



Rural Payments  
Agency

November 2021

# An update from the Rural Payments Agency



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

## Welcome to the RPA update.

As we move into November 2021, we would like to share some updates with you, including:

- changes to Basic Payment Scheme (BPS)
- updates about the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) transformation
- information about the lump sum exit scheme

In July 2021, we published our Annual Report, which takes a look back over the past year at our performance, purpose and partnership working during the challenges posed by the pandemic. It also includes a look to the future.

Do take a look at our Annual Report on GOV.UK at: [Rural Payments Agency annual report and accounts 2020 to 2021 - GOV.UK](#)

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# Basic Payment Scheme (BPS)

## BPS is changing

The Basic Payment Scheme will open next year as normal.

From 2021 to 2027, Direct Payments will be phased out. This means progressive reductions will be applied each year, starting with your BPS 2021 payment from December 2021.

Reductions are being applied to the payment BPS recipients would have been due, including any young farmer payment, after all other reductions and penalties have been applied. To help manage this transition and support you with your business planning, we have created an [online calculator](#). You can use the calculator to see how progressive reductions could affect your payment for scheme years 2021 to 2024.

The money saved by the reduction in Direct Payments will be invested back into farming and the countryside. This includes supporting farmers to deliver environmental outcomes under the new environmental land management schemes, which we will introduce over the agricultural transition.

You can read more about the [Basic Payment Scheme](#) on GOV.UK.

## What does that mean for me?

If you currently receive a BPS payment you may wish to consider the other opportunities available as your Direct Payments are reduced over the next few years.

The [Farming is Changing leaflet](#) sets out the timeline for availability of current and new financial assistance schemes, with information on what each scheme will involve and the eligibility requirements. We acknowledge that development of some of these schemes is ongoing but hope that this leaflet gives an indication of the options that will be available to you.

We understand the importance of forward planning and we would urge you not to leave it too late to consider the next steps for your business.

If you are concerned about the impact of progressive reductions on your business, farming resilience support is also available through 19 organisations under the [Future Farming Resilience Fund](#) (see page 11). Support is free to access and discussions are confidential and any farmer currently receiving Direct Payments is eligible to apply.

## Payments

We will start to make Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) payments from 1 December 2021 until 30 June 2022.

If you are asked to provide evidence or additional information as part of your claim, please do this as soon as possible so that if payment is due, we can pay you as quickly as possible.

## BPS Claim Statement

BPS Claim Statements will be different to previous years due to changes being made to BPS this year.

Changes on your statements include the following.

- All figures on the Claim Statement will be shown in pounds sterling. In previous years, payments were first calculated in euros, even if they were paid in pounds sterling.
- There will be no greening section in the statement as the greening payment has been removed. The greening funds will be included in the value of BPS entitlements.
- You will also see new information about progressive reductions. A table will show your BPS payment before progressive reductions are applied, and a second table will show how progressive reductions are calculated and applied to your overall payment.

## Lump sum exit scheme

Last year, the government announced plans to introduce a lump sum exit scheme in 2022. This scheme is aimed at farmers in England who claim BPS and who wish to exit the industry. The scheme will offer a lump sum payment to those looking to leave farming in place of any further Direct Payments.

The lump sum exit scheme will help those who are looking to retire or leave farming to do so in a planned and managed way. This will also free up land for new entrants and existing farmers wishing to expand.

Defra recently consulted on the proposed lump sum exit scheme, including the eligibility rules. The consultation has closed. A summary of the responses and key scheme rules will be published on the [Direct Payments to Farmers](#) page on GOV.UK and we will then send further information about the scheme to BPS applicants.

## Delinked payments

We intend to replace BPS with delinked payments in 2024. When payments are delinked, recipients will no longer have to farm the land to receive the payments, until they have been phased out by the end of 2027.

Eligibility for delinked payments will be based on a reference period. Defra recently consulted on the approach to delinked payments. The reference period will be confirmed shortly, taking account of the responses to the consultation and will be published on the [Direct Payments to Farmers](#) page on GOV.UK.

## Environmental Stewardship (ES) agreements

If your ES Higher Level Stewardship agreement is expiring in 2022, we may offer to extend your agreement for a further year. The criteria for allowing an extension will be the same as used last year. We will contact you before your current agreement expires.

If you choose to accept this offer, you must print, sign and return the declaration along with any required supporting documents to us within 20 working days of the offer date. This will allow us to extend your agreement before it expires. We are not able to accept electronic or scanned signatures.

You can find additional information on the [Environmental Stewardship](#) guidance page on GOV.UK.

## Payments

We will start to make Environmental Stewardship payments from early December 2021 until 30 June 2022.

If you are asked to provide evidence or additional information, please do this as soon as possible so that if payment is due, we can pay you as quickly as possible.

# Countryside Stewardship (CS)

## Scheme opening

The Countryside Stewardship scheme will open next year as normal.

We are making it easier for you to apply for a Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier agreement. When the application window opens in 2022, you will be able to submit your application online. We will share further information about this and any other changes to the scheme when information becomes available. We will also make any necessary updates to the scheme rules.

## Payments

We will start to make Countryside Stewardship payments from early December 2021 until 30 June 2022.

If you are asked to provide evidence or additional information, please do this as soon as possible so that if payment is due, we can pay you as quickly as possible.

## Countryside Stewardship reminder

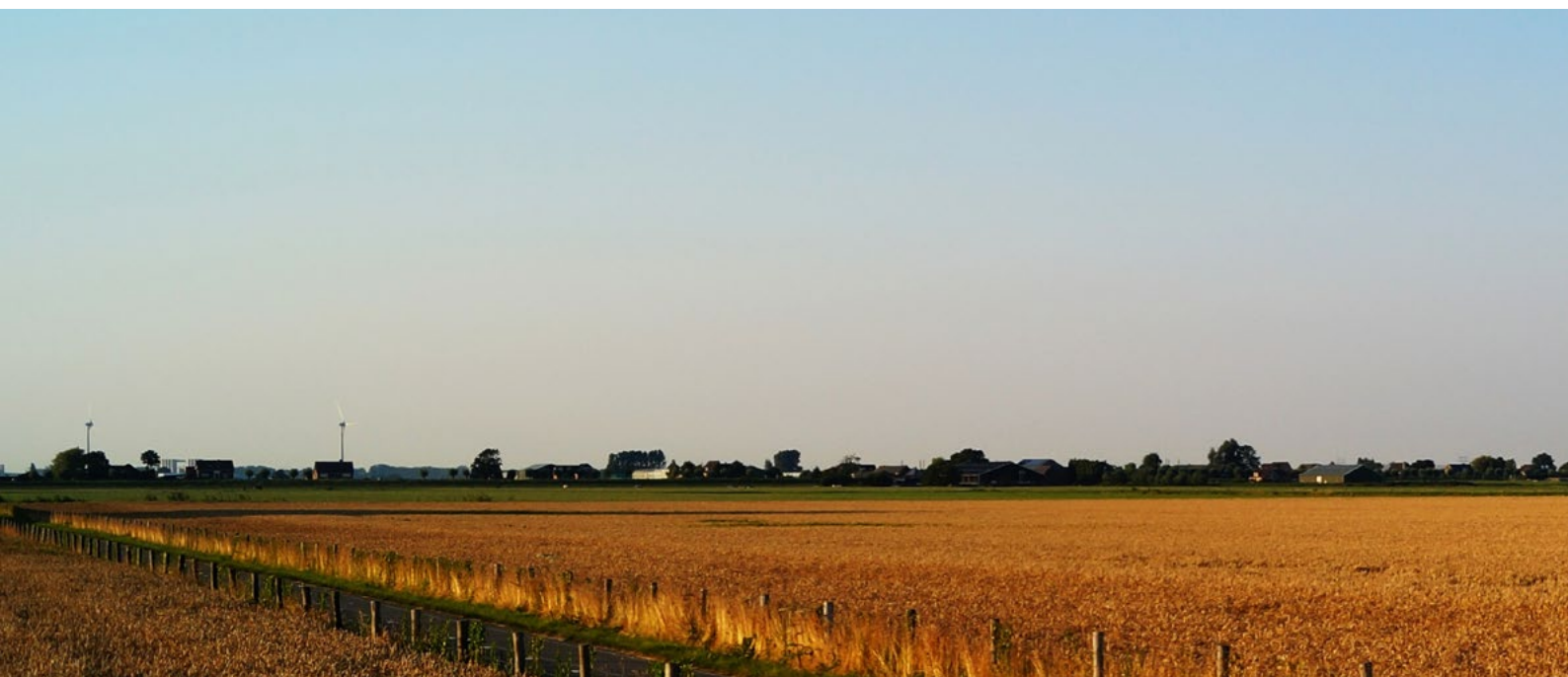
The hectareage of rotational arable options you signed up to in your agreement is the hectareage to be delivered every year of the agreement term.

It is part of your agreement to make sure that you do this. By making sure that you deliver the agreed hectareage, you will be able to claim the full amount under your agreement.

For more information you can read 'Meeting the Requirements of your options' in the Agreement Management section of the [Countryside Stewardship: Higher Tier Manual](#).

## Woodland Management Plan

If you are planning to apply for the CS Woodland Improvement Option WD2 (part of Higher Tier) when it re-opens next year, you will require a Forestry Commission approved [Woodland Management Plan](#) to be in place. To allow time for a plan review to take place, submit your draft Woodland Management Plan to the Forestry Commission by 31 December 2021 to have it approved in time.



The Woodland Management Plan (WMP) grant is a capital grant that is part of Countryside Stewardship. To be eligible you must be a land manager who is an owner or occupier, a tenant, landlord or a licensor.

Applications are currently open. All Woodland Management Plans include:

- Terms and Conditions
- an Agreement Document setting out the details of the Agreement Holder
- additional documents referenced in the Agreement Document

The [Countryside Stewardship Woodland Management Plan grant manual](#) on GOV.UK explains what you need to do to apply for a Woodland Management Plan grant.

## Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund

The Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund will reopen in December following successful uptake in the previous rounds. The fund encourages collaboration and knowledge-sharing amongst the farming community to protect and enhance the local environment.

In addition to the existing priorities for 2022, new priorities have been included to support improving air quality and managing beaver activity. To date, there have been 5 rounds of the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund under the current Rural Development Programme for England, funding 139 groups with over 3,800 members.

This further round of funding is expected to invest in over 30 facilitation groups. The fund is part of Defra's plans for a renewed agricultural sector, centred around incentivising sustainable farming practices alongside profitable food production.

You can read more information about the [Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund](#) on GOV.UK, as well as the full [press release on the new round of funding](#).



# British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) transformation

BCMS manages the Cattle Tracing System (CTS), which records births, movements and deaths of cattle. CTS helps to make sure that cattle can be traced and this helps with effective disease management. These are important factors in supporting UK trade in beef and dairy products.

We are currently working with the devolved governments to create new multi-species systems for each administration (Scotland, Wales and England). The recording of births, movements and deaths of cattle, currently managed by BCMS, will form part of these new systems and we must make sure effective traceability and disease control continues.

You can find more information on the [British Cattle Movement Service](#) pages on GOV.UK.

## Changes for Scottish keepers

The Scottish government has developed its replacement system for CTS. From May 2021, Scottish livestock markets and abattoirs have moved across to a new system called ScotMoves+. As part of this change, all Scottish cattle keepers have been moved onto the new system.

If you are a Scottish keeper, you should have received a letter dated 27 July 2021 from the Scottish government. This letter confirmed that from 4 October 2021, all cattle births, movements and deaths in Scotland must be reported to ScotMoves+, rather than CTS.

If you have not received this letter, or if you have any questions or concerns about this change call 01466 794323 or email [help@scoteid.com](mailto:help@scoteid.com)

## Changes for English and Welsh keepers

Wales and England are currently developing their own multi-species systems to replace CTS. In the meantime, BCMS and CTS will continue to be used by English and Welsh governments and their customers. ScotMoves+ will feed data into CTS to keep a UK wide view so that nationwide traceability remains in place.





## Cross compliance 2022

The cross compliance rules have not changed but we have made some changes to how cross compliance runs. This includes inspections and enforcement action that will be taken if the rules are not met.

### Inspections

To improve our communication with farmers, we'll send a letter shortly after an inspection visit confirming the initial results.

This will confirm whether the inspection was found to be compliant or non-compliant and give any necessary guidance as quickly as possible.

Where the inspection is found to be non-compliant, the letter will give an initial overview of the results and explain what to expect next.

### Penalties / Reductions

For many farmers, penalties for non-compliance (or reductions for non-compliance for CS agreements starting on or after 1 January 2021) will be more proportionate.

For example, where record keeping is non-compliant under SMR 1 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, this will take account of any possible harm to the environment.

We're also making the penalty levels (percentages) more proportionate under SMR 7 Cattle identification and registration and SMR 8 Sheep and goat identification.

# Tree Health Pilot

Owners and managers of trees and woodlands in England affected by pests and diseases are being invited to take part in the Tree Health Pilot which opened on 31 August 2021.

The Tree Health Pilot will expand on support available through the existing Countryside Stewardship Woodland Tree Health grant. It will test new ways to help people who own or manage trees, to keep trees healthy, by stopping the spread of pests and diseases. Learning generated through the pilot will be used to develop future funding for tree health.

You are invited to contact the Forestry Commission and make an Expression of Interest about applying for the Tree Health Pilot by emailing [thpilotenquiries@forestrycommission.gov.uk](mailto:thpilotenquiries@forestrycommission.gov.uk), if you manage specific trees or woodlands affected by specific pests and diseases in any of the following regions of England:

- North West, primarily targeting Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Lake District National Park

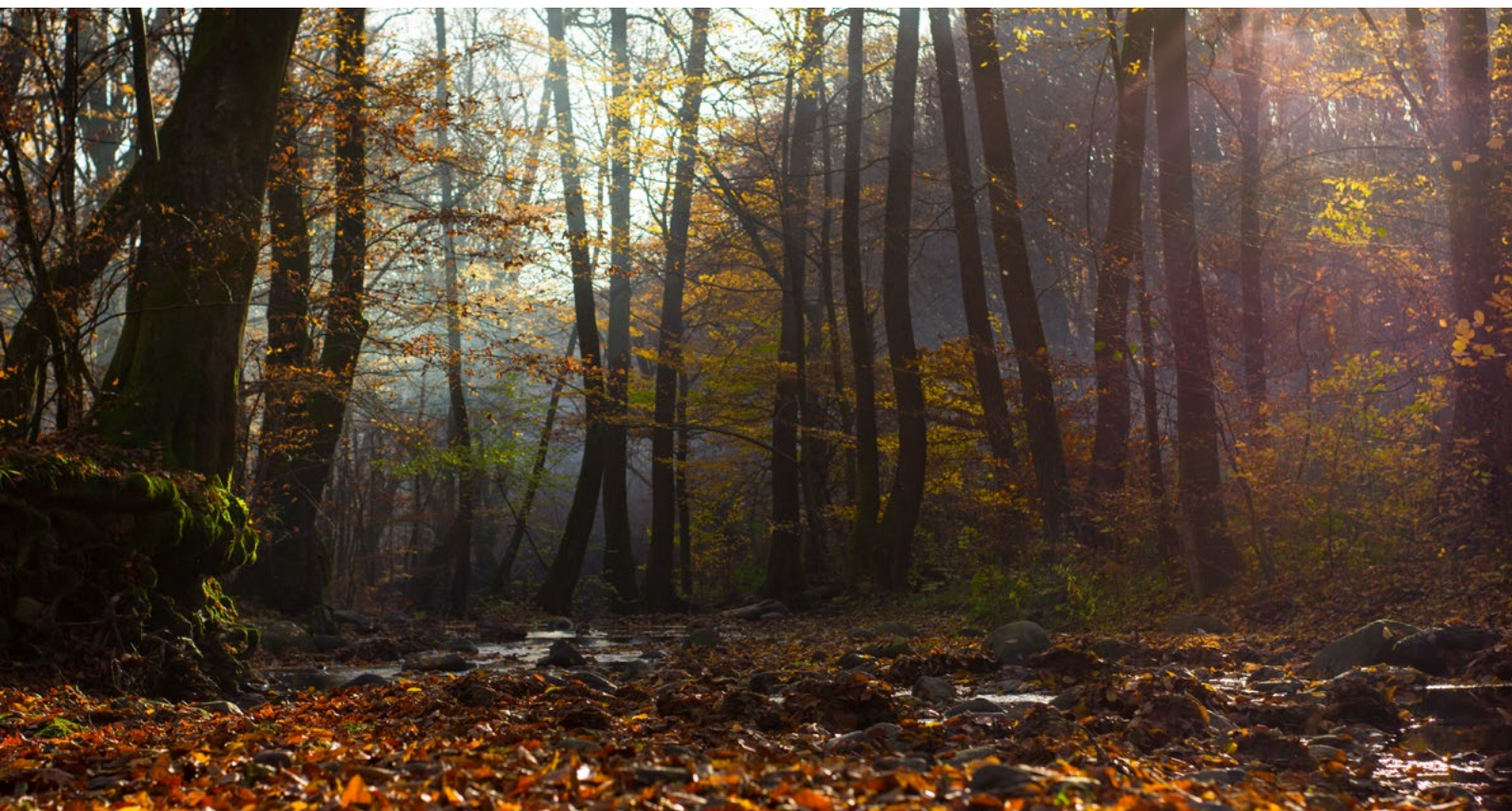
- South East and London, primarily targeting Kent and East Sussex
- West Midlands, primarily targeting the Malvern Hills AONB and Shropshire Hills AONB

The trees you manage must be one of the following:

- ash with ash dieback, as part of a group application
- larch with *Phytophthora ramorum*
- spruce growing in the high-risk spruce bark beetle (*Ips typographus*) area
- sweet chestnut with *Phytophthora ramorum* or sweet chestnut blight

Read more about the information to include in an Expression of Interest and how to apply on the [Tree Health Pilot scheme](#) page on GOV.UK.

The pilot will work alongside the existing [Countryside Stewardship Woodland Tree Health grant](#), which will continue to be on offer until 2024.



## The Future Farming Resilience Fund

The Future Farming Resilience Fund (FFRF) is designed to provide business support to farmers and land managers during the early years of the agricultural transition.

Grants are awarded to organisations providing support to farmers and land managers to:

- understand the changes that are happening
- identify how, what and when they may need to adapt their business models
- access tailored support to adapt

Any farmer or land manager receiving BPS payments is eligible to apply for this free of charge support.

The blog [‘The Future Farming Resilience Fund: access free support’](#) gives details of the provider organisations, including the location and how to get in touch.

We recommend signing up early to avoid missing out on this phase, though a further phase of support will be available from late 2022 onwards.

## England Woodland Creation Offer

The England Woodland Creation Offer (EWCO) provides funding to support landowners and managers in the creation of new woodland that meet the UK Forestry Standard. It is administered by the Forestry Commission.

In addition to covering the standard capital costs of tree planting (up to a maximum of £8,500 per hectare) and annual maintenance payments of £200 per hectare for ten years, EWCO also offers additional contributions that reward farmers and landowners for establishing new woodland that will provide environmental and social benefits.

They particularly offer incentives to create new native woodland, especially where this will extend existing native woodland, alongside watercourses that lack shade, or where public access will be provided across the new wood.

EWCO is one of several Forestry Commission schemes supporting woodland creation and tree planting across England. Read the [Create woodland: overview page on GOV.UK](#) for details of our other current funding opportunities.

## Farming for Net Zero

Defra is supporting farmers in reducing their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and reaching Net Zero. Five key areas have been identified where farming businesses can take action to better understand and reduce their GHG emissions, including:

- utilising carbon audit tools to identify emission sources and measure on-farm GHGs
- enhancing soil quality
- managing a healthy herd
- improving nutrient use
- managing organic materials

By making changes to farm management practices, farmers can not only help to tackle climate change but also boost productivity and profitability.

Defra has published guidance on these areas and actions that can be taken, with more information on the [UK business climate hub website](#).

# Farming in Protected Landscapes

The Farming in Protected Landscapes programme is now open for applications. Applications for the first year of the programme will be received until 31 January 2022. Applications for the second and third year of the programme have not yet been announced.

The programme was developed with the support of a group of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and National Park staff from across the country. It is open to all farmers and land managers within an AONB or National Park in England, or the Broads.

It could also support activity on other land, where a project will benefit a Protected Landscape or its organisation's objectives or partnership initiatives.

## What the programme will pay for

The programme provides funding for one-off projects, it is not an agri-environment scheme. It will support farmers and land managers to carry out projects that:

- support nature recovery
- mitigate the impacts of climate change
- provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage
- support nature-friendly, sustainable farm businesses

For example, the programme might support:

- promoting connectivity between habitats
- replacing stiles with gates on public footpaths, to promote easier access
- conserving historic features on a farm, such as lime kilns or lead mining heritage
- a locally branded food initiative that promotes the links between the product and the landscape in which it is produced
- action to reduce carbon emissions on a farm
- gathering data and evidence to help inform conservation and farming practice

## How to apply

You can contact the relevant Protected Landscape body to request an application form.

Before you apply, it would be a good idea to discuss your project with your Protected Landscape body. They might visit the location of your planned project to talk through your ideas.

Applications for the first year of programme funding are currently being received and will continue to be received until 31 January 2022. Funding will be awarded to successful applicants while applications remain open, rather than after applications close, so you should submit your application as soon as it is ready.

Throughout the application period, Protected Landscape bodies will also consider applications for funding in the second year of the programme (April 2022 to March 2023), especially if you aim to begin early in the financial year.

Multi-year awards are possible for longer projects, but all projects must end by March 2024.

## More information

Read our [Farming in Protected Landscapes](#) page on GOV.UK for more information, or contact your relevant [Protected Landscape body](#).

Make sure you do not miss out on future announcements by subscribing to our [Future Farming blog](#).

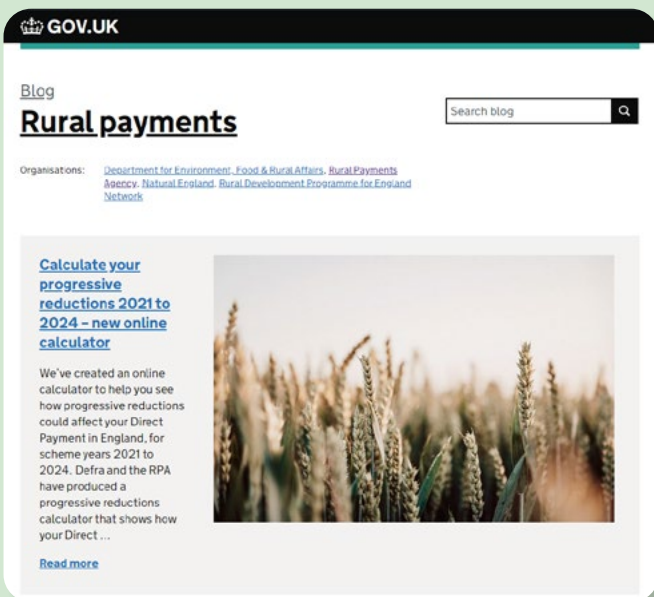
# Keeping in touch with our customers

We believe it's really important to have meaningful, two-way conversations with our customers and over the last few months we have been taking more opportunities to get out and about and meet people face to face.

We've had RPA stands at 11 different shows in 2021, and it's been great to meet so many different people from diverse backgrounds.

We also held our first 'RPA Roundtable' event in Thirsk and Malton constituency with Kevin Hollinrake MP on 30 July. This was the first of a series of events we have organised, getting out into the farming communities and engaging with farmers and land managers on a range of topics alongside local MPs.

As well as giving the attendees an overview of the breadth of services we provide to rural communities, these Roundtable events also provide an update on the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) and introduce colleagues from the Future Farming Countryside Programme (FFCP) who talk through the work they are doing on Agricultural Transition in Defra.



## RPA blog

We run a blog, as well as social media accounts, for example on Twitter and Facebook, which you can sign up to for helpful advice and updates about upcoming announcements and events. The blog also introduces people from across the RPA and gives you a closer look at the work we do.

Recent blogs include a look at the ways farming is changing and how some of our payment schemes will be changing in future, information about the Countryside Productivity Small Grant scheme, and an online calculator to calculate progressive reductions in 2021.

You can sign up by visiting the [RPA blog](#) and subscribing to receive email updates when a new blog is published.

We have more RPA Roundtable events lined up for the coming months. In addition to these events, we are looking at other ways we can engage at a local level with the communities we support. More information on this will be released soon.

If you are unable to attend one of these events, remember you can also keep up to date with our latest information by signing up for the blog at: [ruralpayments.blog.gov.uk](https://ruralpayments.blog.gov.uk)

You can also follow us on social media:

- Twitter: [@ruralpay](https://twitter.com/ruralpay)
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/RuralPaymentsAgency](https://www.facebook.com/RuralPaymentsAgency)
- YouTube: [Rural Payments Agency](https://www.youtube.com/RuralPaymentsAgency)

## The Farming Community Network

In the Farming Community Network's (FCN) article '[There Are Few Limits To What Communities Can Accomplish When We Come Together](#)', the Chief Executive Jude McCann reflects on the impact of the pandemic on farmers and shares future plans for the charity.

### FarmWell

The [FarmWell website](#) from the FCN is a one-stop online resources hub to help you and your farm business stay strong and resilient. FarmWell is full of vital information from a wide variety of sources and is free to use.

### Get Support

You can find a list of additional national and regional support contacts and organisations on the FarmWell website.

### FarmWell Helpline

If you, or someone you know, is concerned about planning for the future, or you would just like someone to talk to, you can email [help@fcn.org.uk](mailto:help@fcn.org.uk) or call the Farming Community Network helpline on 03000 111 999 between 7am and 11pm, 365 days a year.

## Be aware of fraud

We are aware some customers have received emails, texts and telephone calls claiming to be from RPA or Defra. Fraudsters may also target farmers receiving subsidy payments by supplying fake links to websites designed to look like the RPA or Defra online services.

We do not send emails with links to websites to ask you to confirm personal details or payment information. If you receive such a request do not open the link and delete the item.

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

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

If you suspect an attempted fraud or feel you have been the subject of fraud, you can contact:

- RPA's Fraud Referral Team on 0800 347 347 or [FraudInConfidence@rpa.gov.uk](mailto:FraudInConfidence@rpa.gov.uk)
- Action Fraud (the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cyber-crime) on 0300 123 2040.

# Contact us



## Email us

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



## Call us

**03000 200 301**

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



## Write to us

### **CS customers:**

Rural Payments Agency  
PO Box 324  
Worksop  
S95 1DF

### **BPS customers:**

Rural Payments Agency  
PO Box 352  
Worksop  
S80 9FG

**ES customers:** address details are split by county.

For more information, go to the Environmental Stewardship page on GOV.UK.

## Follow us on social media



Follow us on Twitter  
[@ruralpay](https://twitter.com/ruralpay)



Facebook: [www.facebook.com/RuralPaymentsAgency](https://www.facebook.com/RuralPaymentsAgency)



Sign up for our blog at  
[ruralpayments.blog.gov.uk](https://ruralpayments.blog.gov.uk)



YouTube:  
[Rural Payments Agency](https://www.youtube.com/RuralPaymentsAgency)

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