stack against the trees that have been cut.

Small branches and twigs (under 10cm in diameter) can be burnt on site provided trees are not damaged. Avoid disposal on sensitive habitats or historic features.

Fire sites should be a minimum of 10m from the canopy of any tree.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE11: Tree surgery

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the tree surgery item.

How much will be paid

£96.50 per tree when cutting limbs up to and including 20cm in diameter.

£200 per tree when cutting limbs over 20cm in diameter.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- for tree surgery on mature, fully grown trees, with higher payment rate for where cutting of limbs over 20cm diameter is required (Note this item is not intended for use on bush orchard trees.)

Where the cutting of limbs of over 20cm diameter is required, the applicant must obtain a written assessment and advice on the work required from an appropriately qualified arboricultural expert, which addresses and is aimed at delivering:

- the intended outcome
- long term health and viability of the tree(s) to be cut
- any requirements for subsequent management

This item is not eligible on bush orchards. These are defined as intensively managed top fruit crops, including apples, pears, cherries and plums, grown on non-vigorous rootstocks.

How this item will benefit the environment

Maintain and enhance the character of the landscape by managing and/or restoring mature trees, to prolong their lives, and maintain their wildlife and/or historic value.

If successful, mature trees in danger of collapse will have been stabilised and established pollards will have been re-pollarded. In cases where it will enhance the character of the landscape, new pollards will have been created on established trees with a diameter at breast height of less than 40cm (less than 20cm for oak and beech, as larger diameter trees are likely to fail).

Requirements

- carry out tree surgery between 1 September and 1 March
- where cutting limbs over 20cm diameter, carry out the work in accordance with the advice received
- cut the tree cleanly at sufficient height to prevent grazing of re-growth
- only carry out first pollarding on trees with a diameter at breast height of less than 40cm (20cm for oak and beech)
- control injurious weeds as the site regenerates, but do not apply any pesticides within 10 m of the tree, except for herbicides to spot treat or weed wipe
- remove cut material from the site or tidy it into piles

Do not:

- use this item for work required for health and safety purposes

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- records of when the tree surgery was done and by whom, and details of any spot spraying or weed wiping
- photographs of the trees to be managed

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to manage the site

Tree surgery and working at height require specialist skills. Read more about useful [tree management and safety information](#) from the Forestry Commission (FC).

Advice from an appropriately qualified arboricultural expert should be sought – this is a requirement for all work that involves cutting limbs of over 20cm diameter, as is a written assessment.

When reintroducing pollarding on mature trees after a long gap, adopting some of the same techniques that are applied to veteran pollards should be considered - in a group of pollards, trial on an individual tree and/or leave longer stubs to test the response. Limbs that branch from below the height of the first pollard cut do not need to be cut.

Be aware that there is a separate option available in Higher Tier only, [BE6 - Veteran tree surgery](#).

Where practical, angle cuts away from the centre of the crown during tree surgery to allow water to run off. Cut material can be disposed of by stacking in piles on site or removing it from the site. Leave material in as large pieces as possible and do not stack against the trees that have been cut. Small branches and twigs (under 10cm in diameter) can be burnt on site provided trees are not damaged. Avoid disposal on sensitive habitats or historic features. Fire sites should be a minimum of 10m from the canopy of any tree.

Consents and permissions

Be aware that a number of consents and permissions may apply:

- the Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and Conservation Orders may apply to the trees on site
- old trees especially can host European Protected Species, such as bats

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE12: Stump grinding

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the stump grinding item.

How much will be paid

£24 per stump.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only in conjunction with a management or restoration option where approved by a Natural England adviser.

How this item will benefit the environment

It is used to support habitat restoration and management by removing tree stumps that would otherwise restrict access for restoration or management works.

If successful stumps will have been cleared, there will be little or no ground disturbance and wood chippings will have been removed.

Requirements

- grind individual tree stumps down to ground level or below
- clean up the site after the works, including removal of wood chippings

Do not:

- allow works, including access routes, to compact soil

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the stumps before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

This item is only to be used where tree stumps are restricting access to the site for habitat restoration and management. It cannot be used for general tidying up where there is no impediment to the management of the site.

The objective is to clear stumps to ground level with minimum impact on the soil. Occasionally there may be a reason to grind stumps below ground level leaving a depression. Any such depressions can often be left - there are usually good reasons for not moving soil from elsewhere. Applicants must discuss and agree any infilling with soil with Natural England.

Wood chippings may occasionally be used as a mulch provided this has been agreed with a Natural England adviser.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE13: Creation of dead wood habitat on trees

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of dead wood habitat on trees item.

How much will be paid

£175 per tree.

Where to use this item

it is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier when the following conditions are met:

- on trees that are located on or adjacent to sites with existing populations of veteran trees
- where the land around the trees being treated is managed by cutting or extensive grazing
- where tree cover across the area where they are located does not exceed 25%
- on trees that will not impede or be impeded by the crown or canopy of existing veteran trees
- on trees that are of the same native species and genetic origin as existing native veteran trees in the same area

How this item will benefit the environment

It promotes continuity in the provision of dead wood habitat to benefit rare or specialised wildlife where there is a generational gap between existing veteran trees and their successors.

If successful there will be deliberate 'damage' or ageing of younger trees in association with veteran trees where there is a generation gap in the recruitment of future veterans. This will mimic the natural damage caused for example by lightning strikes, branch failure and woodpecker holes, speeding up of the process of producing valuable wood decay habitats otherwise only found in very old trees.

Requirements

You must:

- remove any existing scrub around the selected trees
- carry out the work as set out in an approved specification or implementation plan -conduct the work between 1 September and 1 March, using skilled labour
- cut trees at sufficient height to prevent grazing of re-growth
- make sure you can monitor the trees' response to cutting, by tagging each tree and taking and retaining before and after photographs and making them available to Natural England on request
- leave all mature and veteran standing trees and all standing and fallen deadwood
- keep the deadwood of any tree that dies following veteranisation work and plant a replacement tree of the same native species and genetic origin

Do not:

- use this item for work required for health and safety purposes

Keeping records

Before you apply, you must get a written assessment and advice on the work required from a qualified arboricultural expert. The assessment must:

- lay out the intended outcome of the work
- explain how the long term health and viability of the trees to be cut will be maintained
- explain the requirements for subsequent management

You must send the following with your application:

- a map showing the location of mature and veteran standing trees and standing and fallen deadwood

You must keep the following records and supply them with your annual payment claim:

- photographs of the completed work

- a copy of the arboricultural assessment detailed above

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the trees before works start
- records required of the work undertaken and details of the persons undertaking it and their qualifications

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Related options and items

You can use this item on the same area as the following options and items:

- [BE6 - Veteran tree surgery](#)
- [TE2 - Planting standard parkland tree](#)
- [TE7 - Tree guard \(wood post and rail\)](#)
- [TE8 - Tree guard \(wood post and wire\)](#)
- [TE9 - Parkland tree guard - welded steel](#)
- [WD4 - Management of wood pasture and parkland](#)
- [WD5 - Restoration of wood pasture and parkland](#)
- [WD6 - Creation of wood pasture](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Picking the right trees

‘Veteranisation’ or the creation of dead wood habitat on trees could shorten the tree’s life. Only attempt this where there are enough trees to be left without such treatment and no late-mature trees to provide successors to any veterans. Never use this method on trees which may already be developing wood decay habitat, trees that already have important habitat, or trees where damage may become a safety issue such as in parks or towns. Any intervention still needs to be sufficiently small so

that it does not pose an immediate threat to the tree, allowing it to survive for many years.

Management

You can use a number of methods to encourage veteran features on younger trees including:

- cutting the tops of trees that are likely to respond to pollarding
- making holes in live standing trees to initiate rot
- deliberately damaging the bark to induce decay or simulate sap runs
- breaking branches, rather than saw them off flush, or create 'coronet' ends
- increasing water retention in forks and crowns of trees by drilling holes

You must seek advice from a suitably qualified arboriculturalist before you carry out any work. For more detailed advice on suitable techniques speak to your adviser.

Planting new trees

If a tree dies following this work you must replace it with a tree of the same species and genetic origin. You must plant any replacement tree where there is enough room to grow an open crown.

Consents and permissions

A number of consents and permissions may apply:

- the Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and Conservation Orders may apply to the trees on site
- old trees especially can host European Protected Species, such as bats

Follow the advice on the [VETree](#) website for creating veteran features.

Further information

Read these useful guidance booklets for more information on managing ancient or veteran trees:

- [Ancient tree guides \(booklets 1 to 8\)](#)

- Lonsdale, D (ed) 2013, Ancient and other veteran trees: further guidance on management Tree Council
- [Read, H. 2000 Veteran trees: A guide to good management. Veteran Trees Initiative](#)

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

TE14: Identification of orchard fruit tree varieties

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the identification of orchard fruit tree varieties item.

How much will be paid

£29 per variety.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only with one of the following options:

- [BE4 - Management of traditional orchards](#)
- [BE5 - Creation of traditional orchards](#)

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful local and rare varieties of fruit trees will be identified which will help select varieties to be planted in orchard restoration projects.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- agree which specialist or organisation will identify the tree varieties
- have samples of fruit or leaves identified
- produce a map of the orchard showing the location of each species and variety identified

Samples can only be identified by:

- posting them to an organisation that provides a recognised fruit identification service
- getting a specialist to visit and identify the tree varieties at the right time of year for fruit or leaf identification

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- map of the orchard showing the location(s) of each species and variety identified
- specialist body record of identified species

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

UP1: Enclosed rough grazing

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the enclosed rough grazing option.

How much will be paid

£39 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier

Whole parcel

Only on land above the moorland line within severely disadvantaged areas (SDA), on parcels less than 25ha in area. Parcels must be enclosed.

When this option is targeted at ground nesting birds, parcels must have scrub cover of less than 1% of the area.

Features that can be included in this option

The following features can be included if they're part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).

- Bracken
- Ditches
- Dykes
- Scrub including gorse bushes and briar
- Scree, rock, outcrops or boulders
- Streams less than 4m wide and that take up less than 1 ha of the parcel

Related Mid-Tier options

The following options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option.

- [HS4 – Scrub control on historic and archaeological features](#)
- [OT6 – Organic land management - enclosed rough grazing](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It maintains and enhances areas of enclosed rough grazing land within an upland farming system. This land contains extensive areas of moorland vegetation but it does not meet moorland priority habitat status over the majority of the parcel.

This habitat will benefit moorland birds such as short-eared owl and ring ouzel and provide improved breeding and feeding habitat for birds such as golden plover and redshank.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the spring and summer there will be a mosaic of upland rough grazing habitats with diverse sward heights and low/contained levels of bracken, gorse and scrub.

By autumn, the sward will have a varied sward height with tussocks of grass, and some grasses and wildflowers will be allowed to go to seed.

Management will ensure that cover of soft and hard rush is no more than 20%.

Any archaeological or historic features will be protected under a grass cover, with no increase in scrub or bracken cover, no bare ground present, and no damage incurred as a result of machinery use.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Operate machinery or carry out other activities during the bird breeding season, that may disturb breeding birds or damage nests
- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles and bracken
- Apply any lime, fertilisers or manures
- Supplementary feed except for mineral blocks

- Cut rushes between 15 March and 31 July
- Cut more than half of the scrub in any year, except on historic and archaeological features
- Use herbicides on ferns other than bracken
- Plough, cultivate or re-seed
- Carry out any drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, unless the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has given written permission before work takes place

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- contain bracken and common gorse so that they do not spread to new areas of land
- control common gorse by cutting or burning in blocks
- maintain dwarf shrub coverage
- maintain scrub in discrete small patches, lines and occasional individual bushes scattered across the site
- where scrub cover is less than 5%, keep the full extent of well-established scrub
- where scrub cover is more than 5%, keep scrub cover between 5% and 10% of the parcel area
- maintain a sward with a range of heights during the growing season so that at least 20% is less than 7 centimetres (cm) high and 20% is more than 7cm high. No height variation needs to be maintained when the field is closed up for a cut of hay or silage
- control dense rush by grazing or cutting every year so that stands of soft or hard rush do not cover more than 20% of the parcel area and sward heights are less than 20cm high by 30 September
- check for breeding birds before operating machinery or carrying out other activities which may disturb breeding birds or damage their nests. The breeding season tends to run from mid-March until late July, but it

can start earlier and finish later, depending on the species and the weather

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- Records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel
- Timings of herbicide or pesticide applications along with the product used and application rate
- Burning and cutting dates and locations
- A monthly record of stock numbers grazing each parcel in this option
- Any written agreements from Natural England for drainage works

You may be asked to take and submit the following photographic records.

- A photographic record of the extent of dwarf shrub, bracken and gorse on the site

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

Suitable land includes:

- uncultivated grassland
- unimproved pasture
- allotments that have been historically set aside for the grazing of animals
- steeper or less accessible parcels not routinely used for producing forage
- seasonally wet parcels
- parcels with naturally occurring flushes or rock outcrops

These parcels tend to have unimproved soils that support semi-natural vegetation, priority habitats or [species listed under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act](#).

Avoid damaging historic and archaeological features as these are particularly vulnerable in historically uncultivated parcels.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

UP2: Management of rough grazing for birds

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of rough grazing for birds option.

How much will be paid

£88 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier, Higher Tier and Upland Offer.

Whole or part parcel

Only on permanent grassland parcels of at least 2 hectares (ha) and less than 25ha in areas that are within a Less Favoured Area (LFA). This includes allotments, intakes, newtakes, and semi-improved in-bye that already support (or have the potential to support) breeding waders.

You must also meet at least one of the following conditions to use this option.

- Follow a recommended fertiliser management system to plan nutrient inputs across the farm
- Adopt a recommended fertiliser management system within 18 months of the start of the agreement
- Qualify as a low intensity farmer

In Mid-Tier and the Upland Offer you can only use this option on land that meets one of the following:

- The land is mapped as Upland breeding bird areas for Countryside Stewardship on the [MAGIC website](#)
- The land is adjacent to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), as mapped on the [MAGIC website](#)
- The land is adjacent to or includes a watercourse, as mapped on the [MAGIC website](#)

- The land is mapped as Flood Risk Management Priorities (England) High or Medium Priority, as mapped on the [MAGIC website](#)
- The parcel is part of the Nature for Climate: Peat Capital Grant, and evidence from the relevant Peat Partnership can be provided if required.

You must also fill in the [UP2 checklist: Countryside Stewardship](#) to confirm your eligibility. You do not need to submit this with your application but must keep it and supply it on request.

Features that can be included in this option

The following features can be included if they are part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).

- Ditches, dykes, drains, rivers, streams that are less than 4 metres (m) wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- Temporary water
- Natural unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways, as long as the requirements can still be met
- Bracken
- Areas of scree, rock outcrops and boulders – each area can cover up to 0.1ha
- Permanent water up to 0.1ha
- Grazed woodland and scrub that allows livestock access and has grass underneath

Related Mid-Tier options

The following options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option.

- [BE3 – Management of hedgerows](#)
- [GS16 – Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [OR2 – Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 – Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT6 – Organic land management – enclosed rough grazing](#)
- [SP1 – Difficult sites supplement](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [SP2 – Raised water level supplement](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [SP3 – Bracken control supplement](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [SP4 – Control of invasive plant species supplement](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [SP5 – Shepherding supplement](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [SP6 – Cattle grazing supplement](#)

- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [SP8 – Native breeds at risk supplement](#) (Higher Tier only)
- [SP9 – Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 – Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It's for restoring or maintaining upland bird populations (normally breeding waders such as Lapwing, Snipe, Redshank, Curlew and Golden Plover but may also include Yellow wagtail, Black Grouse or other priority species). The option brings about appropriate water level management and provides the required grassland habitat and sward structure for feeding and nesting.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the spring and summer, grazing in accordance with the [stocking calendar](#) will ensure a diverse sward height with about half the sward being very short.

By autumn, grazing will have removed the year's grass growth so that the appropriate sward conditions can be achieved the following spring.

During the autumn and winter, there will be areas of surface water and wet features.

Waders will nest undisturbed.

Management will ensure that cover of soft and hard rush is no more than 20% and cover of scrub, and bracken is low or contained.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Grazing that does not follow the stocking calendar
- Operate machinery or carry out other activities during the bird breeding season that may disturb breeding birds or damage nests

- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, soft and hard rush nettles, and bracken
- Supplementary feed except for providing mineral blocks (non-energy based)
- Carry out any drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, unless the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has given written permission before work takes place

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- manage the sward by grazing and/or cutting to maintain a varied sward to benefit upland waders by achieving a sward height of less than 5 centimetres (cm) over 50% of the parcel area by 15 March
- manage scrub to achieve cover of between 1% and 5% of the parcel manage bracken and make sure bracken litter doesn't cover more than 25% cover across any area of bracken
- manage dense rush so that stands of soft or hard rush do not cover more than 20% of the parcel and the rush height is less than 20cm by 30 September
- check for breeding birds before operating machinery or carrying out other activities which may disturb breeding birds or damage their nests. The breeding season tends to run from mid-March until late July. It can start earlier and finish later, depending on the species and the weather
- manage wet features to provide muddy areas for waders to feed

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- A stocking calendar
- Evidence that a recommended fertiliser management system is used or evidence to support low intensity farmer claim
- A count of breeding birds in year 5 of the agreement
- Photographs of the extent of bracken on the option area before works start
- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- Stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- The [eligibility checklist](#) (for Mid Tier and Upland Offer applicants)

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

Choose sites that:

- are open, with any surrounding hedges less than about 2m high
- experience minimal disturbance (from footpaths or public rights of way)
- have no overhead pylons or power lines
- have no in-field trees
- are not next to woodland
- have either an existing high water table or surface water attributes (flushes, ditches, foot drains), or where they could be created

Sites to avoid

Avoid sites that are:

- steep (above 14:1 or 8 degrees)
- less than 2ha and bounded by tall (over 2m) hedgerows, scrub or trees

Vegetation management

Tailor vegetation management to the target species. Usually a range of vegetation heights is preferred.

Management of wet features (drains, grips, scrapes)

Provide surface wet features from 1 March to 1 June (such as scrapes, flushes, foot drains or surface standing water). At least 50% of the wet features' edges should have exposed mud at the water's edge to promote invertebrate activity and allow chicks access to feed.

Consider the need to re-profile man-made wet features annually and maintain as required.

Any mechanical operations should be scheduled for the driest period of the year (or after mid-August if breeding snipe are present).

Manage soft and hard rushes so that they cover no more than 20% of the option land.

Grazing

Use quiet stock on these sites to avoid unnecessary trampling of nests and chicks. Adequate grazing and appropriate mechanical operations after the breeding season (August to March) are vital to create the desired vegetation mosaic for the following spring.

It's important that there is enough grazing available, which is not in breeding bird options, to manage the breeding bird areas flexibly and correctly during the breeding season.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

UP3: Management of moorland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of moorland option.

How much will be paid

£43 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option runs for 10 years, not the standard 5 years for the scheme.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part parcels, but only on parcels:

- above the Moorland Line
- that cross the Moorland Line
- that contribute to a single grazing unit above the Moorland Line
- that contain one or more moorland priority habitats or species
- above the stock-proof boundary of enclosed in-bye land that contain semi-natural moorland habitat vegetation (for example allotments, intakes or newtakes)

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- bracken
- ditches
- dykes
- scrub including gorse bushes and briar
- scree, rock, outcrops or boulders
- streams less than 4m wide and that take up less than 1ha of the parcel
- ponds less than 1 ha of the parcel
- unsurfaced roads, tracks and paths

How this option will benefit the environment

It will:

- maintain and restore moorland priority habitats and ecosystem function
- maintain and restore species
- protect historic features
- strengthen landscape character

If successful there will be:

- improved condition of moorland habitats and associated species
- enhanced soil management
- reduced diffuse pollution
- improvements to water quality and flood risk management
- historic environmental features with no bare soil or poaching (trampling)
- stabilized and permanently re-vegetated areas that were previously eroded
- historic features unaffected by trees, bracken and scrub
- no animal burrows developing on historic features

Requirements

You will probably need to:

- only graze the land in accordance with the stocking calendar
- stick to the minimum and maximum stocking rates for each month and for different types of grazing animal
- manage vegetation by burning or cutting, using agreed practices
- prevent spread of bracken or scrub on historic or archaeological sites
- carry out a wildfire risk assessment

The agreement will set out what you cannot do. It's likely you'll not be allowed to:

- plough, harrow or roll
- cultivate or re-seed
- apply any fertilisers, manures or lime
- apply supplementary feed other than as prescribed

- use pesticides other than as prescribed

Keeping records

You must send the following with your application:

- a map of permitted access routes - you can mark these on any map, including your Farm Environment Record (FER)

On your annual claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- copies of the Wildfire Risk Assessment and, where required, the Wildfire Response Plan (agreed with fire service) and Wildfire Management Plan - for guidance and example plans see the [Uplands Management Group template](#) or [Forestry Commission's guide](#)
- records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel
- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- a stocking calendar approved by Natural England
- photographs of the extent of scrub and bracken on any historic and archaeological features on the site before works start
- a monthly record of stock numbers by parcel and stock type
- photographs of the extent of scrub and bracken on historic and archaeological features

The detailed requirements for this supplement will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [BE3 – Management of hedgerows](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP8 – Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

- [UP4 - Management of moorland vegetation supplement](#)
- [UP5 - Moorland re-wetting supplement](#)
- [UP6 - Upland livestock exclusion supplement](#)
- [WT3 – Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Contact organisations early

Make sure you contact Natural England or other relevant organisations well in advance of making your application.

Further information

Read about the regulations on [burning heather and grass](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

UP4: Management of moorland vegetation supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of moorland vegetation supplement.

How much will be paid

£10 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

With the [UP3 - Management of moorland option](#).

Only when land is within the moorland line and Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs) and where one of the following is needed:

- for the management of vegetation where additional interventions will be required, for example restoration burning or cutting followed by the addition of Sphagnum
- significant changes to vegetation management, to bring about favourable or recovering condition of designated sites or functionality of priority habitats and to benefit priority species

Where this supplement cannot be used

To support existing burning or cutting regimes, or minor modifications to them.

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It is for carrying out an appropriate programme of vegetation management to contribute to restoration and improvement in functionality of priority habitats such as dry heath, wet heath and blanket bog where significant changes to current management are required.

If successful there will be a significant change to burning and/or cutting management so that it is carried out to promote restoration of habitats. These changes will have created more diverse vegetation or opportunities

for colonisation by key species such as Sphagnum. There will also be positive impacts on water quality, reduced erosion and enhanced carbon storage.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to follow a programme of management as agreed in [UP3 - Management of moorland](#).

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- copies of the Wildfire Risk Assessment and, where required, the Wildfire Response Plan (agreed with fire service) and Wildfire Management Plan - for guidance and example plans see the [Uplands Management Group template](#) or [Forestry Commission's guide](#)

The detailed requirements for this supplement will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related options

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements:

- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [UP6 - Upland livestock exclusion supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this supplement

The following section gives advice on carrying out this supplement successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this supplement

Pick the right site

On deep peat (blanket bog, other mires) and wet heath, this supplement should only be used when there is a clear need identified in a restoration plan. Do not burn these habitats unless specified as part of a restoration plan or as part of an agreed wildfire management plan.

Other examples of where the UP4 supplement could be considered may include:

- re introduction of burning to dry heath habitats as part of a Site Restoration Plan (for example to control woody re-growth or manage fire risk)
- to create habitat conditions suitable for specific priority species
- to facilitate a switch from burning to cutting management as part of a Site Restoration Plan
- to improve management of western gorse heath by cutting as part of a Site Restoration Plan
- to implement fire risk mitigation planning as part of a Site Restoration Plan
- to encourage tailored management of vegetation on historic features

This supplement should not be used:

- on dry heath where burning or cutting are required to achieve economic outcomes. To introduce burning to wet heath or blanket bog habitat for any reasons other than as part of a Site Restoration or Wildfire Management Plan
- where burning or cutting would damage historic environment features
- on montane habitats or where damage to woodland or environmentally valuable scrub may occur
- to support the rotational burning of purple moor-grass on wet heath, but cutting may be appropriate

Taking care of historic or archaeological features

Sometimes these features may benefit from management that controls vegetation cover and in some cases burning is preferred to cutting. Avoid burning where heat may damage features such as boundary stones, or cutting where damage may be caused by machinery. Refer to the Management of Moorland option prescriptions and seek advice from the

Natural England advisor. Do not cross historic or archaeological features with access routes for heavy machinery and vehicles.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

UP5: Moorland re-wetting supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the moorland re-wetting supplement.

How much will be paid

£18 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only:

- with option [UP3 - Management of moorland](#)
- if a peat restoration programme has been started or completed

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It will maintain and restore vegetation mosaics, wetland habitats and associated wildlife.

If successful there will be:

- improved hydrology of moorland habitats
- benefits to upland flora and fauna, eg increased sphagnum moss growth
- benefits to historic features
- strengthened landscape character
- improved breeding habitat for invertebrates, a food source for grouse and wader chicks

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to maintain blocks. Do this by making sure that:

- there are no breaches in the blocks
- excess water from the grip does not flow into the channel below
- excess water soaks into the ground, down slope from the grip

- no water - except natural peak surface water-flows between dams

Make sure in the re-profiled area that:

- bare peat has stabilised
- vegetation has established
- channel water levels are maintained at ground surface
- channels are actively silting up behind grip blocks

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- records of all management work including grazing, grip blocking and other re-wetting work
- any bank statements, receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- inspection reports and photographs of grips and blocks for your annual claim
- records of maintenance work done to meet the requirements

You should also be aware that at the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic records:

- photographs showing the stabilised peat
- photographs of any excavation or construction work, if applicable

The detailed requirements for this supplement will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related supplements

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements:

- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

- [SP10 - Administration of group managed agreements supplement](#)
- [UP3 - Management of moorland](#)
- [UP6 - Upland livestock exclusion supplement](#)

More than one supplement may be used if agreed with Natural England adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this supplement

The following section gives advice on carrying out this supplement successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this supplement.

Pick the right location

Good sites for this supplement are:

- deep peat soils that can support peat forming blanket bog vegetation
- Natural England's priority habitat for blanket bog
- restored areas with reduced grazing capacity due to re-wetting

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

UP6: Upland livestock exclusion supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the upland livestock exclusion supplement.

How much will be paid

£16 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only:

- with [UP3 - Management of moorland](#)
- where livestock are kept from the site for at least 4 months

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It will improve habitat and feature conditions.

If successful there will be:

- increased rates of heather regeneration
- improved rates of flowering of rare species such as spring gentian
- a regeneration of scrub such as juniper
- improved downstream water quality
- improvements in the condition and visibility of archaeological sites and other historic features

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- only graze the land as scheduled in the stocking calendar, including a period of livestock exclusion
- agree where the excluded livestock should be kept and how they are managed

- stick to the minimum and maximum stocking rates for each month and for different types of grazing animal

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- a stocking calendar approved by Natural England

The detailed requirements for this supplement will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related options

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following options and supplements:

- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 - Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [UP4 - Management of moorland vegetation supplement](#)
- [UP5 - Moorland re-wetting supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this supplement

The following section gives advice on carrying out this supplement successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this supplement.

Natural England should agree that habitats and other features on this site will improve more quickly than under the current or common practice.

The supplement might finish before the end of the agreement if it is used for a period of restoration.

Plan for livestock exclusions

Livestock exclusions will usually be done in winter, but some habitats are different.

Be aware of exceptions, which include removing livestock:

- from limestone grassland from May to August
- from limestone pavement areas for a specified number of years
- during bare peat restoration works for a specified number of years
- from September to April during dry or wet heath restoration

Erect fencing

Consider erecting temporary or permanent fencing if this is a part-parcel supplement, as it helps when removing stock from parts of grazing units.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WB1: Small wildlife box

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the small wildlife box item.

How much will be paid

£28.50 per box.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier

Only:

- with options [HS1](#) and [HS8](#) in Mid Tier (can be used in other circumstances in Higher Tier and Capital Grants)
- for tree sparrow, dormouse, targeted bat species or invertebrate pollinators (these are the 'target species'), unless an RSPB, Buglife or Natural England specialist supports its use for another species
- when the other year-round target species' requirements (summer and winter foraging habitat) are being met on the holding or nearby

How this item will benefit the environment

It provides artificial nesting, roosting and hibernation sites for specific mammals, birds and invertebrates.

Requirements

Agreement holders will need to agree with Natural England a specification for the box. Each box should be sited in the agreed location and cleaned out in the autumn (October and November), unless it is a bee box, or hibernating or roosting bats are using it. Each box must be maintained in good condition, with any damage or losses made good during the agreement term.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the proposed site for the wildlife box
- the date that the nest boxes are cleaned out (unless used by bats or invertebrates)

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Location

Keep the box in its original location, but if it is not being used after year 3, ask Natural England for relocation advice.

Dormice

Boxes should be:

- in ancient woodlands or large hedgerows - avoid isolated trees
- in batches of at least 10 (ideally over 50), spaced 10m to 20m at around 30 boxes per hectare
- 1.5m to 2m above the ground, and over 3m if public have access
- away from footpaths
- made of untreated timber
- based on the [PTES box construction guidance](#)

Tree sparrows

Boxes should be:

- on farm buildings or hedgerow trees, ideally near permanent water such as ponds
- away from places cats and squirrels can easily access, with a secure lid
- out of the midday sun
- weatherproof with small drainage holes in the floor
- made from wood at least 15mm thick with a 28mm entrance hole - follow the [RSPB](#) and [British Trust for Ornithology](#) guidance

Bats

Boxes should be:

- large enough for a maternity colony to cluster to conserve heat
- dry, rainproof and draught-free, with no gaps where the sides and top join
- entered by a slit at the base (front or back) no more than 15mm to 20mm wide - follow the [Bat Conservation Trust](#) guidance
- preservative-free if made of wood
- out of the midday sun
- close to a hedgerow or tree line
- placed with other boxes facing in different directions to offer a range of temperature conditions

Solitary bees

Boxes should be:

- in a dry, sunny and sheltered position on farm buildings, a post, or freestanding with a raised base to prevent rising damp
- near pollen and nectar forage
- 50cm by 50cm and 20cm deep, open fronted but with a back
- made of untreated timber
- weatherproof with small drainage holes in the floor
- contain at least four compartments, packed tightly with drilled hardwood blocks, bamboo stem sections and reed stems or paper drinking straws

Further information

Bats and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - it is an offence to disturb, handle or kill bats. A licence from Natural

England is needed to inspect bat boxes that have been or are being used by bats.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WB2: Medium wildlife box

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the medium wildlife box item.

How much will be paid

£39 per box.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier

Only:

- with options [HS1](#) and [HS8](#) in Mid Tier (can be used in other circumstances in Higher Tier and Capital Grants)
- for tree sparrow (as a triple box) or for bats (these are the 'target species'), unless RSPB or a Natural England bird specialist support its use for another species
- when the other year-round target species' requirements (summer and winter foraging habitat) are being met on the holding or nearby

How this item will benefit the environment

It provides artificial nesting, roosting and hibernation sites for specific mammals and birds. This includes tree sparrow and targeted bat species.

Requirements

Agreement holders will need to agree with Natural England a specification for the box. Each box should be sited in the agreed location and cleaned out in the autumn (October and November), unless hibernating or roosting bats are using it. Each box must be maintained in good condition, with any damage or losses made good during the agreement term.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the proposed site for the wildlife box
- the date that the nest boxes are cleaned out (unless used by bats or invertebrates)

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Each box must be maintained in good condition, with any damage or losses made good during the agreement term.

Location

Keep the box in its original location if it is being used. If it is not being used after year 3, ask Natural England for relocation advice. Boxes should be strapped to trees with wire and hose or rubber to prevent tree damage.

Tree sparrows

Boxes should be:

- in farm buildings or hedgerow trees, ideally near permanent water such as ponds or ditches
- away from bird feeders or places cats and squirrels can easily access, with a secure lid
- out of the midday sun
- weatherproof with small drainage holes in the floor
- made from wood at least 15mm thick with a 28mm entrance hole - follow the [RSPB](#) and [British Trust for Ornithology](#) guidance

Bats

Boxes should be:

- large enough for a maternity colony to cluster to conserve heat
- dry, rainproof and draught-free, with no gaps where the sides and top join
- entered by a slit at the base (front or back) no more than 15mm to 20mm wide - follow the [Bat Conservation Trust guidance](#)
- where bats are known to feed
- preservative-free if made of wood
- sheltered from strong winds and sun for at least part of day
- close to a hedgerow, tree line or other linear vegetation feature
- placed with one or two other boxes facing in different directions to offer a range of temperature conditions

Further information

Bats and their roosts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 - it is an offence to disturb, handle or kill bats. A licence from Natural England is needed to inspect bat boxes that have been or are being used by bats.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WB3: Large wildlife box

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the large wildlife box item.

How much will be paid

£100 per box.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier

Only:

- with options [HS1](#) and [HS8](#) in Mid Tier (can be used in other circumstances in Higher Tier and Capital Grants)
- for barn owls or kestrels (these are the 'target species'), unless there is support from the RSPB or a Natural England bird specialist for another species
- when the other year-round requirements (summer and winter foraging habitat) for the target species are being met on the holding or nearby

How this item will benefit the environment

This item provides artificial nesting and roosting sites for large birds, in particular barn owls and kestrels.

Requirements

Agreement holders will need to agree with Natural England a specification for the box. Each box should be sited in the agreed location and cleaned out in the autumn (October and November), unless hibernating or roosting bats are using it. Each box must be maintained in good condition, with any damage or losses made good during the agreement term.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the proposed site for the wildlife box
- the date that the nest boxes are cleaned out (unless used by bats or invertebrates)

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Each box must be maintained in good condition, with any damage or losses made good during the agreement term.

Location

This item can be used anywhere on the holding. Ideally it should be used with other habitat options such as moorland, rough grassland, boundary field margins, in-field or boundary trees, or historic buildings.

Keep the box in its original location if it is being used. If it is not being used after year 3, ask Natural England for relocation advice.

Construction

Natural England will give location and design guidance as well as the specification, which is likely to include:

- box design and materials
- preferred location
- maintenance requirements

The Barn Owl Trust has [information on the best locations and how to construct a box](#) (kestrel boxes generally follow similar construction guidance). The [RSPB](#) also has information on barn owl and kestrel boxes.

The box should be at least 1km away from any motorway, dual carriageway or similar major road. It should have entrance holes:

- at least 100mm diameter or 100mm by 100mm square
- that are, ideally, 100mm by 130mm
- and are at most 150mm by 150mm (up to 210mm by 300mm for kestrels)

It should also:

- have a nest chamber floor area of at least 0.16 square metres (that is, sides at least 40cm x 40cm), ideally 0.2 to 0.4 square metres
- be at least 46cm from the bottom of entrance hole to the nest (but only 10cm for kestrels)
- have an external platform below the entrance hole or perch with enough room for an entire brood of owlets or young kestrels to exercise and await food deliveries
- be easy to clean
- have wire straps with hose, nylon bolts or aluminium nails to secure the box to the tree or building to prevent damage
- have its tree fixings adjusted each year so they do not cut into the growing tree or cause the box to 'explode' off the bolts
- be sturdy yet light enough to allow safe erection using basic equipment
- be covered with thick roofing felt if outside

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WD1: Woodland creation - maintenance payments

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the woodland creation - maintenance payments option.

How much will be paid

£200 per hectare (ha)

How long this option lasts

This option lasts for 10 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme.

Where to use this option

Available after the works under a Woodland Creation Grant agreement are complete.

Where this option cannot be used

On land owned by public authorities; this includes land owned by the state, the Crown, county councils, district councils, and local authorities.

How this option will benefit the environment

It will help create woodland that:

- supports wildlife, by linking habitats together or providing a protective buffer between them
- reduces the risk of floods, improves water quality and prevents soil erosion
- is resilient and can adapt to climate change
- enhances the landscape

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- keep all newly planted trees free from competing vegetation for 10 years by using approved herbicides, mulch, or a clearing saw, hook or scythe
- replace any trees that die
- maintain fences, tree shelters or spiral guards
- maintain areas of open space
- remove individual tree protection in year 10

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely successful applicants will not be allowed to:

- use any herbicides if trees are being planted on land next to a watercourse.

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- photographs showing the level of maintenance in years 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10
- any bank statements, receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Agreement holders will need to carry out maintenance so that the woodland is fully established by year 10.

Further information

Read more information about the [Woodland Creation Grant](#) or [Higher Tier](#) manuals to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

You can find Guidance on woodland grant schemes and BPS in [Forestry Commission Operations Note 042](#) on GOV.UK.

WD2: Woodland improvement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the woodland improvement option.

How much will be paid

£100 per hectare (ha) per year.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

How this option will benefit the environment

It will improve the biodiversity of woodland and/or make it more resilient to climate change.

Requirements

The agreement will set out the objectives and what you must do to achieve them. This will be based on a pre-existing Woodland Management Plan approved by the Forestry Commission.

You can only use this option on areas covered by the agreement. You cannot use it on other woodland areas also covered by the Management Plan. The specific compartments where this option will be used will be identified in the application process.

You must apply for this option under one of the following priority objectives:

- restore plantations on ancient woodland sites
- enhance priority habitats
- enhance priority species
- improve resilience to climate change through continuous cover forestry (CCF)

You must carry out sufficient and suitable requirements on the land, as informed by the Woodland Management Plan and as discussed with a Forestry Commission Woodland Officer. The requirements you can carry out are:

- reduce the percentage of coniferous species by year 5, as agreed with an adviser
- use regeneration felling where appropriate to encourage crown development and/or natural regeneration
- replant 1,100 trees per ha if native tree species haven't started to regenerate naturally 2 years after the removal of conifers, or conditions to support natural regeneration of native species are not in place (this is for areas larger than 0.25ha)
- manage successional scrub through cyclical cutting
- re-coppice as agreed with an adviser
- thin or selectively fell trees as agreed with an adviser
- implement silvicultural transformation as informed by the Woodland Management Plan
- monitor the presence of red and grey squirrels in red squirrel strongholds
- release existing or recruitment veteran trees from competing tree growth
- control deer if they are identified as a threat in the woodland management plan, put in place a deer management plan and manage deer populations using lethal control or fencing to allow establishment of ground flora and understory
- remove competing, non-native or invasive species by mechanical or chemical control, as agreed with an adviser
- create and/or manage permanent open space and access rides
- manage ride edges by cyclical cutting
- create or maintain appropriate levels of deadwood habitat in line with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS)
- control grey squirrels using live or lethal traps if they are identified as a threat in the woodland management plan. In areas that also contain red squirrels, only live traps can be used. Shooting may be undertaken as an additional method of control.

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any bank statements, receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work

- records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel, including an operational site assessment, or similar, to show UKFS compliant operational activities
- a Forestry Commission approved management plan that justifies the need for this option
- a Deer Management Plan in place by the end of the first year
- monitoring reports for year 3 and 5 of the agreement to confirm progress (for example providing before and after photographs, a record of the number of deer culled, and the results of squirrel monitoring)
- evidence of activities undertaken through monitoring, photography and marking

You can use [Forestry Commission Operations Note 50](#) to find information and tools to support the monitoring report, photo monitoring and information on deer management plans to help you meet your requirements under WD2.

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WD3: Woodland edges on arable land

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the woodland edges on arable land option.

How much will be paid

£323 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

- Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier
- Only on arable land immediately adjacent to predominantly native or ancient semi-natural woodlands.

Where this option cannot be used

On historic or archaeological features

Related Mid-Tier options

The following options can be located on the same area as this option.

- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OR4 - Organic conversion - horticulture](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)
- [OT4 - Organic land management - horticulture](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

New woodland edge habitat will result in an increase in birds, invertebrates, small mammals and other wildlife.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be a strip of scrub and grass mosaic developing through natural regeneration between the arable land and existing woodland. The strip will be a maximum of 6m wide.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles and bracken
- Apply any fertilisers or manures
- Supplementary feed
- Cultivate within 6 metres (m) of the woodland edge
- Cut during the bird breeding season (1 March to 31 August)
- Cut more than a third of the shrubby growth in any one calendar year.

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- allow the woodland edge to grow out for up to 6m
- only cut between 1 September and 28 February to maintain the scrub and grass mosaic and for the control of injurious weeds and invasive non-native species

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices

- Stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- Photographs of the management undertaken

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

The woodland edge should be encouraged to grow 6m out into the field, forming a scrub and grass mosaic. This mosaic should not be allowed to develop into secondary woodland but should be maintained through controlled grazing and/or cutting.

The option should be placed next to mainly native woodland, in particular ancient woodland, which may be under active or passive management. It may be used to enhance woodland within the holding, as well as woodland that immediately borders but is not part of the farm.

The option is also eligible where a ditch runs between the woodland and the arable field. It may not be practical, however, if the ditch requires continuous management or maintenance. Special care is needed to ensure that historic features such as woodbanks are undamaged.

The woodland next to this option may receive funding under woodland options but there must be no overlap. Buffer strip options may also be located next to this option.

The woodlands located next to this option may be home to European Protected Species, which could migrate into the scrub and grass land mosaic created. Young scrub, for example, is ideal habitat for dormice.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WD4: Management of wood pasture and parkland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of wood pasture and parkland option. This option is now available in both the lowlands and the uplands.

How much will be paid

Lowlands (Outside the SDA) £46 per hectare (ha)

Uplands (Inside the SDA) £212 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier for managing existing wood pasture and parkland in good condition. Recreational parkland is only eligible where it forms part of the farmed environment.

This option is available in the Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA), including above the Moorland Line, at the Uplands rate and available in the Disadvantaged Area (DA) at the Lowlands Rate.

For Mid-Tier the land must be mapped on the Priority Habitat Inventory as wood pasture and parkland, see MAGIC.

In Mid-Tier this option can only be used subject to eligibility checks.

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- rivers, streams, ditches, drains and dykes or any open water less than 4 metres (m) wide
- ponds or inland standing water less than 100 square metres
- unsurfaced roads such as tracks, paths or bridleways

- small areas of scrub and woodland that do not qualify for specific scrub, woodland or other options

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [BE3 – Management of hedgerows](#)
- [BE6 - Veteran tree surgery \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [GS15 - Haymaking supplement](#)
- [GS16 - Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 - Organic conversion - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 - Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 – Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It will maintain existing wood pasture and parkland on sites that still support mature and veteran trees. If successful there will be many of the following, depending on whether the site is predominantly wood pasture, parkland or a combination of both.

- Undisturbed standing and fallen deadwood that will provide habitats for invertebrates
- Additional semi-mature or mature trees that will provide continuity of the tree population
- Newly planted trees, spaced evenly with open crowns or patches of regeneration with space to allow open grown crowns to develop
- Open grown scrub within the wood-pasture
- Flowering trees and scrub such as hawthorn, crab apple and wild pear that will provide food and nectar sources for wildlife

- Well managed unimproved or semi-improved grassland or heathland, grazed by traditional breeds of cattle in wood pasture and deer and traditional breeds of cattle in parkland
- Well-maintained historic and archaeological features
- Well-maintained historic designed landscape planting features

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year the site will be cut and/or grazed to maintain a mix of different grass heights, scrub and trees.

Existing trees (including mature and veteran standing trees) will be protected from livestock and wild animals, and any fallen dead wood left in place for invertebrates.

Scrub and grass swards will be managed to meet the additional aims stated in your agreement.

Historic features such as parkland fences, railings or historic boundaries will be protected from damage. An undisturbed strip at least 0.5m wide will be present adjacent to the edge of the feature.

Maintenance works and minor repairs on structural historic and archaeological features will be carried out on a 'like for like' basis to retain the character of the feature in its local setting.

The margins around water features will be managed by grazing and/or cutting to control scrub. Shrubs, scrub or trees will be prevented from shading more than 25% of the southern side of the water feature.

Prohibited Activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Apply any fertilisers or manures
- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot tree or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles or bracken

- Plough, cultivate or re-seed
- Supplementary feed
- Harrow or roll
- Allow damage to existing trees or vegetation or remove deadwood from the site
- Carry out drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without the RPAs written permission before work starts
- Alter the depth, shape, profile and design of the built water body and associated engineering
- Alter the current water regime of any water features.

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

In Mid Tier you can only use this option if it meets the relevant criteria and you have written approval from RPA. Additional aims and prohibited activities may be added to refine the standard requirements, as part of the approval process.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- graze and/or cut to maintain area of closely grazed turf interspersed with taller tussocks
- retain all mature and veteran standing trees and all standing and fallen deadwood, provided that it is consistent with the National Tree Safety Group document [Common sense risk management of trees: landowner summary](#) - you must leave fallen dead wood uncut and in place
- protect existing trees to prevent damage from livestock and wild animals - manage tree guards to prevent any damage to growing trees
- protect historic features such as parkland fences, railings or historic boundaries from damage
- do not cultivate the undisturbed 0.5m wide strip adjacent to historic features and do not allow scrub to develop
- maintain the current water regime of any water features carry out maintenance works and minor repairs on structural historic or

archaeological features on a 'like for like' basis to keep the character of the feature in its local setting

- retain the depth, shape, profile and design of the built water body and associated engineering without alteration
- manage margins around water features by grazing and/or cutting to control scrub. Do not allow shrubs, scrub or trees to shade more than 25% of the southern side of the water feature. Control scrub and undesirable plant species so that by year 2 cover of the feature is no more than 5% (or as stated in the additional aims). All cut material should be removed.

In Mid-Tier, additional clauses may be included to refine the standard requirements. These will be discussed and agreed as part of the approval process.

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Any bank statements, receipted invoices or permissions connected with the work
- Photographs of structural, historic and archaeological features
- Photographs of the management taken
- A monthly record of the number of grazing livestock in each parcel
- Records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel
- Photographs of the water feature, clearly showing its shape and design and all associated engineering features such as sluices, weirs, dams and other water control structures
- Photographs of the water feature and surrounding buffers, clearly showing the extent of any areas of scrub, bracken or pernicious weeds
- Photographs showing before and after shots of all maintenance works and minor repairs that have been carried out

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Veterinary treatments

Avoid applying veterinary treatments on grazing livestock wherever possible. Chemicals from these treatments could harm the insects and fungi that are typical of wood pasture and parkland.

Maintaining wood pasture and parkland

On historic parkland, provide a detailed feasibility study (management plan) tailored to the site. This can be an existing plan or can be funded through [PA2 Feasibility Study](#) item.

Use grazing livestock, preferably traditional breed cattle in wood pasture or traditional breed cattle and deer in parkland, to maintain the site. Avoid compaction around veteran trees.

Continuity of veteran tree or dead wood habitat is a major concern on wood pasture. If sufficient semi-mature trees are present consider the creation of dead wood habitat on trees capital item and encourage new trees through natural regeneration if possible or with planting.

Planting new trees

Try to:

- space out newly planted trees (or patches of natural regeneration) so they are wide enough to grow an open crown
- pick trees that are suitable as eventual replacements for mature or veteran trees
- select tree species appropriate to the historic parkland design but consider varieties or provenances that are resilient to local climate change
- on wood pasture or a site with veteran trees maintain the genetic stock of the veteran trees on site - choose varieties that provide the same ecological wood decay conditions as mature or veteran trees already on the site

Consents and permissions

Be aware that a number of consents and permissions may apply.

- The Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and Conservation Orders may apply to the trees on site

- Old trees especially can host European Protected Species, such as bats

Further information

Read the following guidance booklets for more detail on managing ancient or veteran trees.

- [Ancient tree guides \(booklets 1 to 8\)](#)
- Lonsdale, D (ed) 2014, Ancient and other veteran trees: further guidance on management, Tree Council
- Read, H (ed) 2000 [Veteran trees: A guide to good management](#) Veteran Trees Initiative

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WD5: Restoration of wood pasture and parkland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the restoration of wood pasture and parkland option.

How much will be paid

Lowlands (Outside the SDA) £244 per hectare (ha).

Uplands (Inside the SDA) £316 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option lasts for 10 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme.

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier to restore existing lowland wood pasture and parkland that is in poor condition. Recreational parkland is only eligible where it forms part of the farmed environment.

This option is available in the Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA), including above the Moorland Line, at the Uplands rate and available in the Disadvantaged Area (DA) at the Lowlands Rate.

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).

- Rivers, streams, ditches, drains and dykes or any open water less than 4 metres (m) wide
- Ponds or inland standing water less than 100m square in size
- Unsurfaced roads such as tracks, paths or bridleways
- Small areas of scrub and woodland that do not qualify for specific scrub, woodland or other options

The adviser will provide information on which features can be included.

How this option will benefit the environment

It restores existing lowland wood pasture and parkland on sites that support veteran trees or parkland features.

If successful there will be many of the following, depending on whether the site is predominantly wood pasture, parkland or a combination of both.

- Undisturbed standing and fallen deadwood that will provide habitats for invertebrates
- Additional semi-mature or mature trees that will provide continuity of the tree population
- Newly planted trees, spaced evenly with open crowns or patches of regeneration with space to allow open grown crowns to develop
- Open grown scrub covering 10% to 20% of the wood pasture
- Flowering trees and scrub such as hawthorn, crab apple and wild pear to provide food and nectar sources for invertebrates
- well managed unimproved or semi-improved grassland or heathland, grazed by traditional breed cattle in wood-pasture and deer and traditional breed cattle in parkland
- Well-maintained historic and archaeological features
- Well-maintained historic designed landscape planting and features

Requirements

You must:

- graze or cut to maintain area of closely grazed turf interspersed with taller tussocks
- keep all mature and veteran standing trees and all standing and fallen deadwood, provided that it is consistent with the National Tree Safety Group document [Common sense risk management of trees: landowner summary](#) - leave fallen dead wood uncut and in situ
- protect existing trees to prevent damage from livestock and wild animals - manage tree guards to prevent any damage to growing trees
- protect parkland features, such as fencing, historical structures, lakes and ponds
- plant additional trees or encourage regeneration where required

- maintain the current water regime and agree all drainage works, including modification to existing drainage in writing with Natural England before undertaking any works
- carry out maintenance works and minor repairs on structural historic or archaeological features on a 'like for like' basis to retain the character of the feature in its local setting

The agreement will set out what you cannot do. It is likely you will not be allowed to:

- apply any fertilisers or manures
- use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot tree or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles, rushes or bracken
- use supplementary feeding
- harrow or roll
- allow damage to existing trees or vegetation or remove deadwood from the site

Keeping records

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request.

- Any bank statements, receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- Photographs of all trees and standing and fallen deadwood
- Photographs showing any areas where sward enhancement will be carried out
- Photographs of water feature and surrounding buffers, clearly showing the extent of any areas of scrub, bracken or pernicious weeds
- Photographs of structural, historic and archaeological features
- Photographs of the management taken
- Photographs of water feature, clearly showing its shape and design and all associated engineering features
- A monthly record of the number of grazing livestock in each parcel
- Records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel

- Photographs of all maintenance works and minor repairs that have been carried out (before and after shots are needed)

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option.

- [BE3 – Management of hedgerows](#)
- [BE6 - Veteran tree surgery](#)
- [GS15 - Haymaking supplement](#)
- [GS16 - Rush infestation control supplement](#)
- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OR2 - Organic conversion - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 - Organic land management - unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP1 - Difficult sites supplement](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 – Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Veterinary treatments

Avoid applying veterinary treatments on grazing livestock wherever possible. Chemicals from these treatments could harm the insects and fungi that are typical of wood pasture and parkland.

Maintaining wood pasture and parkland

On historic parkland, provide a detailed Feasibility Study (management plan) tailored to the site, funded through [PA2 - Feasibility study](#).

Use grazing livestock, preferably traditional breed cattle in wood pasture or traditional breed cattle and deer in parkland, to maintain the site. Avoid compaction around veteran trees.

Continuity of veteran tree/dead wood habitat is a major concern on wood pasture. If sufficient semi-mature trees are present consider the creation of dead wood habitat on trees capital item and encourage new trees through natural regeneration if possible or with planting.

Planting new trees

Try to:

- space out newly planted trees (or patches of natural regeneration) so they are wide enough to grow an open crown
- pick trees that are suitable as eventual replacements for mature or veteran trees on adjacent sites
- select tree species appropriate to the historic parkland design but consider varieties or provenances that are resilient to local climate change
- on wood pasture or a site with veteran trees maintain the genetic stock of the veteran trees - choose varieties that provide the same ecological wood decay conditions as mature or veteran trees already on the site

Consents and permissions

Be aware that a number of consents and permissions may apply.

- The Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and Conservation Orders may apply to the trees on site
- Old trees especially can host European Protected Species, such as bats

Read more about useful [tree management and safety information](#) felling licence requirements from the Forestry Commission (FC).

Further information

Read these useful guidance booklets for more information on managing ancient or veteran trees:

- [Ancient tree guides \(booklets 1 to 8\)](#)
- Lonsdale, D (ed) 2013 Ancient and other veteran trees: further guidance on management, Tree Council

- Read, H (ed) 2000 [Veteran trees: A guide to good management](#) Veteran Trees Initiative

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WD6: Creation of wood pasture

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of wood pasture option. This option is now available in both the lowlands and the uplands.

How much will be paid

Lowlands (Outside the SDA) £409 per hectare (ha).

Uplands (Inside the SDA) £333 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option lasts for 10 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme.

Where to use this option

It's available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier to create new wood pasture on **one** of the following sites.

- Where wood pasture was once present, including ones under arable land
- Where it extends, links or buffers existing wood pasture or priority woodland habitats

This option is available in the Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA), including above the Moorland Line, at the Uplands rate and available in the Disadvantaged Area (DA) at the Lowlands Rate.

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).

- Rivers, streams, ditches, drains and dykes or any open water less than 4 metres (m) wide
- Ponds or inland standing water less than 100 square metres
- Unsurfaced roads such as tracks, paths or bridleways

- Scrub, woodland and other areas normally included in scrub or woodland options

The adviser will provide information on which features can be included.

How this option will benefit the environment

It will create new wood-pastures.

If successful there will be:

- undisturbed standing and fallen deadwood providing habitats for invertebrates on land adjacent to that where the creation is being carried out
- newly planted trees, spaced evenly with open crowns or patches of regeneration with space to allow open grown crowns to develop
- open grown scrub covering 10% to 20% of the wood pasture
- flowering trees and scrub such as hawthorn, crab apple and wild pear that will provide food and nectar sources for wildlife
- enhanced grassland sward or heathland, grazed by traditional cattle

Requirements

To assist you achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

You must:

- use grazing animals or cut to maintain areas of closely grazed turf interspersed with taller tussocks
- keep deadwood in or around standing trees, if any is present on site
- protect trees to prevent damage from livestock and wild animals. Manage tree guards to protect any damage to growing trees
- plant additional trees or encourage regeneration trees and scrub
- limit use of supplementary feed

The agreement will set out what you cannot do. It is likely you will not be allowed to:

- use pesticides, except for herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles, rushes or bracken

- plough, cultivate or re-seed, except as part of an agreed sward enhancement programme
- harrow or roll
- apply fertilisers or manures
- make any changes to existing drainage without having written agreement from Natural England
- supplementary feed without agreement (except mineral blocks)

Keeping records

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request.

- Any bank statements, receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- A monthly record of the number of grazing livestock in each parcel
- Records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel, including associated invoices
- Photographs of each tree entered into the option
- Photographs of trees and standing and fallen deadwood
- Photographs of the management taken
- Maps or photographs for sites that have previously been wood pasture

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

The following options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option:

- [BE3 – Management of hedgerows](#)
- [BE6 – Veteran tree surgery](#)
- [GS15 - Haymaking supplement](#)
- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP6 - Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP8 - Native breeds at risk supplement](#)

- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT3 – Management of ditches of high environmental value](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Veterinary treatments

Avoid veterinary treatments on livestock that graze on these sites. Chemicals from these treatments could harm the insects and fungi that are typical of wood pasture.

Maintaining wood pasture

Use grazing livestock, preferably traditional breed cattle, to establish and maintain the site.

Planting new trees

Try to:

- space out newly planted trees or regeneration so they are wide enough to grow an open crown
- pick varieties that are suitable as eventual replacements for nearby mature and veteran trees, ideally using the same genetic stock

Read more about useful [tree management and safety information](#) from the Forestry Commission (FC)

Further information

Read the following guidance booklets for more information on managing wood pasture with ancient or veteran trees:

- [Ancient tree guides \(booklets 1 to 8\)](#)
- Lonsdale, D (ed) 2013, Ancient and other veteran trees: further guidance on management
- Read, H (ed) 2000 [Veteran trees: A guide to good management](#) Veteran Trees Initiative

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WD7: Management of successional areas and scrub

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of successional areas and scrub option.

How much will be paid

£74 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier, Higher Tier, Lowland grazing offer, Upland offer and Mixed farming offer on whole or part parcels.

- Where scrub cover makes up at least 5% of the area

Where this option cannot be used

- Where there are historic or archaeological features
- On existing open habitats (where scrub can be included in a relevant option)
- Where scrub would be out of character for the area

Related Mid-Tier options

You can locate the following supplement on the same area as this option and supplement.

- [SP6 – Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [WD9 - Livestock exclusion supplement - scrub and successional areas](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It provides enhanced habitat for a wide range of wildlife, such as birds and invertebrates, and improves the quality of the woodland edge. It also helps prevent soil erosion and holds back water to reduce downstream flood risks.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will make sure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Throughout the year there will be a mosaic of different grasses and scrub. Where there are growing trees these will be protected and any standing and fallen deadwood will be left in place. Injurious weeds and invasive non-native species will be controlled.

From late autumn until early spring there will be no livestock in the option area.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- Cut more than one-third of shrub growth in any one calendar year
- Cut during the bird breeding season (1 March to 31 August)
- Apply fertilisers or manures
- Plough, cultivate or re-seed
- Harrow or roll
- Supplementary feed
- Use pesticides, except for herbicides to weed wipe or spot treat injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, nettles or bracken
- Carry out drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, without written permission before work starts.

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- keep livestock out of the option area from 1 October to 30 April

- only cut to maintain the scrub and grass mosaic and to control the spread of injurious weeds and invasive non-native species
- protect growing trees from livestock and wild animals
- make sure tree guards do not damage growing trees
- keep all mature and veteran trees and all standing deadwood, if safe to do so
- keep all fallen deadwood uncut and in place, stacked in piles

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- A monthly record of the number of grazing livestock in each parcel
- A standard soil analysis carried out in the last 5 years, including analysis of organic matter by loss on ignition. The [rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution](#) already require farmers and land managers to carry out soil testing on cultivated agricultural land. You can use these test results to meet the record-keeping requirements for this option
- Any consents or permissions connected with this work
- Photographs the management undertaken
- Evidence of extent of scrub cover. You can mark this on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

This option works best where:

- there is some open ground among the scrub for grasses and non-woody plants to grow
- scrub is next to other habitats such as grassland or heath

- scrub is established by woodland edges
- scrub can hold soils together and slow down surface runoff

Remove livestock

Remove grazing livestock to allow scrub plants to establish. Once established, stop scrub from becoming too dense by cutting on rotation, or grazing.

Establish a variety of scrub

Establish a variety of scrub to provide habitats and food for target species. For example:

- gorse scrub can support birds like the Dartford warbler, stonechat, linnet and yellowhammer
- willow scrub in wetlands can support warblers, reed bunting and willow tits
- buds and berries and caterpillars on scrub are essential food sources for birds

Dead and fallen trees

Leave any trees that die or fall in position, except where it is necessary to remove them for health and safety reasons.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#), [Lowland grazing offer](#), [Upland offer](#) and [Mixed farming offer](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WD8: Creation of successional areas and scrub

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of successional areas and scrub option.

How much will be paid

£87 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on whole or part-parcels:

- on land next to existing scrub or woodland areas
- in areas already inhabited by target species

Where this option cannot be used

- On historic or archaeological features
- On existing wildlife sites
- Where scrub would be harmful to the landscape

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- water-bodies that are less than 4 metres (m) wide
- unsurfaced roads such as tracks, paths or bridleways

How this option will benefit the environment

It regenerates a succession of scrub. This enhances habitats for specific target species and improves the quality of the woodland edge.

Establishing scrub growth also restricts soil erosion and holds back water to reduce downstream flood risks.

If successful there will be:

- more scrub growing close to grassland, woodland and other habitats
- birds and invertebrates using the scrub
- less soil erosion in scrub areas
- reduced flooding in scrub areas

Requirements

You must:

- keep livestock out of the option area from 1 October to 30 April
- only cut to maintain the scrub and grass mosaic
- only cut to control the spread of injurious weeds and invasive non-native species
- protect growing trees from livestock and wild animals
- make sure tree guards do not damage growing trees
- keep all mature and veteran trees and standing deadwood
- keep all fallen deadwood in place uncut (although you can stack them in piles)
- graze to maintain the scrub and grass mosaic
- agree with Natural England in writing all drainage works, including modifying existing drainage, before any works take place

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely you will not be allowed to:

- use pesticides and herbicides except to spot-treat or weed-wipe to control nettles, bracken, injurious weeds or invasive non-native species
- cut more than one-third of shrub growth in any one calendar year
- cut during the bird breeding season (1 March to 31 August)
- apply fertilisers or manures
- plough, cultivate or re-seed
- harrow or roll
- use supplementary feed

Keeping records

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- stock records to show grazing activity on parcels
- a standard soil analysis carried out in the last 5 years, including analysis of organic matter by loss on ignition. The [rules for farmers and land managers to prevent water pollution](#) already require farmers and land managers to carry out soil testing on cultivated agricultural land - you can use these test results to meet the record-keeping requirements for this option
- photographs of all trees and standing and fallen deadwood
- photographs of existing bracken
- photographs of scrub location
- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [BE3 – Management of hedgerows](#)
- [SP3 - Bracken control supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP6 – Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 – Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WD9 - Livestock exclusion supplement - scrub and successional areas](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Pick the right location

This option works best where:

- there is some open ground amongst the scrub for grasses and non-woody plants to grow
- scrub is next to other habitats such as grassland or heath
- scrub is established by woodland edges

- scrub can hold soils together and slow down surface runoff

Remove livestock

Remove grazing livestock to allow scrub plants to establish. Once established, stop scrub from becoming too dense by cutting on rotation, or by grazing.

Establish a variety of scrub

Establish a variety of scrub to provide habitats and food for target species. For example:

- gorse scrub can support birds like the Dartford warbler, stonechat, linnet and yellowhammer
- willow scrub in wetlands can support warblers, reed bunting and willow tits
- buds and berries and caterpillars on scrub are essential food sources for birds

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WD9: Livestock exclusion supplement - scrub and successional areas

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the livestock exclusion supplement - scrub and successional areas supplement.

How much will be paid

£121 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier and can be used on whole or part parcels on land:

- containing mostly native species of trees and scrubs

when combined with:

- WD7 - Management of successional areas and scrub
- WD8 - Creation of successional areas and scrub (Higher Tier only)

Where this supplement cannot be used

- For woodlands with an existing scheme to exclude livestock

Related Mid-Tier options

- [WD7 - Management of successional areas and scrub](#)
- [WD8 - Creation of successional areas and scrub \(Higher Tier only\)](#)

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It helps scrub to develop through natural regeneration. This will attract more birds and invertebrates as well as reducing soil erosion and floods in scrub areas.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

There will be no livestock grazing at any time of year. This will allow more trees and scrub to grow due to natural regeneration.

Prohibited activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities.

- None

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option, we recommend that you use best practice.

- Please refer to [Aims](#), [Prohibited activities](#) and [Additional guidance and advice](#)

Keeping records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the supplement have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the supplement. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- Stock records to show grazing activity on parcels

Additional guidance and advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Once scrub has established, you can usually re-introduce grazing.

This supplement may not be needed for the full duration of the agreement.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WN1: Grip blocking drainage channels

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the grip blocking drainage channels item.

How much will be paid

£14.80 per block.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only where:

- grip blocking will contribute to restoration of priority habitats
- re-wetting can provide habitat for breeding waders
- the Environment Agency gives written support regarding impact on flood risk
- blocking of grips or drainage channels is included in an implementation plan or feasibility study agreed with Natural England

This item must be used with 1 of the following options:

- [UP2 - Management of rough grazing for birds](#)
- [UP3 - Management of moorland](#)

How this item will benefit the environment

It will maintain and restore moorland habitats, vegetation mosaics and associated wildlife. If successful there will be restored, re-wetted moorland and peatland habitats supporting target vegetation and species.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to block grips or drainage channels as agreed in the implementation plan or feasibility study ensuring:

- the blocks are wider than the grip and keyed into grip sides to prevent breaching and erosion
- the grips are blocked from the top downwards

- dams match the topography with varied positions at around 7m apart (but no more than 10m apart)
- the grips can fill to a water level above the base of the next dam higher up the slope
- the top of dams are slightly higher than ground level after installation and natural shrinkage, water then overflows away from the dam and soaks into the ground
- a very low ground pressure excavator with wide tracks is used when grip blocking

Inspect all grips and blocks ensuring that:

- there are no breaches in grips and blocks
- excess water from the grip does not flow into the channel below the block
- excess water across the moor soaks into the ground, down slope from the grip
- no water flows between dams except for natural peak surface water

Take photographs and write records of inspections.

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely agreement holders will not be allowed to:

- damage surface vegetation
- expose bare soil or peat
- establish linear routes

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- a copy of the implementation plan or feasibility study, where applicable
- photographs of a sample (2%) of the sites that will be blocked

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying, the applicant should contact the Environment Agency for advice and any consent/approval that is required. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit it with your payment claim.

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Employ specialist contractors

Consider employing specialist contractors to do this work.

Pick the right location

Pick areas:

- where deep peat soils can support peat-forming blanket bog vegetation
- targeted by Natural England as priority habitat for moorland and blanket bog

Managing historic and archaeological features

Show the location of any features of historic or archaeological importance in the Implementation Plan to avoid damaging them.

Using vehicles and machines on site

Reduce machine damage by adding steps in the implementation plan to factor in:

- site access tracks
- the surrounding habitat

- the use of low pressure and appropriate machines

Further information

Information on the best ways to grip block different sites can be found on the [Yorkshire Peat Partnership website](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WN2: Creation of scrapes and gutters

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of scrapes and gutters item.

How much will be paid

£2.80 per square metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only in locations agreed with a Natural England adviser.

Where this item cannot be used

On historic or archaeological features, unless consent has been given by a Natural England specialist or local Historic Environment Service

How this item will benefit the environment

Scrapes provide areas of bare ground, which may be designed to hold water in wet habitats or provide early successional areas in dry habitats. Gutters provide shallow channels to hold/transport water through wet habitats and provide feeding areas for waders.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- agree a detailed specification with Natural England for creating scrapes or gutters
- create the scrapes or gutters in accordance with this specification
- follow the implementation plan and complete it

Scrapes for waders and wildfowl

If creating scrapes for waders and wildfowl, agreement holders are likely to need to:

- locate them at least 100m away from hedges or tall trees, in the place shown in the specification
- carry out the work between July and November
- make sure the scrape has an irregular shape, to maximise the length of its edge
- grade the sides of the scrape so that there a gentle slope from the shallow margins (3cm to 5cm deep) to a maximum depth of 40cm to 50cm at the centre
- leave the surface of the scrape rough
- keep the scrape wet by using gravity feed or pumping between mid-November and June if groundwater or rainfall is low (as agreed with Natural England)

Gutters

If creating gutters, agreement holders are likely to need to:

- create them in the places shown in the specification
- carry out the work between July and November
- make sure the gutters are at least 30cm deep and 1.5m wide, with gently sloping edges and shallow margins that are 3cm to 5cm deep
- connect the gutters to ditches with high water levels
- periodically isolate gutters from ditches where ditch water levels cannot be held high
- keep the gutters wet using gravity feed, water control structures or pumps (as detailed in the specification agreed with Natural England)

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely agreement holders will not be allowed to:

- use spoil to fill hollows or low areas within the field or to form a bund or bank around the scrape or gutter
- place spoil on areas with high soil erosion or runoff potential
- create islands within scrapes
- carry out works when ground-nesting birds are present
- fence the scrapes and gutters

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- specification of agreed works
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work
- implementation plan or feasibility study if required

Before applying for this item applicants should obtain any consents required from Natural England or the Local Authority if on historic or archaeological features. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit any consents with your payment claim.

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related items

This item can be used on the same area as the following options:

- [WT6 - Management of reedbed](#)
- [WT7 - Creation of reedbed](#)
- [WT8 - Management of fen](#)
- [WT9 - Creation of fen](#)
- [GS9 - Management of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS10 - Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS11 - Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS12 - Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)

- [GS13 - Management of grassland for target features](#)
- [GS14 - Creation of grassland for target features](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

What the specification should include

The specification will identify the purpose of the scrapes and gutters, and will be tailored accordingly. It should take account of site hydrology, soil type, botanical interest, archaeological and historic features, and landscape character. The shape, size, depth, location, methods, timing of the work, spoil disposal and ongoing management requirements should all be specified. Specialist advice may be required.

How to apply for consent

Consent may be needed from the local land drainage authority (such as the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Board or local authority) to create scrapes or dispose of spoil. A waste exemption licence may also be required.

When not to use this item

This item should not be used to prevent soil erosion or runoff. The soil and water capital items should be used instead.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WN3: Ditch, dyke and rhine restoration

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the ditch, dyke and rhine restoration item.

How much will be paid

£7.30 per metre (m).

Where to use this item

It is available for Higher Tier if you send an assessment of the existing biological interest of the site (particularly related to protected species) with your application.

Where this item cannot be used

For routine agricultural maintenance or to drain land prone to waterlogging.

How this item will benefit the environment

It restores the wildlife value of overgrown or neglected ditches and helps to establish raised water levels for restoring or creating habitats.

Requirements

You must:

- carry out the restoration work between 1 July and 28 February (the exact timing will be determined by the pre-application assessment)
- only re-profile or cut deeper than the original profile by agreement with the adviser
- if re-profiling, create a variety of depths in the channel, from 70 centimetres (cm) to 100cm, grading to a shallow, wet, marginal fringe
- if re-profiling, make sure the profile varies, with most of the slopes between 30 and 45 degrees
- work from one bank in an upstream direction, restoring only half the ditch in any one year
- restore one side of the ditch along its full length, or alternate 100m sections along both sides

- retain any in-channel features such as gravel beds, riffles and natural meanders
- create berms along the sides of the ditch
- secure material at the downstream end of the ditch during dredging or re-profiling to capture silt in the water, and remove this when any silt has settled
- place the spoil on top of the bank or in the field next to it, making sure that it is not used to fill hollows or low areas within the field
- make sure that the spoil is not placed on historic or archaeological features
- spread the spoil thinly to prevent a spoil bank from forming
- place all fences at least 1m away from the edge of the bank top

The agreement will set out what you cannot do. You probably will not be allowed to:

- reprofile or cut deeper than the original profile unless by agreement with the adviser
- fill hollows or low areas within the field with spoil
- place spoil on historic or archaeological feature

Keeping records

Before applying for this item you should make sure you have any relevant consents, for example from the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Board or Historic England. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you must send any consents with your payment claim.

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- any Environmental Agency, Internal Drainage Board or Historic England advice or consent if needed
- photographs of the completed work
- an assessment of the existing biological interest of the site, particularly related to protected species using the [Ditch, dyke and rhine restoration assessment form](#)

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work (in addition to the ones stated above)
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail

Related items

You can use this item on the same area as the following options:

- [WT6 - Management of reedbed](#)
- [WT7 - Creation of reedbed](#)
- [WT8 - Management of fen](#)
- [WT9 - Creation of fen](#)
- [GS7 - Restoration towards species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS8 - Creation of species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS9 - Management of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS10 - Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS11 - Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS12 - Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS13 - Management of grassland for target features](#)
- [GS14 - Creation of grassland for target features](#)
- [HS7 - Management of historic water meadows through traditional irrigation](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Where to use this item

Use this item on ditches that have become silted up through neglect and have channels that need to be cleaned and banks that need to be reprofiled. Using this item will create a more varied habitat for wildlife.

You can also use this item to prevent the degradation of historic environment features and waterlogged archaeological deposits by helping to support high water levels.

Re-profiling ditches, dykes and rhines

The profile of restored ditches, dykes and rhines should reflect the character of existing features in the local area.

Further information

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WN4: Ditch, dyke and rhine creation

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the ditch, dyke and rhine creation item.

How much will be paid

£8.40 per metre.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only in combination with one of the following management options:

- [WT6 - Management of reedbed](#)
- [WT7 - Creation of reedbed](#)
- [WT8 - Management of fen](#)
- [WT9 - Creation of fen](#)
- [GS7 - Restoration towards species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS8 - Creation of species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS9 - Management of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS10 - Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS11 - Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS12 - Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS13 - Management of grassland for target features](#)
- [GS14 - Creation of grassland for target features](#)
- [HS7 - Management of historic water meadows through traditional irrigation](#)

Where this item cannot be used

To create ditches that will lead to waterlogged land being drained or archaeological features being dried out.

How this item will benefit the environment

It aims to establish raised water levels to help restore or create habitats.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- create a channel 70cm to 100cm deep, creating a variety of depths in it and grading to a shallow, wet marginal fringe
- make sure that the bank slope profile varies along the length of the ditch (most slopes should be between 30 and 45 degrees)
- create berms along the sides of the ditch
- place the excavated material on top of the bank or in the field next to it, making sure it does not fill hollows or low areas
- make sure the excavated material is not placed on historic or archaeological features
- spread the spoil thinly to prevent a spoil bank from forming

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely agreement holders will not be allowed to:

- fill hollows or low areas within the field with spoil
- place spoil on historic or archaeological features

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying for this item applicants should contact the Environment Agency for advice and relevant consents. Applicants may also need to obtain relevant consents from the Internal Drainage Board or Historic

England. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit any consents with your payment claim.

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Agreement holders should aim to create ditches, rhines or dykes that are characteristic of the local landscape.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WN5: Pond management (less than 100 square metres)

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the pond management (first 100 sq m) item.

How much will be paid

£270 per pond.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- on ponds of up to 1 hectare
- in combination with a pond buffer strip option, if the pond is next to cultivated land or intensive grassland
- for pond restoration, where an assessment of existing biological interest and historic features has been completed

Where this item cannot be used

- to create ponds within 6m of a historic or archaeological feature identified in the HEFER
- within areas of wildlife habitat identified on the FER except with the written agreement of Natural England

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will create networks or complexes of at least 3 ponds and restore the wildlife value of ponds that have become degraded.

Requirements

Pond creation

- peg out the outline of the pond before excavations start, making sure that the pond has an irregular edge

- create a variety of water depths, from very shallow margins to pools of up to 1m to 1.5m deep and at least 7m by 7m square
- make sure that the majority of the margin is gently sloping, to create a large drawdown zone and extensive shallows
- use mechanical means or a weed wiper to control injurious weeds that colonise the spoil
- place any fencing at least 1m away from the bank top

Do not:

- link the pond to inflowing water from ditches and streams
- plant around the pond
- use spoil to form a mound or bank around the pond or to fill and level neighbouring wet areas
- dispose of spoil on historic or archaeological features as identified in the HEFER
- introduce any plants or animals to the pond, or feed wildfowl in or around it

Pond restoration

- carry out the work within the dates determined by the pre-application assessment
- remove woody cover from at least three-quarters of the pond margin, especially the southern side, so the pond receives the morning sun over a large area
- remove fallen trees and trees growing in the water to create open water
- keep features of historic or archaeological interest identified in the pre-application assessment
- remove sources of water pollution
- place cut vegetation far enough away from the top of the bank to prevent decaying material and run-off from falling in and polluting the pond
- use mechanical means or a weed wiper to control injurious weeds that colonise the spoil
- place any fencing at least 1m away from the bank top

Do not:

- re-profile or cut deeper than the original profile

- use spoil to form a mound or bank around the pond or to fill and level adjacent wet areas
- dispose of spoil on historic or archaeological features as identified in the HEFER
- use herbicides to control aquatic plants and bankside vegetation
- introduce any plants or animals to the pond, or feed wildfowl in or around the pond
- plant the pond banks following restoration, or plant trees or shrubs around the southern margin of the pond or anywhere around a pond within an open landscape

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs showing the pond (or the location of a new pond) before the works begin
- an [assessment of existing biological interest and historic features](#) for ponds to be restored

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following items:

- [WN6 - Pond management \(areas more than 100 sq m\)](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to choose a site

Create ponds in low input, semi-natural habitats that have small catchments and are unconnected to other water bodies (to protect them from pollution). To encourage biodiversity, aim to create a variety of pond types (e.g. in depth, size and age) close to other freshwater habitats.

How to manage the site

Manage only part of the pond at any one time and always keep some of the existing habitat as it is including some of the leaf litter, logs and woody debris. If there are a number of ponds on a site, do not use the same management plan on all of them at the same time. Aim to maintain diversity in the pond complex. If the pond contains a protected species, a [wildlife licence](#) will be required.

Further information

More information about [creating ponds](#) is available from the Freshwater Habitats Trust.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WN6: Pond management (more than 100 square metres)

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the pond management (areas more than 100 sq m) item.

How much will be paid

£170 per 100 square metres.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier, Higher Tier and Capital Grants.

Only:

- on ponds of up to 1 hectare
- in combination with a pond buffer strip option, if the pond is next to cultivated land or intensive grassland
- for pond restoration, where an assessment of existing biological interest and historic features has been completed

Where this item cannot be used

- to create ponds within 6m of a historic or archaeological feature identified in the HEFER
- within areas of wildlife habitat identified on the FER except with the written agreement of Natural England

How this item will benefit the environment

This item will create networks or complexes of at least 3 ponds and restore the wildlife value of ponds that have become degraded.

Requirements

See [WN5 - Pond management \(first 100 sq m\)](#)

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs showing the pond (or the location of a new pond) before the works begin
- an [assessment of existing biological interest and historic features](#) for ponds to be restored

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the relevant manual [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Related Mid Tier and Capital Grants items

This item can be used on the same area as the following item:

- [WN5 - Pond management \(first 100 sq m\)](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

How to choose a site

Create ponds in low input, semi-natural habitats that have small catchments and are unconnected to other water bodies (to protect them from pollution). To encourage biodiversity, aim to create a variety of pond types (e.g. in depth, size and age) close to other freshwater habitats.

How to manage the site

Manage only part of the pond at any one time and always keep some of the existing habitat as it is including some of the leaf litter, logs and woody

debris. If there are a number of ponds on a site, do not use the same management plan on all of them at the same time. Aim to maintain diversity in the pond complex. If the pond contains a protected species, a [wildlife licence](#) will be required.

Further information

More information about [creating ponds](#) is available from the Freshwater Habitats Trust.

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#), [Higher Tier](#) or [Capital Grants](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WN7: Restoration of large water bodies

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the restoration of large water bodies item.

How much will be paid

Up to 100% of actual costs.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only:

- on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) with ecologically degraded water bodies of 1 hectare or more
- if other land management options are included in the agreement

How this item benefits the environment

It will restore the wildlife value of large water bodies that have become degraded.

Requirements

- agree a specification for the works with Natural England
- complete the works as set out in the approved specification and within the agreed timescale

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- photographs of site before works start
- item specification, if required

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is not available
- photographs of the completed work

Before applying for this item applicants should contact the Environment Agency for advice and any permits. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit any consents with your payment claim.

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

This item can be used to support the implementation of lake restoration plans. It may also cover one or more of the following:

- water management
- scrub management
- management of invasive non-native species
- fish removal
- bird control
- desilting

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WN8: Timber sluice

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the timber sluice item.

How much will be paid

£315 per sluice.

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only with one of the following management options:

- [GS7 - Restoration towards species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS8 - Creation of species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS9 - Management of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS10 - Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS11 - Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS12 - Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS13 - Management of grassland for target features](#)
- [GS14 - Creation of grassland for target features](#)
- [HS7 - Management of historic water meadows through traditional irrigation](#)
- [WT6 - Management of reedbed](#)
- [WT7 - Creation of reedbed](#)
- [WT8 - Management of fen](#)
- [WT9 - Creation of fen](#)

How this item benefits the environment

It will provide a simple mechanism for water level control, which will support raised water levels for restoring or creating habitats.

Requirements

- construct the sluice to the size and height agreed with Natural England
- use pre-cut tongue and groove or chamfered boards, so that they fit tightly together and can easily be re-used or replaced

- drive the boards far into the ditch sides and ditch bed, so that the bottoms are at least 300mm into impermeable soil (failure to do this will cause leaks)
- make sure that the boards are long enough to raise the water to the desired level
- install a first board central to the ditch, making sure it is absolutely vertical
- drive in subsequent boards on either side of the central board and build towards each ditch bank
- make sure that the final boards are well keyed into the ditch banks (use horizontal timbers or 'string pieces' to prevent them from moving or spreading)

Alternatively, for seepage barriers agreement holders will need to follow these steps:

- construct the barrier using wooden slats
- make sure the slats are formed either vertically or horizontally (if they are less than 2m wide)
- leave a small gap of 2mm between each slat to allow the slow movement of water
- use posts to support and secure the slats
- make sure the vertically arranged slats stay in place by using horizontal timbers to brace them to posts on either side of the ditch
- once the vertical boards are in place, cut out an appropriately sized opening and screw metal channeling to each vertical edge so that it accepts sluice boards
- install a plank bridge across the back of the board tops on the downstream side
- secure the plank bridge firmly into the ditch banks (to strengthen the structure and allow access to the drop boards for adjustment)

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable

- photographs of site before works start

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed works in place and installed

Before applying for this item, applicants should contact the Environment Agency for any advice or consent and obtain any other relevant consents, for example from the Internal Drainage Board. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit any consents with your payment claim.

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Use this item on drains, ditches and minor watercourses of appropriate, relatively small size. Use 'like for like' materials if replacing an existing timber sluice.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WN9: Brick, stone or concrete sluice

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the brick, stone or concrete sluice item.

How much will be paid

£2480 per sluice

Where to use this item

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only in combination with one of the following management options:

- [WT6 - Management of reedbed](#)
- [WT7 - Creation of reedbed](#)
- [WT8 - Management of fen](#)
- [WT9 - Creation of fen](#)
- [GS7 - Restoration towards species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS8 - Creation of species-rich grassland](#)
- [GS9 - Management of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS10 - Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS11 - Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS12 - Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS13 - Management of grassland for target features](#)
- [GS14 - Creation of grassland for target features](#)
- [HS7 - Management of historic water meadows through traditional irrigation](#)

How this item will benefit the environment

It aims to provide a robust and substantial structure for water level control to support raised water levels for habitat restoration or creation.

Requirements

- agree a specification for the works with Natural England
- complete the works as set out in the approved specification and within the agreed timescale

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of site before works start
- item specification, if required

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them with the claim:

- photographs of the completed work

Before applying for this item applicants should contact the Environment Agency for any advice or consent and obtain any other relevant consents, for example from the Internal Drainage Board or Historic England. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to submit any consents with your payment claim.

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Higher Tier applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following section gives advice on carrying out this item successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this item.

Applications for consent will need to be supported by fully dimensioned drawings and the specification.

If the sluice replaces an existing one, materials and construction should reflect the original. Otherwise, choice of materials and construction should reflect similar features in the local area.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WN10: Construction of water penning structures

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the construction of water penning structures item.

How much will be paid

Up to 100% of actual costs.

Where to use this item

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier on sites where it is not possible to use standard soil bunds or sluices to raise water levels. You must use in combination with one of the following options:

- [GS9 - Management of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS10 - Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS11 - Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS12 - Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [LH1 - Management of lowland heathland](#)
- [LH2 - Restoration of forestry and woodland to lowland heathland](#)
- [LH3 - Creation of heathland from arable or improved grassland](#)
- [WD7 - Management of successional areas and scrub](#)
- [WD8 - Creation of successional areas and scrub](#)
- [WT6 - Management of reedbed](#)
- [WT7 - Creation of reedbed](#)
- [WT8 - Management of fen](#)
- [WT9 - Creation of fen](#)
- [WT10 - Management of lowland raised bog](#)

How this item will benefit the environment

It will provide bespoke water penning or control structures to support raised water levels for restoring or creating habitats.

Requirements

You must:

- agree a specification for the works with Natural England

- provide a minimum of 3 written quotations for the completion of the works, identifying associated costs
- complete the works as set out in the approved specification and within the agreed time period

Keeping records

Before you apply for this item you should contact the Environment Agency to get any advice or consents needed. You must also get any other relevant consents, for example from the Internal Drainage Board. You do not need to provide this with your application, but you will need to send it with your payment claim.

You must send the following with your application:

- quotes for the completion of the work

You must keep the following records and supply them with your payment claim:

- receipted invoices, or bank statements where a receipted invoice is not available
- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- any consents or permissions connected with the work

The detailed requirements for this item will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Please see the record keeping and inspection requirements as set out in the [Higher Tier manual](#) for more detail.

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

How to apply for consent

You will need fully dimensioned drawings and the specification itself when you apply for consent.

Where to use this item

This item can be used for raising banks, installing gauge boards or tilting weirs.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WT1: Buffering in-field ponds and ditches in improved grassland

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the buffering in-field ponds and ditches in improved grassland option.

How much will be paid

£201 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier

Only on improved grassland next to ponds.

Where this option cannot be used

- on historic or archaeological features
- around ponds associated with industrial features such as effluent ponds, balancing ponds or small water supply reservoirs

Related Mid-Tier options

- [OR1 - Organic conversion - improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 - Organic land management - improved permanent grassland](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It protects ponds from nutrient leaching and sediment runoff. This will maintain and enhance water quality and wildlife.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

There will be a 10m – 20m wide grass strip surrounding a pond or adjacent to a ditch. This will be left to develop a mix of tussocky grasses, flowering

plants and low scrub through natural regeneration with the southern side remaining free of scrub.

Prohibited Activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- cut the strip, except to prevent scrub from developing on more than half of the pond or ditch margin
- let livestock poach more than a third of the pond margin
- use pesticides, except for herbicides to weed wipe or spot treat for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, nettles or bracken
- apply any fertilisers or manures
- cut between 1 March and 31 August

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- only cut to control the spread of woody growth - the southern side of the pond or ditch should remain open and free of scrub.

Keeping Records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- evidence that the grassland is improved
- photographs of the strips

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you have not carried out any prohibited activities.

Additional Guidance and Advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

- None

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WT2: Buffering in-field ponds and ditches on arable land

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the buffering in-field ponds and ditches on arable land option.

How much will be paid

£501 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier.

Only on arable land next to ponds, or on arable land adjacent to ditches under option WT3 Management of Ditches of High Environmental Value.

Where this option cannot be used

- on historic or archaeological features
- around ponds associated with industrial features such as effluent ponds, balancing ponds or small water supply reservoirs

Related Mid Tier options

These options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option:

- [OR3 - Organic conversion - rotational land](#)
- [OR4 - Organic conversion - horticulture](#)
- [OT3 - Organic land management - rotational land](#)
- [OT4 - Organic land management - horticulture](#)

How this option will benefit the environment

It protects ponds and high environmental value ditches from nutrient leaching and runoff. This will maintain and enhance water quality and wildlife. If successful there will be a decrease in the amount of sediment and nutrient entering the pond or ditch.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

Established in the first year, there will be a 10m – 20m wide grass strip surrounding a pond or adjacent to a ditch. This will be allowed to develop a mix of tussocky grasses, flowering plants and low scrub through natural regeneration.

Prohibited Activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- cut the strip, except to prevent scrub from developing on more than half of the pond or ditch margin
- use pesticides, except for herbicides to weed-wipe or spot-treat for the control of injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, nettles or bracken
- apply any fertilisers or manures
- cut between 1 March and 31 August

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

Recommended Management

To assist you in achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- only cut to control the spread of woody growth - the southern side of the pond or ditch will remain open and free of scrub.

Keeping Records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include

any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- photographs of the strips

Additional Guidance and Advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WT3: Management of ditches of high environmental value

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of ditches of high environmental value option.

How much will be paid

£37 per 100 metres (m) for the management of both sides of the ditch.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier and Higher Tier on ditches of high environmental value and ditches essential for the management of the following options:

- [GS9 - Management of wet grassland for breeding waders](#)
- [GS10 - Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl](#)
- [GS11 - Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [GS12 - Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [UP2 - Management of rough grazing for birds](#)
- [WT6 - Management of reedbed \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [WT7 - Creation of reedbed \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [WT8 - Management of fen \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [WT9 - Creation of fen \(Higher Tier only\)](#)
- [WT10 - Management of lowland raised bog \(Higher Tier only\)](#)

In Mid-Tier you can only use this option if it meets the relevant criteria, you have written approval from RPA and only with options GS9 and GS10

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- ditches
- dykes
- drains

Related Mid-Tier options

If the ditch is partly located on a neighbouring parcel of land, you can use this option with any whole-field options or supplements that can be used on that parcel.

How this option will benefit the environment

It will manage ditches of high environmental value that support target species of plants, birds, mammals and invertebrates. It will also manage ditches that are essential to carrying out the wet grassland and wetland options.

Aims

If you're selected for a site visit, we will check that delivery of the aims is being met and the prohibited activities have not been carried out. This will ensure the environmental benefits are being delivered.

During the autumn and winter, ditches will be managed on a suitable rotation. Ditches will be managed by removing vegetation and silt to their previous profile. The arisings will be placed on top of the bank/next to the ditch and spread thinly to prevent a spoil bank from forming. One side of the ditch will be left unmanaged during any one operation. When vegetation is removed by cutting, it will be cut above the base. Some vegetation will be left uncut on one or both sides of the ditch.

Following ditch maintenance, bankside vegetation will be re-established using natural regeneration.

Ditch banks will be managed so that overhanging vegetation is very limited (except next to woodland). This will normally be achieved by grazing up to the water's edge.

Water levels will be maintained at appropriate levels, as specified in the additional aims.

Prohibited Activities

To achieve the aims and deliver the environmental benefits, **do not** carry out any of the following activities:

- re-profile or increase the width or depth of the ditch

- use spoil to fill hollows or low areas within the field, or place spoil on historic or archaeological features
- manage ditches between 1 April and 31 August

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you **have not** carried out any prohibited activities.

In Mid Tier you can only use this option if it meets the relevant criteria and you have written approval from RPA. Additional aims and prohibited activities may be added to refine the standard requirements, as part of the approval process.

Recommended Management

To assist you achieving the aims and deliver the environmental benefits for this option we recommend that you use best practice.

We recommend that you:

- manage ditches by cleaning/vegetation removal/desilting/dredging/slubbing to their previous profile
- manage ditches on a suitable rotation between 1 September and 31 March, so that not all ditches are managed in any one year
- leave one side of the ditch unmanaged during any one operation, as a refuge for plants and invertebrates – manage this at another point in the rotation
- where vegetation removal is done by cutting, cut above the base of the ditch, leaving the roots in the base and retaining a fringe of emergent vegetation on both sides/one side of the ditch.
- dispose of spoil in an appropriate manner
- control invasive non-native species, if they're present
- manage ditch water levels appropriately
- except alongside woodland, manage ditch banks so that vegetation does not overhang more than half the width of the channel on more than 10% of the ditch length
- trim hedges beside the ditch every 2 years, or more frequently if required to control overhanging vegetation
- if fences are erected, place them so that livestock are able to graze up to the water's edge (or as specified in the additional aims and prohibited activities within your agreement)

Keeping Records

Where there is uncertainty about whether the aims of the options have been delivered, we will take into account any records or evidence you may have kept demonstrating delivery of the aims of the option. This will include any steps you've taken to follow the recommended management set out above. It's your responsibility to keep such records if you want to rely on these to support your claim.

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- photographs of the ditch

Additional Guidance and Advice

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

What to do if the work is complex

Maintain a variety of successional stages within the ditch network. These may range from open water to well-developed aquatic plant communities. Draw up an implementation plan specific to the site if the work proposed is particularly complex.

How to manage the ditches

Manage the ditches in a way appropriate to their scale, number and local area (methods of ditch management vary across the country).

Using the option on one side of a ditch

Normally use this option where you have control of both sides of a ditch. However, where control is limited to one side of a ditch, you can use this option if you are able to achieve the aims.

Restoring ditches

Restore ditches covered by this option with funding from the appropriate ditch restoration capital item. However, you will need to agree this with Natural England first.

Protected species

If the ditch contains a protected species, you will need a wildlife licence.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Mid Tier](#) and [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WT4: Pond management (less than 100 square metres)

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the pond management – first 100 square metres (sq m) option.

How much will be paid

£103 per pond.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier:

- on priority ponds (these are defined on the [Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) website)
- on other ponds with flora and fauna of nature conservation importance, good quality water and natural water levels
- when the neighbouring land is under a management option that restricts fertilisers, manures and pesticides

Where this option cannot be used

In combination with pond management capital items.

How this option will benefit the environment

It will protect and enhance small ponds of high wildlife value.

Requirements

You must:

- manage vegetation in the pond
- control scrub and invasive non-native plants
- retain overhanging trees, bushes and deadwood
- graze or cut the margins of the pond
- carry out the work within the dates agreed with the adviser
- maintain clear, unpolluted water

- maintain the current water regime

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely you will not be allowed to:

- introduce any plants or animals (including fish and waterfowl) to the pond
- deepen or change the original profile of the pond
- infill the pond

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- photographs of the pond

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate these options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

To avoid damaging the pond:

- survey it to check which species are present
- if the pond contains a protected species, you will need a [wildlife licence](#)
- only manage one section of it at a time
- keep some of the existing habitat
- keep some of the leaf litter, logs and woody debris
- aim to maintain diversity in the pond complex - if there are several ponds on the site, don't carry out the same management on all of them at the same time

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WT5: Pond management (more than 100 square metres)

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the pond management (areas more than 100 square metres (sq m)) option.

How much will be paid

£183 per pond.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier:

- on priority ponds (these are defined on the [Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) website)
- on other ponds with flora and fauna of nature conservation importance, good quality water, and natural water levels
- when the neighbouring land is under a management option that restricts fertilisers, manures and pesticides

Where this option cannot be used

- In combination with pond management capital items
- On ponds of area less than 100 sq m or greater than 1 ha

How this option will benefit the environment

It will protect and enhance larger ponds of high wildlife value.

Requirements

You must:

- manage vegetation in the pond
- control scrub and invasive non-native plants
- retain overhanging trees and bushes and deadwood
- graze or cut the margins of the pond

- carry out the work within the dates agreed with the adviser
- maintain clear, unpolluted water
- maintain the current water regime

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely you will not be allowed to:

- introduce any plants or animals (including fish and waterfowl) to the pond
- deepen or change the original profile of the pond
- infill the pond

Keeping records

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- photographs of the pond

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related supplements

You can locate the following supplements on the same area as this option:

- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

To avoid damaging the pond:

- survey it to check which species are present
- if the pond contains a protected species, you will need a [wildlife licence](#)
- only manage one section of it at a time
- keep some of the existing habitat
- keep some of the leaf litter, logs and woody debris

- aim to maintain diversity in the pond complex - if there are several ponds on the site, don't carry out the same management on all of them at the same time

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WT6: Management of reedbed

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of reedbed option.

How much will be paid

£78 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Whole and part-parcel

Only on:

- priority habitat reedbed in good condition and more than 2ha in area
- degraded reedbed more than 2ha in area with the potential for restoration

Features that can be included in this option

The following features can be included if they are part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- areas of open water up to 1 ha

How this option will benefit the environment

It is for managing, maintaining and restoring priority reedbed habitat.

If successful there will be predominantly open, reed-dominated vegetation with occasional scrub, and open water features along ditch lines and ponded areas. High water levels will sustain open water features all year round. Reedbeds will be well maintained or recovering and will support healthy populations of target reedbed species.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- manage water levels and water supply
- manage distribution and flow of water through the site
- maintain any culverts, sluices, tidal flaps or bunds
- manage scrub and vegetation to maintain a predominantly open reedbed
- dispose of cut material appropriately
- manage open water features

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely agreement holders will not be allowed to:

- apply fertilisers or manures
- use pesticides or herbicides, except to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control injurious weeds and invasive non-native species

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related options

The following options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option:

- [OR2 – Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 – Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP2 – Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 – Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 – Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 – Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

- [WT11 - Wetland cutting supplement](#)
- [WT12 - Wetland grazing supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following section gives advice on carrying out this option successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this option.

Reedbed habitat quality can vary greatly. Reedbed size, degrees of wetness and dryness, scrub cover, soil type, water quality and reed management practices all affect wildlife opportunities. For example, a small scrubby reedbed might support a diverse invertebrate assemblage but will not attract breeding bittern.

Manage the reedbed with a planned set of wildlife goals. Plans should be appropriate and feasible and take account of:

- area available
- water supply
- topography
- other landscape and management constraints such as flood risk, historic environment and landscape impact

Further information

The RSPB website is a useful source of information, including the report on [Bringing Reedbeds to Life](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WT7: Creation of reedbed

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of reedbed option.

How much will be paid

£323 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option lasts for 10 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme.

Where to use this option

It is available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier only on:

- land with a level or very shallow gradient and a reliable, sufficient water supply that will maintain adequate flow and water table elevation during the summer

On whole and part-parcels on any of the following:

- arable land
- temporary grassland
- improved grassland
- wetland habitat in poor condition if approved by a specialist

Where this option cannot be used

- On existing semi-natural habitat, unless existing wetland is in poor condition and the work is agreed by a specialist
- On historic or archaeological features
- When it could flood someone else's land
- If it is associated with poor water quality
- On areas of open water 1ha or more in area

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- areas of open water up to 1 ha

How this option will benefit the environment

It will help create new areas of reedbed priority habitat on land that is currently of low wildlife value. If successful it will generate open reed-dominated vegetation on waterlogged ground, interspersed with open water features along ditch lines and pond areas sustained all year round. The reedbed will support healthy populations of target reedbed species.

Requirements

You must:

- carry out earthworks to create ground and water conditions suitable for reedbed
- establish reedbed vegetation
- manage water levels and water supply
- manage distribution and flow of water through the site
- maintain any culverts, sluices, tidal flaps or bunds
- manage scrub and opportunistic species to assist reedbed establishment
- dispose of cut material appropriately
- manage open water features

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely you will not be allowed to:

- apply fertilisers or manures
- use pesticides or herbicides, except to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control injurious weeds and invasive non-native species

Keeping records

Before you apply you should contact the Environment Agency to see whether you need any consents before beginning any works.

On your annual claim you must declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices
- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related options

You can locate these options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP2 – Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 – Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 – Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 – Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT11 - Wetland cutting supplement](#)
- [WT12 - Wetland grazing supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Reedbed habitat quality can vary greatly. Reedbed size, degrees of wetness and dryness, scrub cover, soil type, water quality and reed management practices affect wildlife opportunities. For example, a small scrubby reedbed can support a diverse invertebrate assemblage but will not attract breeding bittern.

Create the reedbed with a planned set of wildlife goals. You should assess feasibility and impact in advance and get all the appropriate advice and permissions. You should agree a detailed implementation plan for the

works with Natural England. Plans should be appropriate and feasible and take account of:

- area available
- water supply
- topography
- other landscape and management constraints such as flood risk, historic environment and landscape impact.

Further Information

The RSPB website is a useful source of information, including the report on the project [Bringing reedbeds to life](#).

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WT8: Management of fen

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of fen option.

How much will be paid

£39 per hectare (ha)

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Whole or part-parcel

Only on:

- priority fen habitat in good condition
- priority reedbed habitat in good condition and less than 2 ha
- a mosaic of priority fen and reedbed habitat in good condition where total reedbed area does not exceed 2ha
- fen and reedbed habitat (alone or combined) in poor condition where there is adequate water supply to restore appropriate water levels and the total reedbed area does not exceed 2ha

When this option cannot be used

- areas of open water that are 1 ha or more
- areas of reedbed greater than 2 ha

Features that can be included in this option

The following features can be included if they are part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- ditches, drains or dykes that are less than 4m wide
- a pond or standing water that's under 1ha
- rivers and streams that are less than 4m wide for the majority of their length in the parcel
- bracken beds if control of these are included in the agreement

- scrub or woodland if there is less than 5% cover or if control of these are included in the agreement

How this option will benefit the environment

It will help maintain and restore priority fen habitat and small areas of reedbed.

If successful there will be predominantly open fen vegetation, with occasional scrub. There may also be small open water features along ditch lines, water tracks and ponded areas. High water levels will be sustained by a natural, unpolluted water supply which will support a diverse range of target fen species.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- manage water levels and water supply
- maintain any culverts, sluices, tidal flaps or bunds
- manage scrub and vegetation to maintain a predominantly open habitat
- dispose of cut material appropriately

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely agreement holders will not be allowed to:

- apply any fertilisers or manures
- use pesticides and herbicides, except to spot-treat or weed-wipe to control injurious weeds, invasive non-natives, nettles or bracken

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related options

The following options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option:

- [OR2 – Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 – Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 – Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 – Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 – Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT11 - Wetland cutting supplement](#)
- [WT12 - Wetland grazing supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following section gives advice on carrying out this option successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this option.

Fen is a diverse habitat type with different fen types depending on factors such as water chemistry, soil type, fertility, position in the landscape and historical management.

To maintain or restore fen appropriately consider the location and landscape setting. Identify the type of fen the option is aiming to conserve and enhance and set objectives and management appropriately.

Decide how best to manage and restore fens by taking into account:

- how and where it sits in the wider landscape
- how past modification and management have influenced the fen and the wildlife it supports
- how the fen is supplied with water and how it drains
- other landscape and management constraints such as flood risk, historic environment and landscape impact

Small fen sites are usually fragments of much larger wetlands and semi-natural landscapes so look for opportunities to extend and buffer existing fens by:

- re-wetting areas with drained peat next to them
- blocking or in-filling pipes or ditches that intercept springs or drain the fen

Account for the surroundings and neighbouring habitats to plan more coherent wetland units. Habitats can include lowland raised bog, wet grassland or wet woodland.

The character and condition of a fen is largely determined by water that comes from its catchment. Therefore it's important that surrounding land is managed sympathetically and in ways that won't damage the fen through pollution by nutrients or sediment runoff.

If the proposed management involves raising water levels, applicants should contact the Environment Agency before applying for this item.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WT9: Creation of fen

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the creation of fen option.

How much will be paid

£446 per hectare (ha).

How long this option lasts

This option lasts for 10 years, instead of the standard 5 years for the grant scheme.

Where to use this option

It is available for Higher Tier on whole or part-parcels on:

- arable land, temporary grassland, improved permanent grassland
- other wetland habitat that is in poor condition if approved by a specialist
- land with an suitable and adequate water supply - suitable sites are usually underlain by peat but can also be on slopes with a groundwater outflow

Where this option cannot be used

- On existing wetland habitat, unless existing wetland is in poor condition and the work is agreed by a specialist
- On areas of open water 1ha or more in area

Features that can be included in this option

You can include the following features if they are part of the land, even if they are not eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- areas of open water up to 1 ha

How this option will benefit the environment

It will help create new areas of fen priority habitat on land with low wildlife value, particularly around existing wetland habitats.

If successful this option will create predominantly open fen vegetation, with occasional scrub. There may be small open water features along ditch lines, water tracks and ponded areas. High water levels will be sustained by a natural, unpolluted water supply which will support a diverse range of target fen species.

Requirements

You must:

- undertake any ground works in accordance with an agreed plan
- manage water levels and water supply
- establish fen vegetation
- maintain any culverts, sluices or bunds
- manage scrub and vegetation to maintain a predominantly open habitat
- manage scrub and opportunistic species to assist fen establishment
- dispose of cut material appropriately

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely you will not be allowed to:

- apply fertilisers or manures
- use pesticides or herbicides, except to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control injurious weeds and invasive non-native species

Keeping records

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you have not carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

You must keep the following records and supply them on request:

- receipted invoices, consents or permissions connected with the work
- records of all management activity on the option area for each parcel
- photographs of the completed work

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. You should discuss and agree these requirements with your adviser.

Related options

You can locate the following options and supplements on the same area as this option:

- [OR1 – Organic conversion – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT1 – Organic land management – improved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP2 - Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 – Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 – Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 – Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT11 - Wetland cutting supplement](#)
- [WT12 - Wetland grazing supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

Fen is a diverse habitat type with different fen types depending on factors such as water chemistry, soil type, fertility, position in the landscape and historical management.

To create fen appropriately consider the location and landscape setting. Identify the type of fen the option is aiming to create and set objectives and management appropriately.

Decide how best to create fens by taking into account:

- how and where it sits in the wider landscape
- how past modification and management have influenced the fen and the wildlife it supports
- how the fen is supplied with water and how it drains.
- other landscape and management constraints such as flood risk, historic environment and landscape impact

Small fen sites are usually fragments of much larger wetlands and semi-natural landscapes so look for opportunities to extend and buffer existing fens by:

- re-wetting areas with drained peat next to them

- blocking or in-filling pipes or ditches that intercept springs or drain the fen

Account for the surroundings and neighbouring habitats to plan more coherent wetland units. Habitats can include lowland raised bog, wet grassland or wet woodland.

The character and condition of a fen is largely determined by water that comes from its catchment. Therefore it is important that surrounding land is managed sympathetically and in ways that will not damage the fen through pollution by nutrients or sediment runoff.

Feasibility and impact should be fully assessed in advance and all appropriate advice and permissions obtained. A detailed implementation plan or feasibility study for the works should be agreed with Natural England.

If the proposed management involves raising water levels, applicants should contact the Environment Agency before applying for this item.

Further information

See the [Higher Tier manual](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WT10: Management of lowland raised bog

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the management of lowland raised bog option.

How much will be paid

£164 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this option

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Whole and part-parcel

Only on:

- priority lowland raised bog habitat which can be kept wet enough for peat to form

Features that can be included in this option

The following features can be included if they are part of the land, even if they are ineligible for the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS):

- ditches, drains or dykes that are less than 4m wide
- a pond or standing water that's less than 1ha in total
- rivers and streams that are less than 4m wide in most of the parcel
- bracken beds if control is in the agreement
- 5% cover of scrub or woodland, or if control is included in the agreement

How this option will benefit the environment

It will help to manage and restore priority lowland raised bog habitat

If successful there will be:

- a rain-fed water table kept close to the surface of the peat
- a cover of characteristic bog vegetation such as sphagnum moss and cotton grass maintained or expanded
- reduced amounts of invasive bracken, scrub or non-native species

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- maintain water levels at the surface of the bog fed only by rainfall
- control scrub and other undesirable species
- dispose of cut material appropriately
- maintain structures that help to control water levels

The agreement will set out what must not be done. It is likely agreement holders will not be allowed to:

- apply any fertilisers or manures
- use pesticides or herbicides, except for spot-treating or weed-wiping to control injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, nettles or bracken

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- field operations at the parcel level, including associated invoices

On your annual claim you will be asked to declare that you haven't carried out any activities prohibited by the option requirements.

The detailed requirements for this option will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related options

The following options and supplements can be located on the same area as this option:

- [OR2 – Organic conversion – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [OT2 – Organic land management – unimproved permanent grassland](#)
- [SP2 – Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 – Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 – Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)

- [SP8 – Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)
- [WT11 - Wetland cutting supplement](#)
- [WT12 - Wetland grazing supplement](#)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following section gives advice on carrying out this option successfully but does not form part of the requirements for this option.

Pick a location

This option should only be available for raised bog habitat where:

- a substrate of bog peat remains in place
- the area has a surface irrigated only by rainfall
- high water levels sustained by rainfall can be maintained or restored

Maintain and restore raised bog

Get expert advice if using this option to pen rain water to raise water levels (smaller sites may only need internal drain blocking).

Drains or streams in adjacent areas may draw water away. Check what other wetland options might help reduce these effects.

If blocking off or diverting water flow associated with neighbouring drains and streams check what impact this might have on adjacent farm owners or occupiers. The Environment Agency should be consulted along with other relevant bodies eg Internal Drainage Boards. It may be necessary to obtain consent.

Pick a suitable penning structure

Pick water penning structures to suit the size of the drains. Use simple plastic pile or peat plug dams to block small grips and drains or more complex, engineered structures for larger drains. Try extended pile or peat bunds where the surface is either complex or very open and featureless, e.g. after peat milling. Large scale earthworks for rewetting will need careful feasibility study and planning.

Manage vegetation and water levels

Relatively undisturbed raised bog surfaces are usually more self-sustaining and should require less intervention.

Where sites may have dried out and colonised by trees and scrub, aim to:

- remove up to 95% of native trees, and all invasive non-native species
- keep water levels raised to reduce re-colonisation as birch, conifers and rhododendrons can exacerbate drying out

Control bracken by bruising, cutting or applying herbicides. A longer term solution would be to maintain raised water levels.

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WT11: Wetland cutting supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the wetland cutting supplement.

How much will be paid

£440 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only with one of the following options:

- [WT6 - Management of reedbed](#)
- [WT7 - Creation of reedbed](#)
- [WT8 - Management of fen](#)
- [WT9 - Creation of fen](#)
- [WT10 - Management of lowland raised bog](#)

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It supports the appropriate cutting management of wetland habitats.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- cut particular areas by an agreed method
- cut at specific times
- dispose of cuttings in an agreed way
- produce a simple map of the areas cut and the dates of cutting

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- map of the areas cut

You should also be aware that at the start of each claim year, a percentage of agreement holders will be asked to take and submit the following photographic records:

- photographs of the management undertaken

The detailed requirements for this supplement will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related supplements

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements:

- [SP2 – Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

WT12: Wetland grazing supplement

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the wetland grazing supplement.

How much will be paid

£304 per hectare (ha).

Where to use this supplement

Available for Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier

Only with one of the following options:

- [WT6 - Management of reedbed](#)
- [WT7 - Creation of reedbed](#)
- [WT8 - Management of fen](#)
- [WT9 - Creation of fen](#)
- [WT10 - Management of lowland raised bog](#)

How this supplement will benefit the environment

It supports the appropriate grazing management of wetland habitats.

Requirements

Agreement holders are likely to need to:

- graze specific areas by an agreed method
- graze at specific times
- achieve a particular vegetation condition by grazing

Keeping records

Agreement holders will need to keep the following records and supply them on request:

- stock records to show grazing activity on parcels

The detailed requirements for this supplement will be tailored to the Higher Tier site. Applicants should discuss and agree these requirements with their adviser.

Related supplements

This supplement can be located on the same area as the following supplements:

- [SP2 – Raised water level supplement](#)
- [SP4 - Control of invasive plant species supplement](#)
- [SP5 – Shepherding supplement](#)
- [SP6 – Cattle grazing supplement](#)
- [SP7 – Introduction of cattle grazing on the Isles of Scilly](#)
- [SP8 – Native breeds at risk supplement](#)
- [SP9 - Threatened species supplement](#)

Further information

Read more information about Countryside Stewardship [Higher Tier](#) to find out more about the scheme and how to apply.

