



Rural Payments  
Agency

## **Countryside Stewardship: How to complete the capital claim form**

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# **Introduction**

This guidance explains how to complete your Countryside Stewardship (CS) capital claim and submit it by email or post.

## **When to claim**

You can submit a capital claim, supporting documents and any evidence that needs to be submitted, to reach RPA by the 'Claim by' date outlined in your agreement document. Late claims will be rejected.

## **Before you start your claim**

Read all the guidance and information you need about capital claims in the relevant scheme manual on GOV.UK, search for Countryside Stewardship, then choose the link for the relevant scheme.

You can read information about the requirements and evidence for items by searching for Countryside Stewardship grants on GOV.UK. If you cannot access the information online, please call us on 03000 200 301.

## Be aware of fraud

How to avoid fraud and what to do if you suspect an attempted fraud.

Fraudsters may target farmers who receive subsidy payments and we're aware that in the past some customers have received emails, texts and telephone calls claiming to be from RPA or Defra. Links to a fake website designed to look like an authentic RPA or Defra online service are sometimes included in the message.

We do not send emails or text messages with links to websites asking you to confirm your personal details or payment information. We strongly advise anyone who receives such a request not to open the link and delete the item.

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

never discuss your bank account details with someone you do not know

we 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

rpa@notifications.service.gov.uk

FETFEnquiries@rpa.gov.uk

FETFClaims@rpa.gov.uk

FTF@rpa.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.

# Getting started

To get started it's important that you do the following in the order listed

## 1 Register or sign in to the Rural Payments service,

To receive CS payments you must be registered in the Rural Payments service. To find out how to do this read the 'Register or sign into the Rural Payments service' section. If you cannot access the information online, call us on 03000 200 301.

## 2 Check and change

Check that your personal details, business details and permission levels are up to date, and update them if needed. To find out how to do this read [Rural Payments service: registering and updating your details](#) on GOV.UK. It's important that your bank account details are up to date and valid or we will not be able to pay you for CS and any other schemes you are claiming payment for. To amend your bank account details, call us on 03000 200 301. You cannot change them online or by email.

To help prevent fraud, after payments start from 1 December 2022 until the end of December, there are restrictions on updating bank account details. We can only update details if we have asked you for them or if your bank has rejected payment.

## 3 Complete your claim

Read the 'Complete your claim' section

# Register or sign into the Rural Payments service

If you're new to the Rural Payments service or already a customer this information will help you sign in.

## If you're a new customer

You must verify your identity before you can register with the Rural Payments service. You can do this in one of 2 ways.

1. Online with GOV.UK Verify – this gives you simple, trusted and secure access to an increasing number of public services on GOV.UK.

If you have difficulty verifying your identity with GOV.UK Verify or you are having problems with the Verify service, you should contact your identity provider.

2. Call the Rural Payments helpline on 03000 200 301 and we will help you – this will only give you access to the Rural Payments service, not other government services.

After you've verified your identity, you can sign in to the Rural Payments service and start to register. You will need to create a password. For security do not share your password with anyone.

## If you're an existing customer

Sign in to the [Rural Payments service](#)

Or you can sign in using the link on the [RPA page](#) on GOV.UK and click 'Sign in to the Rural Payments service'.

Depending how you registered for the service you'll need your:

- 'Verify' login details if you registered through GOV.UK 'Verify'. Click the 'Sign in if you registered online with GOV.UK Verify' link and follow the onscreen instructions
- customer reference number (CRN) and password, if you registered through RPA. Click 'Sign in with your customer reference number and password'. For security do not share your password with anyone.

To open the service we recommend you use the latest version of Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Firefox or Safari.

The best screen resolution to view the service is 1024 x 768.

To view PDF files from the service (such as an application summary), we recommend you download the latest version of Adobe Acrobat.

## Problems signing in to the Rural Payments service

If you make a mistake when signing in to the service you'll see this message:



**Sign in**

There is a problem signing in - try the following:  
[Check you've entered your 10 digit customer reference number \(CRN\) correctly](#)  
[Check you've entered your password correctly](#)

Customer reference number (CRN)  
This is the 10 digit number emailed to you when you created your account

1234567890

Password

\*\*\*\*\*

[Sign in](#)

[Still having trouble signing in after you've checked your CRN and password?](#)  
[Forgotten your password - create a new one here.](#)  
[Started creating a new password and received the security code by email - enter it here](#)  
[Lost your customer reference number \(CRN\), call 03000 200 301.](#)

- Check that you've entered your CRN correctly.
- Then make sure you're using the correct password.

You have 3 attempts to sign in to the service. If you make a mistake at each attempt you won't be able to access your account. You'll need to change your password, read 'Registered through RPA' for more information.

If someone else makes a mistake when signing in to their account by accidentally using your customer reference number (CRN), they'll also see this message but it will count towards failed attempts to access your account. If this happens, then the next time you try to sign in to your account you may not get 3 attempts and may need to follow the same instructions above to get access.

# What to do if you still cannot access the Rural Payments service

## Registered through GOV.UK Verify

If you registered through GOV.UK Verify and cannot access your account, you need to contact your chosen provider.

You can leave feedback on the issue using the link on the GOV.UK Verify screen.

The Government Digital Services (GDS) team will investigate your issue and reply to you if you requested a response.

## Registered through RPA

You'll need your CRN and the password you created when you activated your account. If you have forgotten your CRN, call us on 03000 200 301.

If you've forgotten your password or need to change it, click the 'create a new one here' link on the Sign in screen.

## Sign in

Customer reference number (CRN)  
This is the 10 digit number emailed to you when you created your account

Password

[Sign in](#)

Forgotten your password - [create a new one here.](#)

Started creating a new password and received the security code by email - [enter it here](#)

Lost your customer reference number (CRN), call 03000 200 301.

Enter your CRN and email address, then click 'Request security code'.

# Create new password

First we need to email a security code to you

Customer reference number (CRN)

Email address  
(Must be held in the Rural Payments service for your CRN)

**Request security code**

You'll receive a security code by email. You'll need to enter the code on the next screen.

# Create new password

Your security code has been emailed to you  
(You must use it within 12 hours)

Enter security code

**Continue**

If you close this screen before you enter your security code,  
you can enter it from the 'Sign in' screen.

You must use the security code within 12 hours. If you haven't used it by then, you'll have to request another one.

**IMPORTANT:** Keep the 'Create new password' screen open while you access your emails so that you can enter the security code.

The easiest way to do this is either

- open a 'new tab' by clicking the right button on your mouse or pad with the cursor over the existing tab at the top of the screen, and read your emails in the new tab
- access your emails from another device, for example, your mobile phone.

If you close the 'Create new password' screen before you enter the security code, you can enter it from the Sign in screen. Click the 'Started creating a new password and received the security code by email – enter it here' link near the bottom of the screen. We've shown this link in the screenshot under 'Registered through RPA'.

Then at the 'Create new password' screen you'll need to enter your CRN, email address and the security code, then click 'Continue'.

**Create new password**

Enter your details and security code below

Customer reference number (CRN)

1234567890

Email address  
(Must be held in the Rural Payments service for your CRN)

a.farmer@fieldinternet.com

Security code

Continue

After you've entered your security code you can create a new password. You must not use your email address as your password as it will not be accepted.

Use the new password when you want to Sign in to the Rural Payments service.

After you've successfully changed your password, if you still cannot sign in, call us on 03000 200 301.

## **Check and change anything that needs to be updated**

Check your personal details, business details and permission levels, and change them if needed

### **Check – your details are up to date**

Before you start to create your claim, you must check that the personal and business details you've already registered are still correct. We'll use them to contact you about your claim so please make sure they are up to date.

### **Check – your personal details**

As soon as you sign in to the Rural Payments service you'll see a screen called 'Your businesses and messages'. To check and change your personal details, click 'View and amend personal details' on the right side of the screen. Click 'Amend your details', then after you make any changes, click 'Submit changes'.

Check that your address, email address and phone number are up to date.

**IMPORTANT** – if you claim online, we'll contact you by email whenever possible, so it's important that your email address is up to date.

### **Check – your business details**

To check your business details, choose the business from the 'Your businesses and messages' screen. On the 'Business overview' screen, click 'View full business details' on the right side of the screen. To make any changes, click the appropriate 'Amend' link.

The main business address that we have in the Rural Payments service is the address that we'll use to send certain types of information to you, such as the remittance advice after a payment is made.

## **Check – your bank account details**

It's important that your bank account details are up to date and valid or we will not be able to pay you for CS and any other schemes you are claiming payment for. To amend your bank account details, call us on 03000 200 301. You cannot change them online or by email. You must have 'Business details: Make legal changes' permission level in the Rural Payments service before you ask us to update your bank account details. We'll make payments in sterling only.

We will use the bank account details we already have to pay you. If you want to be paid into a different account, you must call us before 12 November 2022.

To help prevent fraud, after payments start from 1 December 2022 until the end of December, there are restrictions on updating bank account details. We can only update details if we have asked you for them or if your bank has rejected payment.

## **Check – your permission levels**

If the 'Countryside Stewardship claims' link is not visible on the Countryside Stewardship screen, or you're not able to do something in the claim screens, check you've got the correct permission level.

To check your permission levels, click the relevant name under 'Give people permission to act for this business' on the 'Business overview' screen. If you do not have the right permission level in the service you'll need to get someone with 'Business Details: Full Permission' level for the business to change your permission level.

There are 4 different permission levels. To create a capital claim you must have either 'Amend' or 'Submit' permission level under 'Countryside Stewardship (Agreements)'. To submit a claim, it must be set to 'Submit'.

After your permission level has been updated in the Rural Payments service, if you still cannot see what you need to see or the link, you should 'sign out' then 'sign in' again, to refresh your account.

## **Check – any permission levels you’ve given to other people**

If you want someone else to have access to your business so they can help you claim online, you need to check that you’ve given them the right permission level. You must have ‘Business Details: Full Permission’ level for the business to be able to change their permission level.

Click the relevant name under ‘Give people permission to act for this business’ on the ‘Business overview’ screen. They’ll need Countryside Stewardship (Agreements) ‘Submit’ permission if you want them to claim for you. They must be registered in the Rural Payments service before you can give them access, and you will need their customer reference number (CRN).

If you prefer, you can arrange for someone else to receive payments on your behalf.

After you’ve updated the permission level, remember to scroll to the bottom of the screen and click ‘Save and return’.

## **Complete your claim**

This section tells you how to fill in your capital claim and annexes.

### **If you're submitting your claim by email**

Save the form and annexes to your computer, fill them in on your screen or print them and write the information onto the paper copy. In both cases, you must print the declaration section, then sign and date it. Scan any printed sections into your computer as well as supporting documents and any evidence that needs to be submitted. Then email your completed form, annexes and supporting documents and evidence to us. For more information read the 'Submit your claim' section.

### **If you're submitting your claim by post**

Fill in the claim form and annexes and post them to us together with any supporting documents and any evidence that needs to be submitted. Remember to sign and date the declaration section in the form. For more information read the 'Submit your claim' section.

If you're completing a paper claim use BLOCK letters and black ink throughout and make sure that you initial any alterations – do not use correcting fluid.

You must sign and date your claim form if you are submitting it by either email or post.

Please give your SBI at the bottom of all pages of the claim in the boxes provided.

## **Claim details**

Read the first page of your Countryside Stewardship Agreement Document, in particular Agreement Reference and End Date, for help when completing this section.

Fill in your SBI, Business name and address (including postcode).

Scheme – tell us which scheme the claim is for, for example Mid Tier, Higher Tier.

Agreement reference – give the agreement reference this claim is for.

Agreement end date – give the end date of the agreement this claim is for.

## **Annex I – claim for standard cost items**

Read Sections 7 and 8 of your Countryside Stewardship Agreement Document for help when completing this annex.

If this is your first claim, ignore 'Quantity remaining to complete' and 'Eligible grant remaining'.

If your claim is pre-populated with information, you only need to give the following information for each item you're claiming for.

Enter the quantity claimed and payment claimed for the actual work that has been completed. Also indicate if this is the final claim for that particular capital item.

If your claim does not contain any pre-populated information you need to fill in all the information in the row for each item you're claiming for.

If your agreement includes capital items PA3 and/or RP8 you can only claim for these items once and only after each individual capital item has been completed. If you make a partial claim on either of the above items, you cannot keep the outstanding quantity for future claims. Read the relevant scheme manual for more information about partial claims.

If your agreement includes multiple items of the same option type from the following capital options, RP4, RP7, RP11, RP13, RP15, RP17, RP18, RP22, RP24, RP25, RP27, RP28, RP29 and RP30, and they are on the same parcel, then a claim can be made on completion of each individual item under that option on that parcel. For example, if you had option type RP15, and this option type was to be delivered as 3 separate items (multiple items) on the same parcel, once you have fully completed one of the three items on that parcel, you can submit a partial claim, supported by the relevant required evidence.

## **Annex II – claim for actual cost items**

Read Sections 7 and 8 of your Countryside Stewardship Agreement Document for help when completing this annex.

If this is your first claim please ignore 'Grant already claimed' and 'Eligible grant remaining'.

If your claim is pre-populated with information you only need to give the following information for each item you're claiming for.

- Received Invoice Reference Number – enter the reference number from the invoice.
- Total Invoiced Amount Excluding VAT – enter the total invoiced amount (excluding VAT) for the item you are claiming.
- Agreed Rate (%) – enter the agreed percentage of the invoiced value (excluding VAT). It should not be greater than eligible grant remaining. If the Total Invoiced Amount (excluding VAT) does not match the agreed quotation, contact your Natural England Area Team adviser to discuss.
- Tick if Final Claim – tick if this is the final claim for this particular item.
- Amount Claimed Excluding VAT – enter the total amount you want to claim (excluding VAT) for the actual work that has been completed.

If your claim does not contain any pre-populated information you need to fill in all the information in the row for each item you're claiming for.

## **Claim profile**

Give details in this section of any capital items in your agreement that:

- you have not claimed for by the 'claim by' deadline date
- you have not already claimed for, and you do not intend to make a further claim for them.

## **Other public funding**

You cannot use Countryside Stewardship to pay for capital work that you're receiving other public funding for. Therefore, you must tell us about any other funding you're receiving or have received for capital work completed under this agreement so that we can assess the eligibility of your claim. If you are not sure about whether something is public funding, call us before you claim for the work.

## **Supporting documents**

Read Section 9 of your Countryside Stewardship Agreement for help to complete this section. When you send your capital claim to us you also need to send supporting documents and evidence. This section asks you to confirm which documents you're sending. For more information about receipted invoices/receipts and evidence such as photos read the 'Supporting documents and evidence' section.

## **VAT declaration for actual cost items**

If you're not VAT registered and want to claim the VAT for the actual cost items in this claim, confirm that you're sending us a letter from an accountant confirming that you are not VAT registered.

## **Receipted invoices/receipts**

When you claim for capital items based on actual costs, you must submit receipted invoices (that show payment for materials and contracted work) with your claim. Tick the box if you are sending receipted invoices/receipts to us, and enter the number of receipted invoices/receipts in the other box.

## **Capital item supporting evidence**

For some capital items you need to submit evidence such as photographs, with your capital claim to show that you have completed the work. If evidence is required for the capital items in your claim, tick the box to confirm that you're sending it to us.

## **Declarations**

Read the declaration section and complete your name and status (for example, agent, partner, agreement holder), and sign and date it.

You must have the correct permission level (at least 'CS Agreements –Submit) in the Rural Payments service before you submit your claim. Read 'Check – your permission levels' section.

## Supporting documents and evidence

Read this section to find out about the supporting documents and evidence you must submit

RPA must receive your claim, any supporting documents and any evidence that needs to be submitted, by the 'Claim by' date in your agreement document. Late claims will be rejected.

Depending on the items you're claiming for, the supporting documents and evidence you need to send to RPA may vary. Therefore, it's important that you read about each item in the relevant scheme manual and Countryside Stewardship grants on GOV.UK. Some evidence you must submit to RPA and some evidence you must keep until you're asked for it. Read about the requirements for each individual item in Countryside Stewardship grants on GOV.UK.

You may need to send:

- receipted invoices/receipts
- photographs at different stages and on completing the work
- contacts or other documents outlining the technical specification of the work.

## Receipted invoices/receipts

All invoices you send to us must be signed and dated by the contractor to prove they have received your payment. This is known as 'receipted'.

Proof of payment can be any of the following:

- till receipts
- internet purchased receipts
- bank and or credit card statements where necessary
- schedule of works/timesheets, where you have used your own labour/machinery and none of the above are available.

For Higher Tier and Mid Tier agreements starting on or after 1 January 2023, or CS Capital only agreements starting on or after 8 February 2022, capital claims can be

submitted and paid based on incurred expenditure (work completed and invoiced) rather than after you've paid for the work.

For earlier agreements, full payment must have left your bank account (been paid) before you submit your capital claim, so the date of receipting (on invoices) and/or transaction date (on other eligible proof of payment) must be before the date your capital claim was submitted.

For more information read the 'Evidence required to support your claim' section of the relevant CS manual on GOV.UK.

## Labelling photographs

All photographs (digital and paper) must meet the standards set out in the 'Photographic evidence' section of the relevant [CS manual](#) on GOV.UK.

Use the Ordnance Survey (OS) map sheet reference and National Grid reference for the field parcel, followed by the relevant proposed or implemented option or capital item code and, if more than one image is required, the image number.

The OS map sheet reference and National Grid reference should relate to the field parcel on which the feature or capital item is sited or for boundary features the adjacent field parcel. For example, if you need to take before and after photographs to show evidence that works have taken place for Gateway relocation (RP2), label the image as XX12345678\_RP2\_1 and XX12345678\_RP2\_2. If there is no relevant land parcel reference, include a clear identifiable description such as Farmyard\_RP22\_1.

Save digital images under the label outlined above. If posting printed photographs, clearly write the label on the reverse of each one, detailing the Ordnance Survey (OS) map sheet reference and National Grid reference for the field parcel, the implemented capital item code, date, Agreement Holder name and SBI

# How to submit your supporting documents and evidence

## To send by email

Scan your supporting documents/evidence and email them to [ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk) using 'CS Capital Claim Evidence\_[Your SBI]\_[Claim Reference, if known]' as the email subject heading.

Make sure your emails are not over 32MB as this is the largest email size we can receive.

Do not include links to cloud storage, for example Dropbox or Google Drive, as we cannot accept documents or evidence this way.

For security reasons, do not send discs, USB pen drives or other external storage media.

You can send digital photos by email, but do not send scans of printed photos as the quality is not good enough. Read the 'Photographic Evidence Quality' section of the relevant [CS manual](#) on GOV.UK for more information.

## To send by post

You can also send supporting documents/evidence by post to:

Rural Payments Agency

(Countryside Stewardship)

PO Box 324

Worksop

S95 1DF

Remember to put your SBI, agreement number on all documents and, where possible, include the claim reference.

We recommend you get proof of postage.

# Submit your claim

## Information about how to submit your claim form

Remember to sign and date the Declaration section in the claim form if you are submitting your claim by either email or post.

Send your completed claim (include all pages), supporting documents and any evidence that needs to be submitted, to reach RPA by the 'Claim by' deadline date in your agreement document.

IMPORTANT – for all claims you must:

- print, sign and date the Declaration section
- put your SBI and agreement number on everything you send to us
- have the correct permission level (at least 'CS Agreements –Submit) in the Rural Payments service before you submit your claim.

## Submit your claim by email

### If you received your claim from us by email

'Reply' to that email, attaching your completed documents to it. Remember to print the Declaration section, then sign and date it. Scan it into your computer as well as the supporting documents and evidence that need to be submitted. By 'replying' to the email we sent to you, rather than sending us a new email, your claim will be automatically forwarded to the correct team, and not have to wait in a queue to be sorted manually. For more information about submitting evidence by email read the 'Supporting documents and evidence' section.

### If you received your claim by post

You can submit it by email. Scan all the documents, attach them to an email and send the email to [ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk). Use 'Countryside Stewardship 2022 Capital Claim' and your SBI as the email subject heading.

Remember to sign and date the Declaration section.

Make sure that the email address you're sending your claim from is registered for your business in the Rural Payments service before you send the email.

For more information about submitting evidence by email read the 'Supporting documents and evidence' section.

## Send your claim by post

If you received your claim by post and cannot submit it by email, you can post it to:

Rural Payments Agency (Countryside Stewardship),

PO Box 324,

Worksop S95 1DF

Remember to sign and date the Declaration section before you submit your claim.

We recommend that you get proof of posting for any documents you send to us by post. You should keep a copy of everything you send to us.

## Next steps

We'll contact you if we have any queries.

We'll make all payments directly into the bank account we have details for, so it's important that this information is up to date.

After you've submitted your claim, you can check the progress of it in the Rural Payments service. The claim status will change in the Countryside Stewardship claims screen as your claim progresses through the following stages.

- Submitted

You've submitted your claim, supporting documents and any evidence that needs to be submitted, to reach RPA before the 'claim by' date in your agreement document.

- Claim validation

Your claim, supporting documents, and any evidence that needed to be submitted are being checked to confirm eligibility.

- Final checking

Your claim is waiting for final check and authorisation to pay.

- Preparing for payment

Your claim is being sent for payment, or has been paid.

The claim status will still show 'Preparing for payment' after it has been paid. Please check your nominated bank account to confirm whether payment has been made. If your claim has been at 'Preparing for Payment' for longer than one month and you've not received your payment contact RPA using details from the 'More information, contact details and data protection' section.

## Scheme rules and other guidance

All the guidance and information you need about a capital claim is in the relevant scheme manual on GOV.UK.

For guidance and information read [How to claim for payment on an existing CS agreement](#).

For the scheme rules and information about agreements read the relevant [Countryside Stewardship scheme manual](#).

## **More information, contact details and data protection**

Contact information and data protection details

### **How to contact us**

Rural Payments Agency (Countryside Stewardship)

PO Box 324

WORKSOP

S95 1DF

Rural Payments helpline: 03000 200 301

Open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm, (closed at weekends and on public holidays).

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

Follow us on Twitter @ruralpay

For all queries about your online claim or about submitting your supporting documents or evidence, contact RPA. Please quote your Single Business Identifier (SBI) for all enquiries.

### **Complaints about service**

If you are an applicant for Countryside Stewardship, or an Agreement Holder, and you want to complain about the level of service you have received or the way that you have been treated, you should use the appropriate organisation's complaints procedure below:

For more information search for [Rural Payments Agency](#) on GOV.UK then scroll down the screen to 'Complaints procedure' under 'Corporate information'.

## **Data protection**

For information on how we handle personal data go to GOV.UK and search [Rural Payments Agency personal information charter](#).