

Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators

Headline Performance Update
30 September 2022

Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators Headline Performance Update at 30 September 2022 (First Release)

The Forestry Commission publishes a range of key performance indicators (KPIs) to highlight our contribution towards forestry and woodlands in England, and to show barometers of trends in the wider forestry sector in England. The indicators reflect our objectives to expand, protect, improve and connect England's woodlands. They display some of the contributions Forestry England makes to people, nature and the economy through the nation's forests. Our use of indicators also reflects our commitment to evidence-based working, and to ensuring that there is a robust data available to the forestry sector to underpin policies and operational decisions. As such the KPIs reflect our strong commitment to deliver the Government's plans for the environment as set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan¹, The England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024² and the Tree Health Resilience Strategy 2018³.

We have recently reviewed and improved our KPIs to ensure that these remain good measures of the positive differences we are making in the real world. All the new suite of KPIs, 38 in all, were most recently reported in the Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Report for 2021-22, published⁴ in June 2022.

Our second interim monitoring report of 2022-23 on the six headline indicators is provided in this Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Headline Performance Update at 30 September 2022. The six headline indicators are listed in Table 1.

The coverage of all our key performance indicators is England, and figures are at country level. Most of the indicators are based on statistical and geographical analysis of Forestry Commission administrative data, the National Forest Inventory, surveys conducted by or commissioned for us by the Forest Research statistics team, data available from other parts of Defra Group and other available data collections.

This is an Official Statistics publication, produced with a view to adhering to the standards of the Code of Practice for Statistics (Office for Statistics Regulation and UK Statistics

¹ HM Government (2018) *A Green Future: Our Plan to Improve the Environment*, London: Defra, 151 pages, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

² UK Government (2021) *The England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024*, London: Defra, 38 pages, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-trees-action-plan-2021-to-2024>

³ Defra (2018) *Tree Health Resilience Strategy*, London: Defra, 63 pages at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tree-health-resilience-strategy-2018>

⁴ Forestry Commission (2022) *Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Report for 2021-22*, Bristol: Forestry Commission, 68 pages, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forestry-commission-key-performance-indicators-report-for-2021-22>

Authority, 2022). The Government Internal Audit Agency have assured the latest and previous annual out-turn statistics.

Table 1: Forestry Commission Headline Key Performance Indicators

Headline Key Performance Indicator	Page
Expanding and connecting our trees and woodland	
Area of woodland in England	5
New planting of woodland and trees in England	7
Protecting and improving our trees and woodland	
Percentage of woodland that is sustainably managed	10
Percentage of the annual growth of trees in English woodlands that is a harvested	12
Number of additional tree pests and diseases becoming established in England within a rolling 10-year period	13
Percentage of known tree felling carried out with Forestry Commission approval	15

We currently publish:

- Updates on the six headline Forest Services indicators quarterly for the ones where data are available at that time or year
- Updates on the six headline Forestry England indicators annually
- Reports on the full suite of 38 Forestry Commission indicators annually

A change is proposed to the frequency of releases of the six headline Forest Services indicators from this report onwards. Further details on the proposal, along with information on how to submit your views, are provided on page 4 of this document.

See the [Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators web pages on GOV.UK](#) for these and other reports in this statistical series.

Responsible Statistician: David Cross
david.f.cross@forestrycommission.gov.uk
0300 067 4000

Evidence and Analysis
Strategic Development
Forestry Commission
Bristol

Enquiries: Cathy Manley
evidence@forestrycommission.gov.uk
16 November 2022

Proposed change to the frequency of interim updates on the six headline key performance indicators

All six of the headline KPIs are reported on an annual basis and for three of these we have also provided quarterly interim updates where data is available.

The new planting of woodland and trees in England KPI is currently an annual indicator reported for each financial year ending 31 March. The planting season lies both sides of 31 March, and the weather can cause planting to be advanced or delayed. As a result of this, and the time it takes for some new planting to be verified, via for example grant payments, some new planting is counted in the following year. In-year interim reports are partial and only contain reports from delivery partners able to provide data at that point of the year. To provide a clearer and more reliable picture of new planting we propose to change the frequency of reports of this indicator to twice per year.

Both the percentage of woodland that is sustainably managed and the percentage of known tree felling carried out with Forestry Commission approval KPIs have remained largely stable across recent years and with little observed change from quarter to quarter. As a result, we consider that we can safely change the frequency of reporting of these two KPIs to twice per year whilst fully maintaining required monitoring of trends in these key performance indicators.

We therefore propose to make the following change to the frequency of statistical reporting:

- The cycle for interim in-year reporting will move from quarterly to half-yearly. Therefore, the headline indicators will be reported annually for the full year out-turn to 31 March, with a single partial interim report for the first half of the year to 30 September

Reporting of all other annually reported Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators is unaffected by these proposals and it is planned this will continue as per usual.

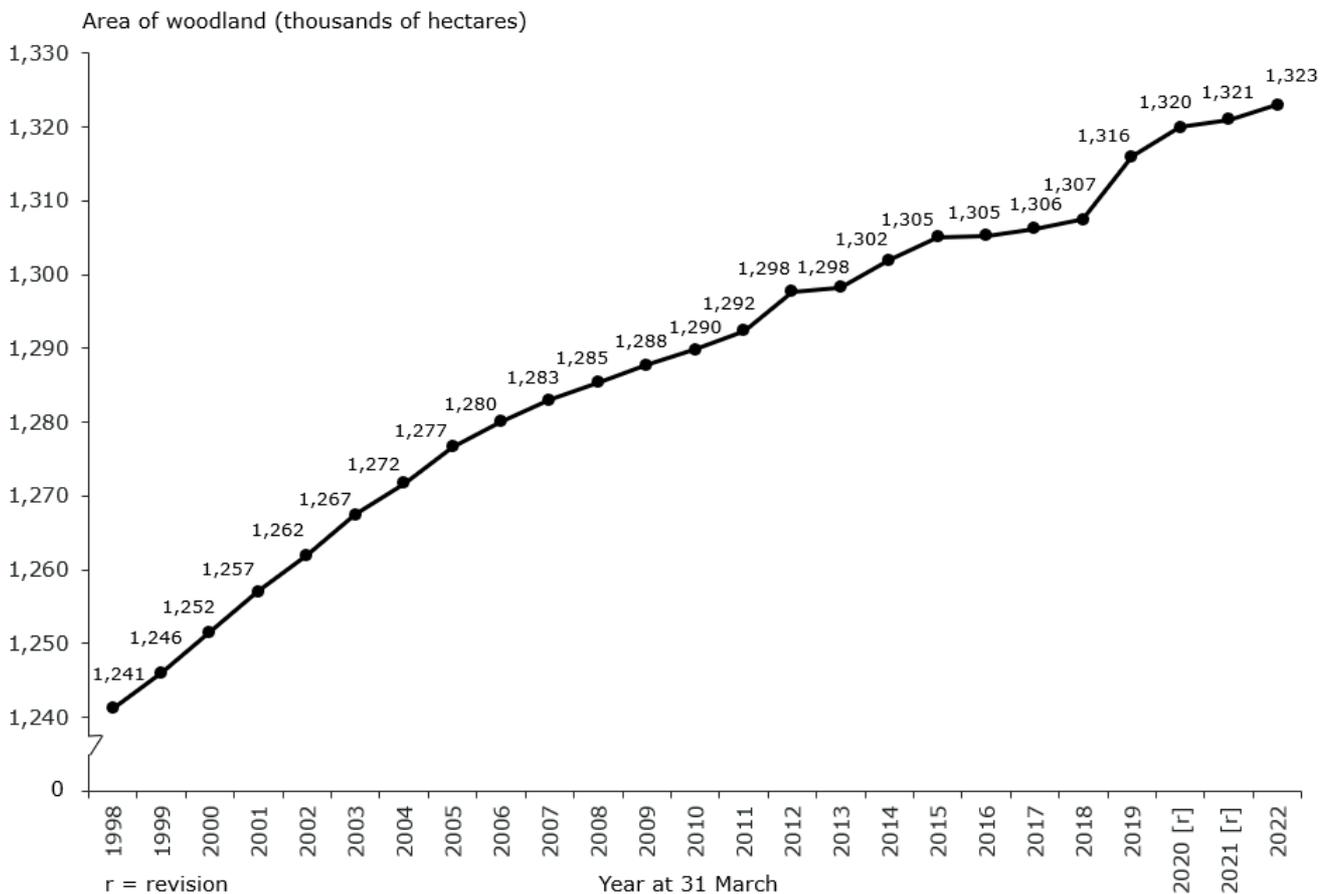
The next report of the headline indicators would be for the full 2022-23 year and we would expect to publish that in June 2023.

We would welcome any views on the proposed changes. Please send your comments by Friday 16 December 2022 to: evidence@forestrycommission.gov.uk

Forest Services Headline Key Performance Indicators

Expanding and connecting our trees and woodland

Area of woodland in England



Source: Forestry Statistics 2022 (Forest Research), based mainly on the National Forest Inventory and Forestry Commission administrative data.

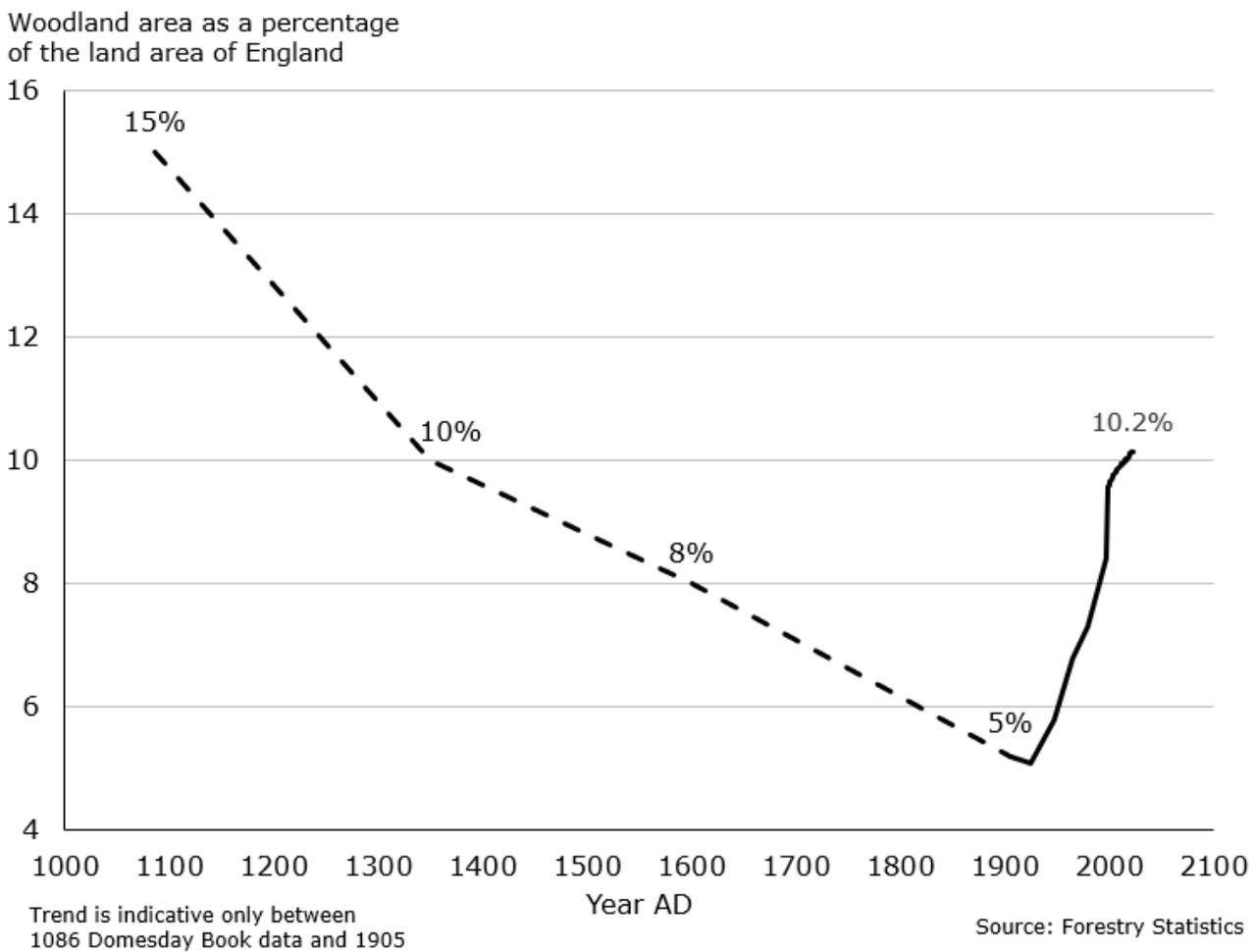
Reports for this indicator are published annually. Our most recent report as at 31 March 2022 was included in our annual Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Report for 2021-22⁵.

⁵ Forestry Commission (2022) *Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators: Report for 2021-22*, Bristol: Forestry Commission, Bristol: Forestry Commission, 68 pages, at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/forestry-commission-key-performance-indicators-report-for-2021-22>

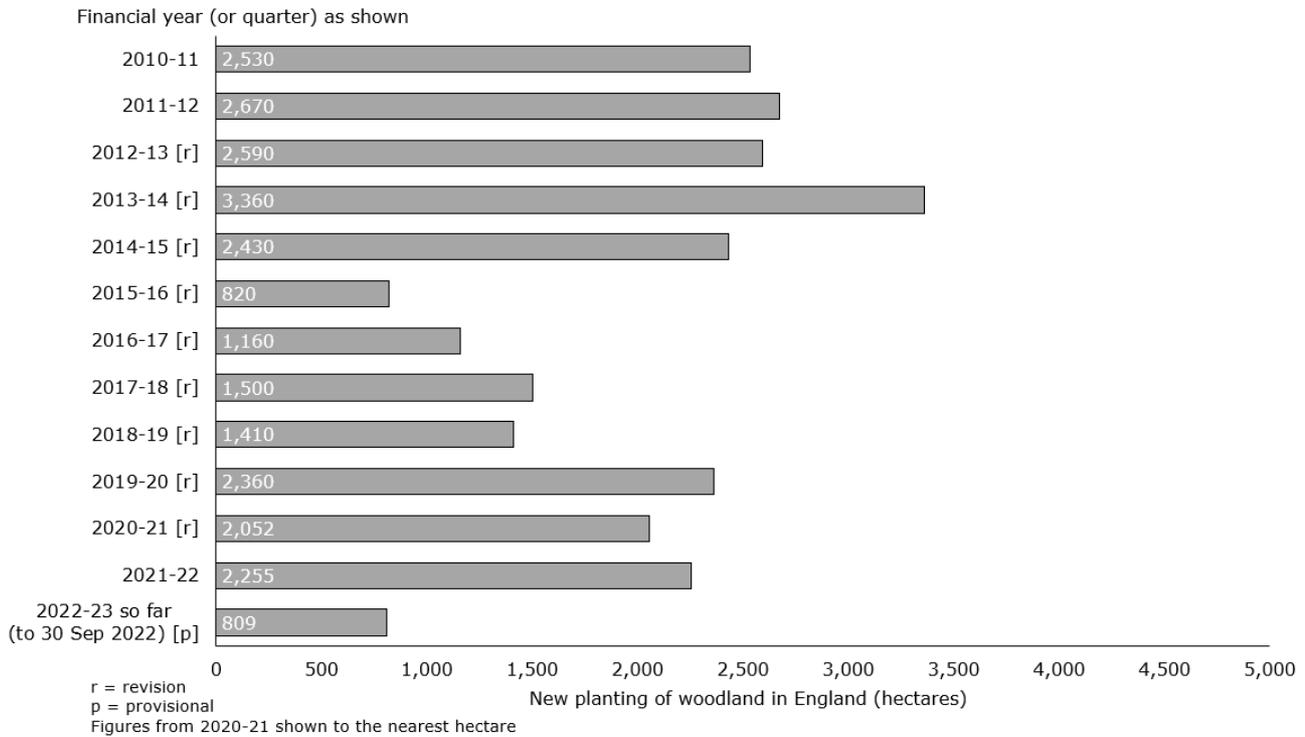
The area of woodland in England is 1,323 thousand hectares (10.2% of the land area) at 31 March 2022 (confirmed statistic). The March 2022 figure is an increase of 2 thousand hectares on the previous year.

Woodland area figures at March 2020 and March 2021 have been revised from those published in Forestry Statistics 2021 to take account of updates to the National Forest Inventory.

Figure 1: Long-term trend in woodland as a percentage of land area of England



New planting of woodland and trees in England



Source: [Forestry Statistics 2021](#) and [Provisional Woodland Statistics 2022](#) (Forest Research) and Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators.

It should be noted that this interim report is only a partial picture of tree planting, as returns have not been submitted by all partners at this stage of the year. Of the 809 ha reported as planted since 31 March 2022, an area of 422 hectares of new planting of woodland in England was reported for the second quarter of 2022-23, together with 5,000 trees outside woodland (equivalent to an area of approximately three hectares)⁶. The reported area of new woodland planted in the same period in 2021-22 was 383 hectares.

⁶ To correct for a typographical error the area of new planting of woodland in England in the second quarter of 2022-23 has been revised since first published.

Table 2: New planting of woodland and trees in England, by source, 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022: provisional statistics

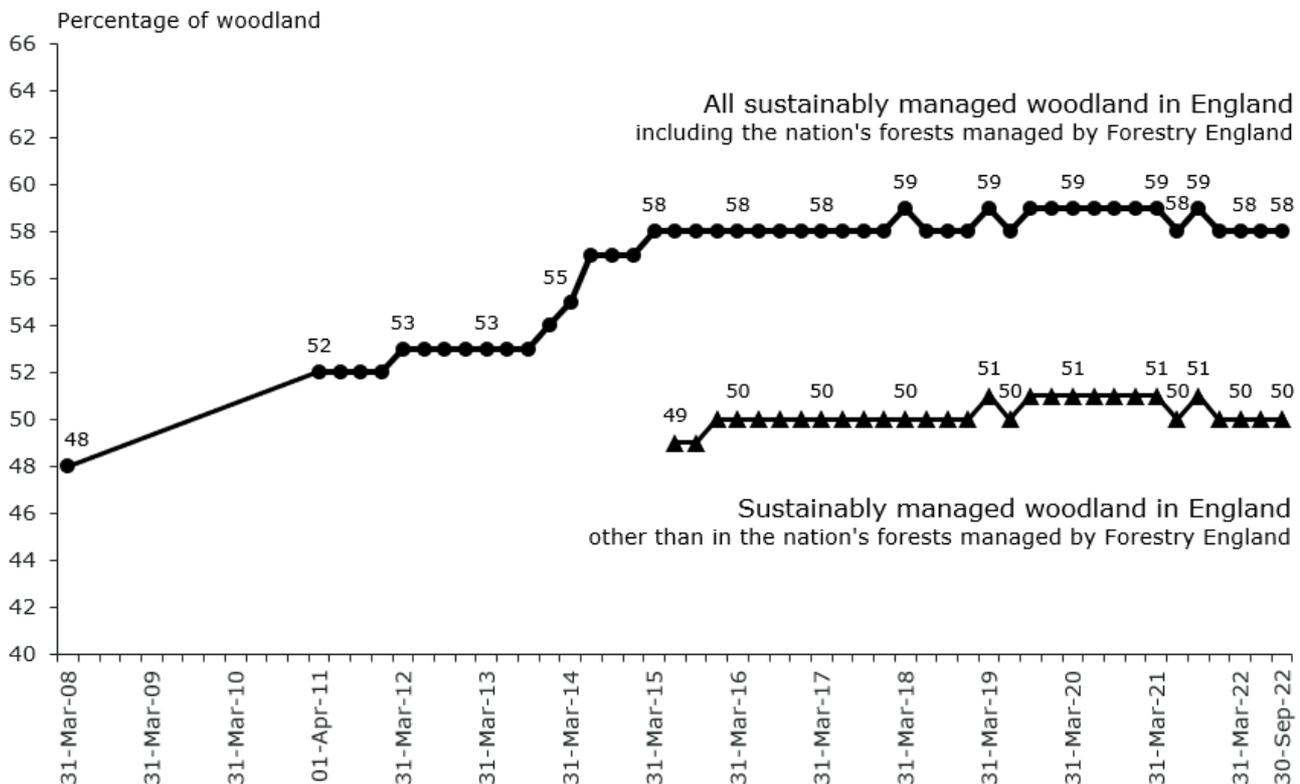
New planting of woodland	Reported area of woodland newly planted, 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 (hectares)	Reported area of woodland newly planted, 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 (equivalent number of trees)
Government-supported		
Countryside Stewardship woodland creation	129	224,000
England Woodland Creation Offer	445	744,000
Woodland Carbon Fund	53	84,000
High Speed 2 Woodland Fund	9	12,000
Forestry England	34	90,000
Countryside Stewardship: other tree planting options	139	223,000
Environment Agency	x	x
Northern Forest	0	0
National Forest Company	0	0
Ministry of Defence	x	x
National Highways	x	x
Community Forests	x	x
Sub-total Government-supported	809	1,376,000
Non-governmental organisations		
Woodland Trust	0	0
Total woodland	809 hectares of woodland	1,376,000 trees within woodland
New planting of trees outside woodland	(Approximate equivalent in hectares)	Individual trees newly planted (number)
Government-supported		
Countryside Stewardship: single trees	7	11,000
Urban Tree Challenge Fund	x	x
Local Authority Treescaping Fund	1	2,000
Forestry England	0	0
Environment Agency	x	x
Northern Forest	0	0
National Forest Company	0	0
Community Forests	x	x
Total trees outside woodland	Approximately 8 hectares	13,000 trees outside woodland
Total woodland and trees outside woodland	Approximately 817 hectares within and outside woodland	1,389,000 trees within and outside woodland

Notes to Table 2:

1. Statistics may not sum due to rounding.
2. Areas of woodland are rounded to the nearest hectare and tree numbers are approximate and rounded to the nearest 1,000 trees.
3. [x] denotes no confirmed report of new planting is available. We currently expect returns for most of these additional sources of new planting later on as a full annual return for the complete 2022-23 year. An exception to this is new planting by National Highways where a date can't be given for reporting while work progresses on a central database.
4. To correct for a typographical error the report of new planting by the Woodland Trust has been revised since first published.
5. Statistics for woodland are for planting that meets the National Forest Inventory (NFI) definition of woodland, namely as land with a minimum area of 0.5 hectare under stands of trees, and tree crown cover of at least 20%, or the potential to achieve this. The minimum width for woodland is 20 metres.
6. Statistics for new planting of single trees outside woodland are known to be incomplete. The estimations of the equivalent land areas these might represent are approximations.
7. The density of tree planting, in numbers of trees planted per hectare of land, varies between planting schemes.
8. This indicator at present includes new planting of woodland that is either supported by Government or that supported by the Woodland Trust, and for which we have received records. It is anticipated that future reports will include other new planting of woodland and trees in England.

Protecting and improving our trees and woodland

Percentage of woodland that is sustainably managed



Source: Forestry Commission administrative data and the [National Forest Inventory](#) (Forest Research).

As at 30 September 2022, 58% of all woodland in England was sustainably managed; totalling 769,000 hectares of woodland in management (at this date, when rounded). The equivalent figure for woodland other than in the nation’s forests was 50%, totalling 555,000 hectares of woodland in management.

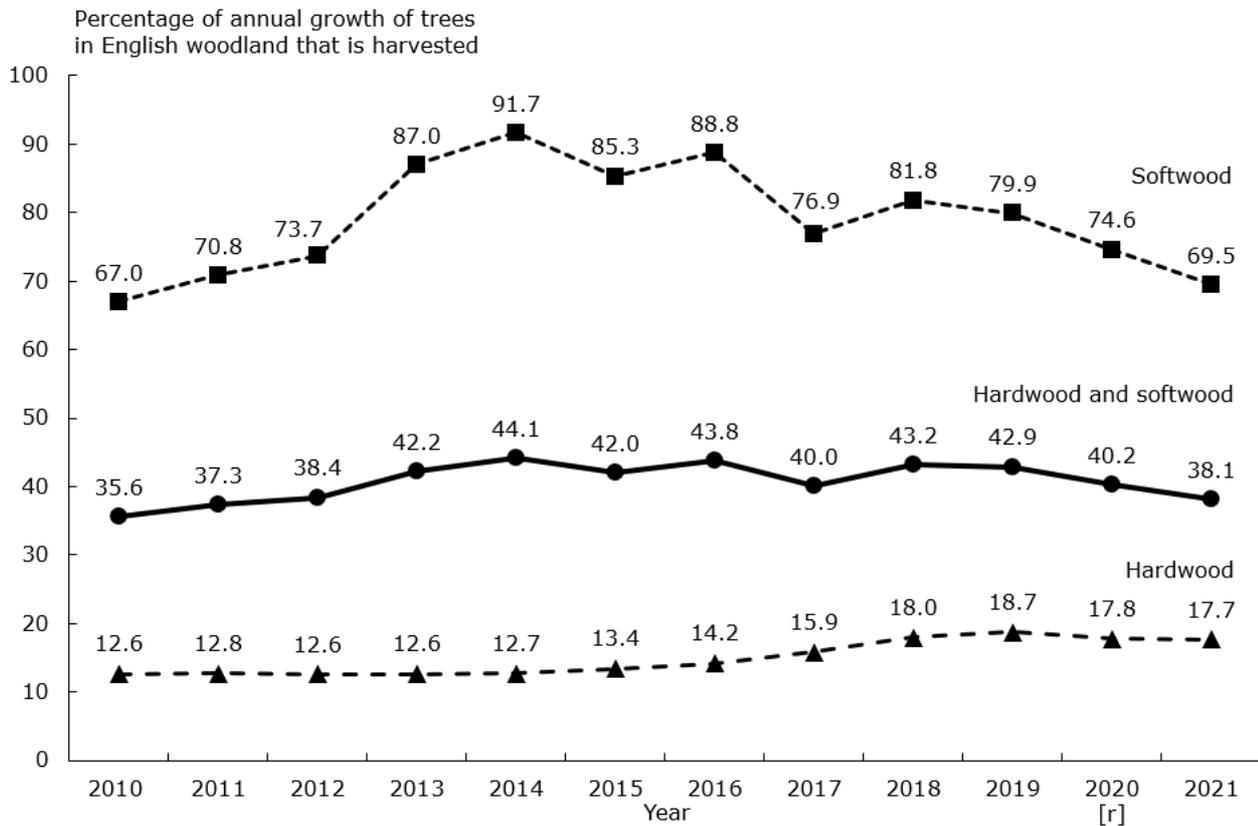
Our definition of ‘sustainably managed’ is woodland managed to the UK Forestry Standard that has a Woodland Management Plan, or for which we have made a previous grant of felling licence in the last 15 years⁷. It also includes all woodland in the nation’s forests managed by Forestry England and all woodland on Defence Infrastructure Organisation training areas. It is recognised that other woodland might be considered as managed as well.

Demand for timber and timber products remains high, and there is scope to further increase the area of woodland sustainably managed to meet demand for UK grown timber.

⁷ From this report of the indicator as at 30 September 2022 onwards we are able to include in the count of land that is sustainably managed areas where we have data for all Woodland Management Plans (where either funded or unfunded, and approved within the 10 years before the report date), areas of Countryside Stewardship woodland creation (where claims were paid before the report date) and Countryside Stewardship restocking (where the contract start date is within 2 years 3 months before the report date).

This will help improve woodland resilience, manage tree pests and diseases, and reduce England's reliance on timber imports in the face of global supply-chain uncertainties.

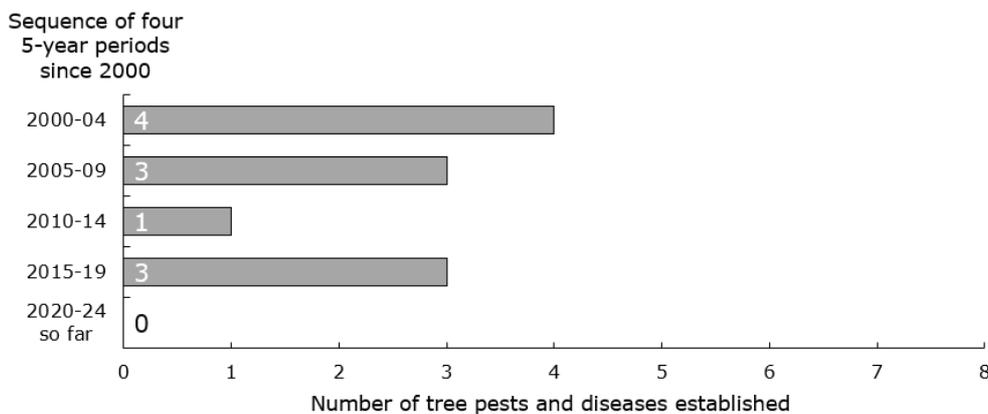
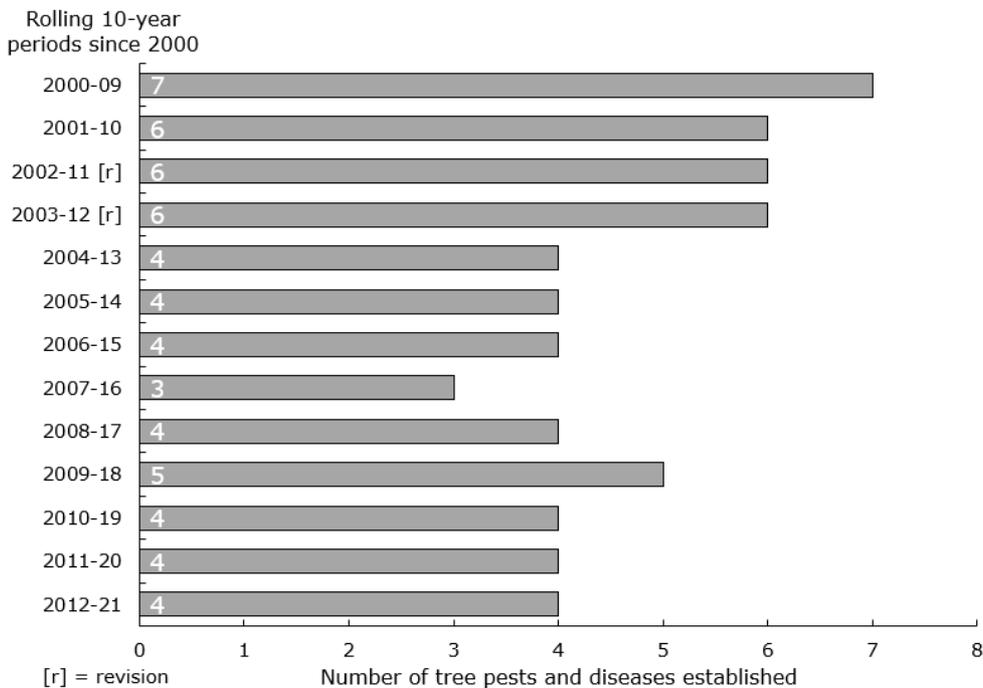
Percentage of the annual growth of trees in English woodlands that is harvested



Source: Forest Research statistics on [UK wood production and trade](#) and [National Forest Inventory](#) team forecasts.

There is an opportunity to considerably increase the hardwood harvest if new markets are developed. The Woods into Management Innovation Fund includes a Timber in Construction Innovation Fund that should help to develop and promote these new markets. The proportion of softwood annual increment that is harvested remains high (ca. 70%), reflecting strong demand as well as the age structure of the conifer woodland resource.

Number of additional tree pests and diseases becoming established in England within a rolling 10-year period



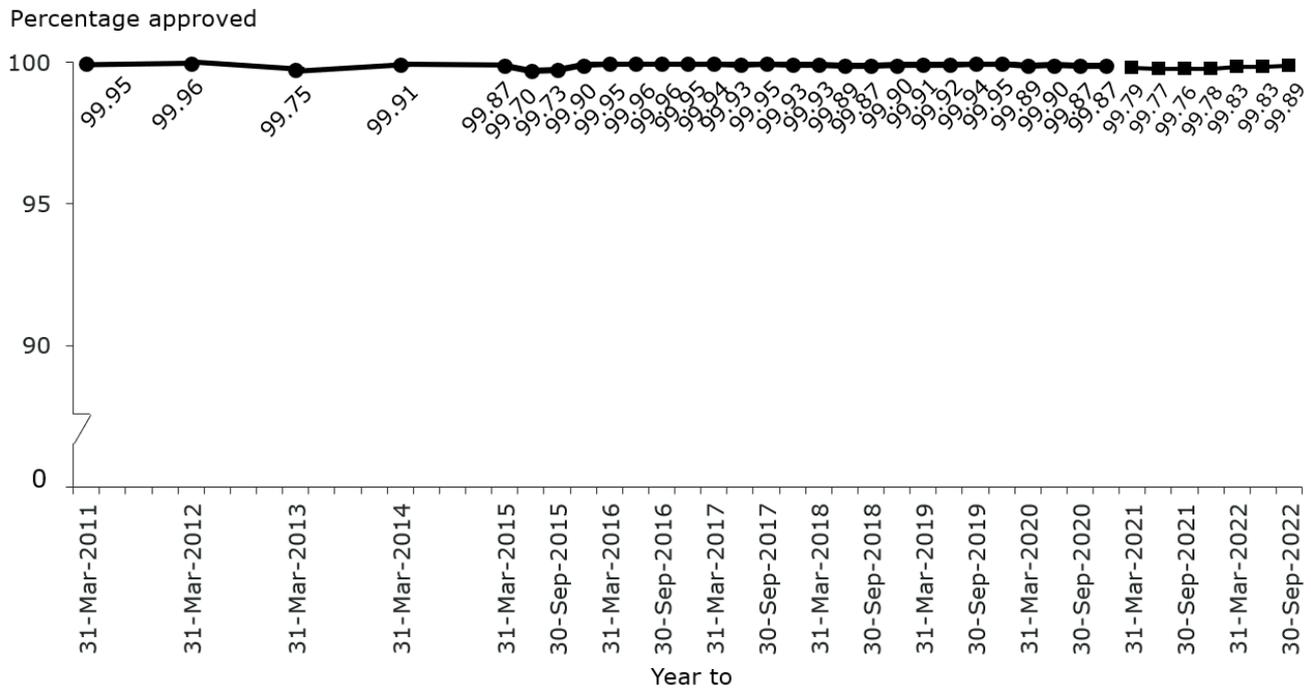
The number of additional tree pests and diseases becoming established in England within a rolling 10-year period fell from a peak of seven in the 10-year period 2000-09 to a low of three in 2007-16.

In the most recent ten-year period (2012-22), four tree pests and diseases became 'established' in England:

1. Chalara Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*): This is present in most parts of the United Kingdom and continues to spread. The Forestry Commission continues to provide guidance, advice and support to landowners to aid management operations via the Local Authority Treescaping Fund (LATF).

2. Oriental chestnut gall wasp (*Dryocosmus kuriphilus*): The wasp population continues to spread and is now present at over 150 sites across southern England and the Midlands.
3. Sweet chestnut blight (*Cryphonectria parasitica*): Surveillance has continued across England to determine the extent of the disease, with a view to removing infected trees where possible, and whilst there have been no significant new findings the infection has re-emerged on several sites previously subject to statutory control measures.
4. Elm zigzag sawfly (*Aproceros leucopoda*): This continues to spread across a wide area of southeast England and the East Midlands. The full potential extent of its distribution is unknown, but the expectation is still that it will continue to spread and become a major competitor of other foliage-feeding species on elm trees.

Percentage of known tree felling carried out with Forestry Commission approval



Source: Forestry Commission administrative data.

Report for year to 30 September 2022: 99.89% of known tree felling was carried out with Forestry Commission approval.

The overall figure of legal felling remains at a consistently very high level.