Countryside Stewardship Scheme

Farm Update North Events
Overview and Update on scheme for 2018
Scheme Overview and Design
Overview of Countryside Stewardship Scheme

• Integrated scheme delivered by NE and Forestry Commission

• Replaces Environmental Stewardship (ES), the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) and capital grants from the Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) programme.

• A competitive targeted scheme, with grants awarded to those who will make the biggest improvements in their local area.

• **This means that not everyone who applies will be successful**

• Fixed application window and single start date.

• The Government has confirmed that it will guarantee funding for Countryside Stewardship grants if these are agreed and signed before the UK’s departure from the EU, even if the grant agreements continue after we have left the EU, providing they are good value for money and they are in line with domestic strategic priorities.
## Scheme Design

### Mid Tier
- Multi-Objective
- Widespread uptake
- Simpler Management
- 5 year (2yr if only water capital items)

### Higher Tier
- Multi-Objective
- Site specific, more tailored action
- 5 year or longer

### Capital Grants
- Single Objective
- Capital Only
- 2 year

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### Countryside Stewardship

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**Same Option & Item Payment Rates**
The main priorities of the scheme are:

**Wildlife and nature:**
restoring habitats, providing food and nesting places, creating areas for rare flowering plants and managing hedges.

**Pollinators:**
ensuring the right resources for wild pollinators where they are needed most.

**Water/flooding:**
making water cleaner and reduce risk of flooding by encouraging changes to farming practice & improving farm infrastructure.

**Woodland:**
funding the creation of new woodland and supporting the management of existing woodland.
Improving Water Quality & Soil Health

- Water Capital items are available as part of Mid Tier and Higher Tier CS in combination with land management options or as water capital only.

- Both routes are competitive, scored against local priorities and follow the same application process.

- A water capital items mid-tier application is 2 years, limited to £10,000 per application.

- Advice may be available in High Water Quality Priority Areas from Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers (CSFOs).

- Some high value options are only available in the high water quality priority area and with CSFO approval (other water quality options are available to all).

- In targeted areas obtaining support from a CSFO will increase a Mid Tier CS application score and chance of success.
CSF Priority Areas

**TILL/TWEED**
- 318 target farms in High Priority area
- Issues include: TILL SAC; Bathing Water; Nitrogen and Phosphorus levels; Fecal Indicator Organisms (FIO - bacteria).
- A mature catchment for CSF, informal local partnerships include: Environment Agency; Northumbrian Water Ltd; The Tweed Forum; Forestry Commission; Northumberland National Park Authority.
- CSF Officer: Stuart Moss 07981 934705

**NORTHUMBERLAND RIVERS**
- 203 target farm in High Priority area
- Issues include: Coquet SSSI; SGZ (EA Safeguard Zone); GES (Good Ecological Status - Water Framework Directive): Phosphorus and sediment levels; CIT (???)
- A new catchment for CSF, includes collaborative agreement on the Lyne with Northumberland Rivers Trust.
- CSF Officer: Susie Hardie 07795 305673

**TEES**
- 400 target farms in High Priority area
- Issues include: Phosphorus and sediment; GES (Good Ecological Status)
- A new catchment for CSF, collaborative agreement with Tees Rivers Trust for delivery in Aid & Skelton; HLF Brightwater Project.
- CSF Officer: Bunty Wright 07827 981318
The Countryside Stewardship (CS) facilitation fund supports people and organisations that bring farmers, foresters, and other land managers together to improve the local natural environment at a landscape scale.

Funding will be awarded to successful applications through a competitive process. Priority will be given to approaches which show partnership and a collective approach across holdings to deliver shared environmental outcomes that go beyond what could be delivered by individual holdings acting in isolation.

Funding for paid facilitators who can help farmers work together
- E.g. annual application round, training aligning management activities

20% points uplift for Mid Tier applicants linked to CS Facilitated groups
Countryside Stewardship is a targeted and competitive scheme, with grants going to those who will deliver the most for the environment. Farmers and land managers who work together, or choose options that support wild pollinators and wildlife or improve water quality or reduce flood risk are more likely to receive a grant. Anyone can apply for land that isn’t already in Environmental Stewardship or the English Woodland grant scheme.

For more information visit www.gov.uk/countrysidestewardship
New for 2018 Countryside Stewardship – What changes have we made?
Four new CS Offers for wildlife for Mid Tier:
1) Arable Offer
2) Lowland Grazing Offer
3) Mixed Farming Offer
4) Upland Offer

Each offer has a limited set of Mid Tier options designed to direct farmers towards the right options for wildlife on their land and locality.

The Offers have been designed to help farmers choose the right options for their land and make it quicker and easier to apply for a Mid Tier agreement.

Capital works are not available with a CS Mid Tier Offer agreement.

The Offers are not competitive and providing you meet the requirements and agreement will be offered.

CS Mid Tier Offers will give an annual payment for 5 years.
The following options were previously only available in Higher Tier but are now available in Mid Tier agreements. Options in Mid Tier agreements have set prescriptions that cannot be altered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Option title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BE4</td>
<td>Management of traditional orchards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE7</td>
<td>Supplement for restorative pruning of fruit trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS6</td>
<td>Management of species-rich grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS9</td>
<td>Management of wet grassland for breeding waders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS10</td>
<td>Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP9</td>
<td>Threatened species supplement (only for corn bunting and brown hair streak butterfly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP2</td>
<td>Management of rough grazing for birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WD4</td>
<td>Management of wood pasture and parkland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WT3</td>
<td>Management of ditches of high environmental value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This grant is a standalone capital grant available under Countryside Stewardship. Farmers and other land managers can apply for this grant to help restore existing farm boundaries, delivering environmental and landscape benefits on their land.

Twelve capital items are available under this grant for a standalone two year capital only agreement.

We have made improvements for the 2018 application window. The application window opens earlier in 2018, the total budget available has been increased to £10 million and the maximum grant individuals can apply rises to £10k from £5K. The scoring system has also been simplified.

The scheme will open for online application on 15 January and the closing date is 30 April 2018.
Countryside Stewardship – How to apply and what to expect
Mid Tier – How it works and What to expect

• You will need to contact Natural England and request an application pack.
• Applicants can also choose to apply for one of the 4 New CS Offers for Wildlife which offer a selected number of multi-year options that can be used to create a Mid Tier agreement without capital works. The Offers are not competitive and providing you meet the requirements and agreement will be offered.
• All other Mid Tier applications will be scored and ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be those where the selected multi-year options and capital items meet locally important priorities.
• Mid Tier agreements last five years, unless they only comprise water capital items, in which case the agreements will last two years.
Higher Tier – How it works and what to expect

• You will need to contact Natural England and request an application pack.
• Complete application form and Farm Environment Record (FER) map showing the environmental features on your holding.
• The application will be assessed and scored. Applicants will be informed if their application has been successful. Unsuccessful non-woodland applications can then apply for Mid Tier if appropriate.
• Successful applications will be developed with a Natural England Adviser (Forestry Commission adviser for woodland applications.)
• Application details finalised and underpinning evidence submitted by 31st August 2018.
• By mid September, Natural England or Forestry Commission issue a Conclusion of Negotiations letter and Negotiated Schedule. There is a tear off slip to sign and return by 30th September.
• Agreements will then be offered and the signed declaration returned by the agreement holder.
Develop the best application you can for your farm:

1. pick options to tackle the targeted priorities in your area

2. focus on quality not quantity: selecting options that do not address priorities will weaken your application

3. options that deliver multiple objectives, such as for water and biodiversity, will score more highly
Developing a High Scoring Application - What are the local environmental priorities?

- Look at the maps on www.gov.uk/countrysidestewardship to identify the Statement of Priority (SoPs) for your local area.
- Use (www.magic.gov.uk) to identify local environmental priorities.
## Key dates for 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Mid Tier</th>
<th>Higher Tier</th>
<th>Capital Grants – Hedges and Boundaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018 Scheme opens</td>
<td>15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; January 2018</td>
<td>15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; January 2018</td>
<td>15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; January 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application pack requested</td>
<td>By 31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; May 2018</td>
<td>By 9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application submitted</td>
<td>By 31&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; July</td>
<td>By 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; April</td>
<td>By 30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agreement start date for successful applications</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; January 2019</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; January 2019</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; January 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agreement duration</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>2 years</td>
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How to request an application pack?

• Contact Natural England for an application pack or if you have queries. You will need to state if you wish to apply for Mid Tier, Mid Tier CS Offers or Higher Tier and the correct application pack will be sent to you:

Countryside Stewardship (Technical services)
Natural England
County Hall, Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2NP
Email enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk
Telephone 0208 026 1089

• You can apply online for a standalone Hedgerow and Boundary Capital Grant and for the Arable CS Mid Tier offer (from 20th February)
Update on Current Schemes and Payments

• Agreement holders are paid twice a year and will now receive 75% of their annual grant midway through the year and the remaining 25% as a final payment for the year.
• There have been some delays to payments for existing schemes but our Technical Services team are working on making all outstanding payments as soon as possible.
• For customers who applied in 2017, we are working hard to carry out eligibility checks for individual applications and to issue Agreement offers to applicants for multi-annual Agreements before the end of March 2018.
• If your application is successful, regardless of when your Countryside Stewardship Agreement is offered to you, it will be effective from 1 January once you have accepted it.
Where to find more information?