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BETTER  
WOODLANDS  
FOR WALES

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Grants and support for creating  
and improving woodlands

# Approach to Restocking

## Introduction

In the vast majority of cases there will be a legal obligation to restock following selective or clearfelling. The presumption remains that all felled areas will be restocked unless there is a clear and strong environmental or landscape reason why it should not be. This is crucial in providing sustainable forest management. Decisions made about species choice, stocking density and establishment methods at this stage have long-term implications and are critical to the future development of the industry and environment.

In order to achieve the policies and priorities outlined in the Wales Woodland Strategy, Better Woods for Wales (BWW) has been designed by Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) to promote a greater use of mixtures and native woodlands. This will create more diverse woodlands that will be more responsive to change in the future and will respond to the requirements of biodiversity action plans.

## Definitions

The **UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)** is an independent certification standard for verifying sustainable forest and woodland management in the United Kingdom. Woodland owners can achieve certification for their woodlands if they gain independent verification that they are complying with the standard.

The **UK Forest Standard (UKFS)** outlines the UK Government's approach to sustainable forestry.

**Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)** are sites where records show continuous woodland cover since 1600 and where the native woodland has been replaced with exotic plantations. The sites often maintain many of the important characteristics of native woodland.

## BWW Approach to Restocking

There is a presumption within BWW that all felled areas will be restocked unless there are clear and strong environmental or landscape reasons why restocking should not take place. New

areas of open space can be created at the time of restocking so long as the total area of open space within a woodland block does not exceed 20% of the total woodland area. This figure is taken from the UKFS and includes roads, rides and unplanted riparian areas together with other areas of open ground. For the purposes of administering BWW, FCW will assume that roads, rides and unplanted riparian areas account for 5% of the open space allowed in a woodland regardless of what the actual figure is. This is to avoid FCW having to work this figure out for every plan. FCW will then allow other areas of mapped open space to account for the remaining 15%. So, for Management Planning purposes, mapped open space other than roads, etc, should not exceed 15%. The Woodland Officer (WO) will scrutinise felling applications to ensure that open space does not exceed the thresholds. Felling applications where open spaces exceed the thresholds will require supporting evidence. All open space is at the WO discretion but FCW would not normally question proposals that fit within the 20% rule. However, in some cases e.g. small woodlands surrounded by open ground, the WO may refuse open space altogether other than for management purposes i.e. a road or ride.

Small areas of open ground can be included in the grant aided restocking area as long as the total of these areas does not exceed 15% of the restock area. These areas could include a road or ride passing through the compartment or scattered areas unsuitable for planting. Mapped open space greater than 0.1 hectares is not eligible for restocking grant but is eligible for Woodland Improvement Grant for management work.

There is also a presumption within BWW that native woodlands will not be clearfelled and will be managed using small (<0.25ha) selective felling areas.

Restocking grants will remain as a single instalment payment, paid on completion of satisfactory replanting of the area designated within the Management Plan. This payment will contribute both to the initial establishment of the crop and its subsequent management up to year 5. After this time, felled areas will be eligible for further Woodland Improvement Grant payments for maintenance operations such as cleaning.

Felled areas can be restocked using natural regeneration when appropriate but under BWW there will not be restocking grant payable. Woodland Improvement Grant will be available for operations to encourage, secure and manage regeneration.

As with all elements of BWW, owners entering the scheme will be required to meet certain requirements in relation to PAWS. These are outlined in the 'Approach to PAWS' document which also contains details of PAWS restocking grants.

## Planning Process

BWW restocking grants can only be claimed using the BWW Management Planning process. All areas felled after December 2003 will be eligible for the grants, including areas felled under a Felling Licence, as long as the specifications are met. Woodland Officers will assess felling applications within BWW using the UKFS and UKWAS and applications under a Felling Licence using the UKFS. Woodland Officers will refuse applications where they do not meet these standards. They will also encourage applicants to undertake felling within BWW.

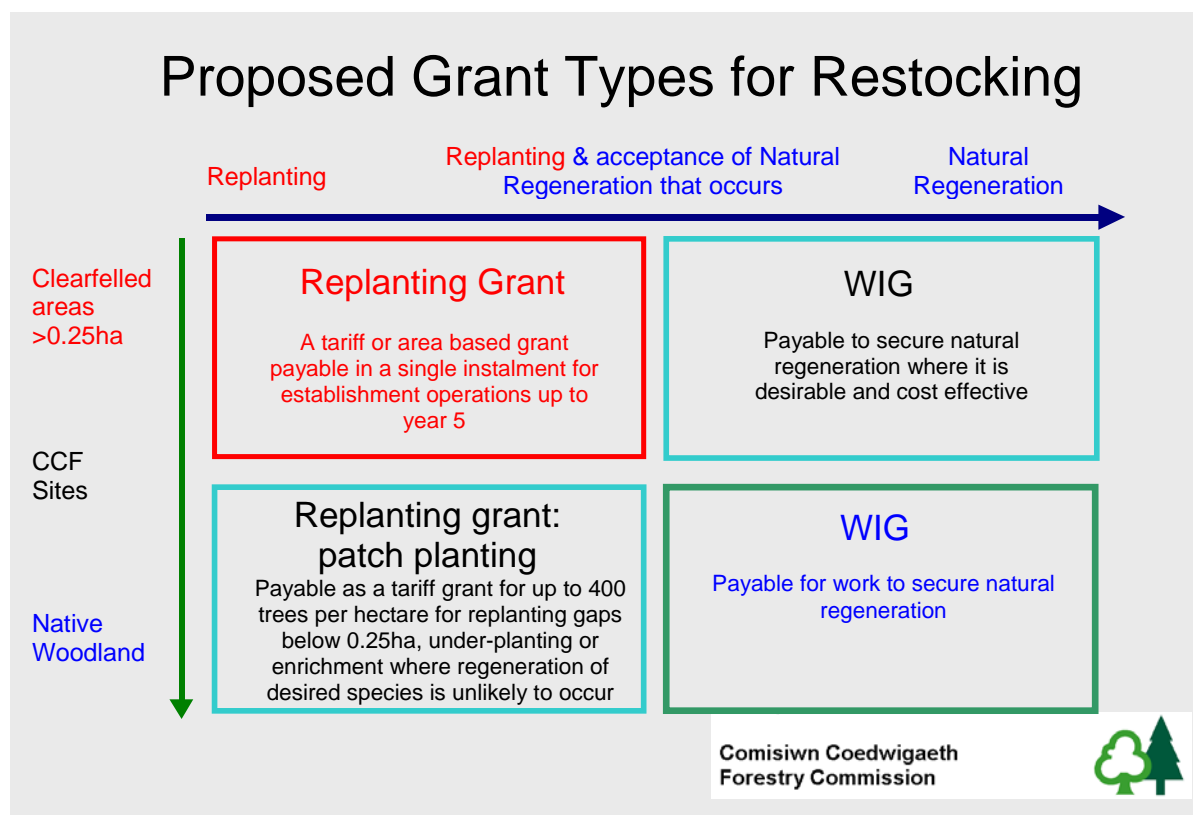
The BWW planning process takes a flexible approach to the way in which restocking is identified and the grant calculated. Where areas that can be easily mapped are felled the Planner will identify these in the management plan and restocking grant will be based on the area. For smaller selective felling areas the Planner can either estimate the restocking area or specify a certain number of trees to be planted per hectare up to a maximum of 400/hectare (at which point area must be measured or estimated). The computer system will calculate all grants regardless of the method used.

# BWW Grants for Restocking

**Replanting Grants** – Under BWW tariff based grants towards the cost of replanting re-establishment will remain. There will be a variety of options and rates available depending on the type of woodland being created. Default stocking levels will rise in accordance with good forest practice to 1600 trees per hectare for broadleaves and 2500 trees per hectare for conifers. Where small areas are to be replanted (below 0.25ha), enrichment planting is to be undertaken or where desired species are unlikely to regenerate, ‘Patch Planting’ will be available paying grant on a pro rata basis. On PAWS, options and grant aid will vary depending on the degree and method of restoration undertaken (for full details please see BWW Restocking Grant Guide).

**Natural Regeneration** – Restocking by natural regeneration will remain an option through BWW where it is deemed to be desirable and achievable. This allows for greater flexibility in managing the environmental gains on sensitive sites. The default stocking levels for natural regeneration are the same as those for replanting. Restocking grant will not be available for natural regeneration but grant aid is available in the form of Woodland Improvement Grants (WIGs), which will contribute to the costs of preparing the site and securing natural regeneration. If using WIG to encourage and secure natural regeneration, but the regeneration is not successful, then FCW would not expect the WIG to be repaid as long as the work had been done. The obligation to restock the area would still remain but FCW would either provide replanting grant for this or further WIGs depending on which is most appropriate. Where FCW feels that failure to properly protect successful regeneration from browsing has caused poor stocking, they may insist that the stocking is brought up to the correct level without further grant, at the owners cost. If a combination of natural regeneration and planting is used on the same site, then replanting tariff grants for the planted element will be paid on a pro rata basis.

The diagram below outlines the basic principals behind the BWW restocking grants. Detailed accounts of all restocking grants can be obtained from the Grant Guide Document.



## Further Information

UKWAS Standard  
The UK Forest Standard  
BWW Grant Structure  
BWW Restocking Grant Guide  
BWW Approach to PAWS  
BWW A Guide for Woodland Owners  
FC Practice Guide: The restoration of PAWS  
Woodland Trust Guide: The conservation and restoration of PAWS