

Grants and Regulations National Email Alert

1 December 2014

CAP Reform leaflet—Introducing Countryside Stewardship

On the 25 November a new CAP Reform leaflet was published on the GOV.UK site titled '[Introducing Countryside Stewardship](#)', which is the name for the new environmental land management scheme.

It covers:

- An introduction to the scheme and how it works
- Funding available in 2015 including Woodland Creation Grants
- Facilitation Funding
- How and when to apply for Countryside Stewardship
- Who to contact if you have further questions



Introducing Countryside Stewardship
November 2014



Please read this important information

It also includes [an annex](#) detailing all the options/capital items available and their rates. Further guidance will be forthcoming in early 2015 on exactly which options/items can be used in forestry but please note that FY2, Woodland Infrastructure Grant (which is very similar to the current Woodfuel WIG) is paid at 40% of actual costs and not as stated in the annex as actual costs.

Further information and guidance on Countryside Stewardship will be published on [GOV.UK](#) over coming months.

Closure of the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS)

As Countryside Stewardship takes shape, the current EWGS closes at the end of this month (December 31st). **Any applications we have received that are not processed to draft contract status (DCT) by the end of December will be rejected and closed** (this does not include child cases for felling licence applications when submitted as part of the management planning process). Depending on what the application was for there may not be an alternative in Countryside Stewardship.

DCT status is when we are happy with the contract from our point of view and are ready to send a copy to you for signing. It does not matter if you have not received the contract by the 31 December or even if we have not posted it yet, the important point is that we have to set it to DCT status on the EWGS IT system (GLOS) by 11.59pm on the 31st December 2014. **There is no flexibility on this deadline.**

Realistically this means applications need to be at DCT status **before** the Christmas holidays start. There may be some cover over Christmas for last minute processing but please do not rely on this. Therefore if we are waiting for any information from you to progress your scheme please let us have it **as soon as possible**.

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Important! - Returning signed contracts

Once your EWGS application is at DCT status we will send you a copy of the contract to sign. The covering letter attached to this usually gives 30 days notice to return this contract.

There are two very important points to note about returning these contracts:

1) Woodfuel Woodland Improvement Grants (WWIG)

Due to an extremely high volume of last minute applications we would over-commit funds to WWIG if we approved to DCT status all those WWIG's still remaining to be processed. Therefore we cannot currently approve to DCT status any that were received after 1st August this year – those affected should already have received a letter regarding this.

In order to free up WWIG budget, any draft contracts we send out from now on that are **not returned by 15th December** we will assume the applicant no longer wishes to proceed and we will reject the application and offer the released value to applications submitted after August 1st. This deadline to return signed WWIG contracts will be indicated in the covering letter, and is different to the standard 30-day deadline usually given to return signed EWGS contracts.

2) All EWGS Contracts that have exceeded the 30 day contract return period.

There are a large number of draft contracts that have already been issued but that have not yet been returned. Many of these are outside the 30 day notice period given in the covering letter. This makes it hard for us to accurately manage budgets as we do not know if the applicant has simply forgotten to return the contract or has actually decided that they no longer wish to proceed. Due to the number of these outstanding contracts we cannot chase applicants. If these contracts outside the 30 day notice period are not returned by the 15th December also we will assume the applicant is no longer interested and reject the scheme.

The onus is firmly on you to return signed contracts within the 30 day period or by the 15th December (for WWIG and those other EWGS contracts which have exceeded the 30 day return period) whichever is appropriate. Failure to do so will mean your application is rejected and closed.

Please give due consideration to postal times leading up to Christmas and consider using guaranteed or recorded postal services for returning signed contracts.