

Government supported new planting of trees in England

Report for 2017-18

Government supported new planting of trees in England; report for 2017-18 (first release)

This statistical release contains the first report on the number of trees planted in England with central government support, excluding replacement and restocking. It shows progress made by government in meeting its commitment to new plant 11 million trees in England in the 5-year period of the 2017-22 Parliament. This report covers the first year of progress covering 2017-18.

Woodland creation is a key part of the government's 25 Year Environment Plan¹ launched by the Prime Minister in January 2018, that includes aims to plant a Northern Forest as part of increasing the area of woodland in England to 12% of land by 2060. Expansion of the woodland area is therefore one of the three key aims of the Forestry Commission, as set out in the Forestry Commission England Corporate Plan 2018-19².

- **Key findings** including the headline number of trees planted in 2017-18, interpretation of the figures, along with a map of England showing where the new planting took place are presented from page 3 onwards.
- **The methodology** showing what sources of government supported planting of trees have been selected to be counted, and those excluded, and the reasons why are set out in Annex 1 from page 7 onwards.
- **Further information**, such as the availability of other statistics on new planting (including that *without* government support), and on the overall area of woodland in England is also provided on page 9.

These statistics are based on administrative data computed, collected and collated from Forestry Commission England, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the National Forest Company.

The 2017-18 outturn of this indicator has been successfully assured by the Government Internal Audit Agency.

This new '11 million trees indicator' is a part of Forestry Commission England's Corporate Plan Performance Indicators.

Current and future reports are available from www.forestry.gov.uk > [England](#) > [About us](#) > [Indicators](#).

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

² Forestry Commission England (2018) *Corporate Plan 2018-19*, Bristol: Forestry Commission England, at time of this publication due to be published imminently at <https://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-5e4g6a>

Key findings

Indicator: Government supported new planting of trees in England

Report for 2017-18 financial year: **1,579,000** trees were planted in England with support from central government, in this first full year of progress towards the government's commitment to plant 11 million trees in the 2017-22 Parliament.

Details are shown in Figures 1 and 2, Table 1 and Map 1.

Figure 1: Government supported new planting of trees in England, 2017-18

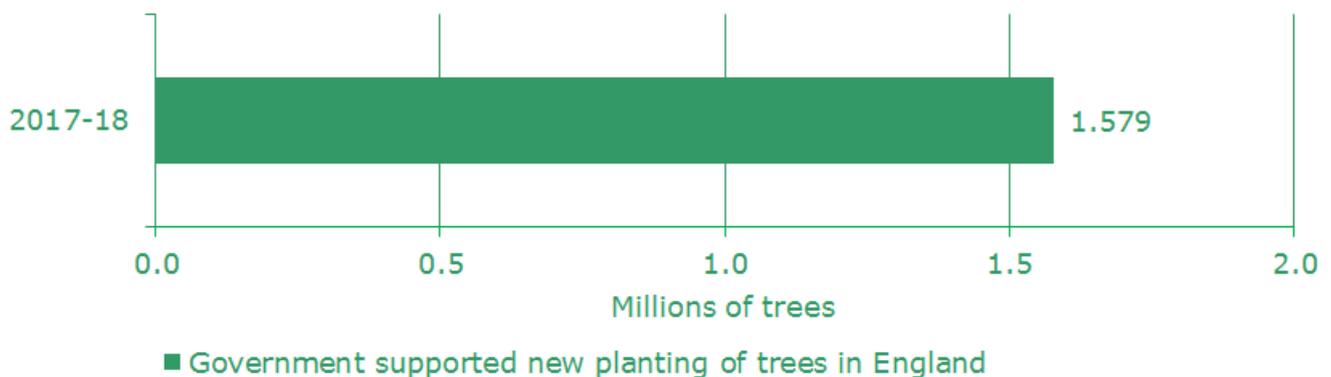


Figure 2: Percentage of Government support for new planting of trees in England, 2017-18 by source

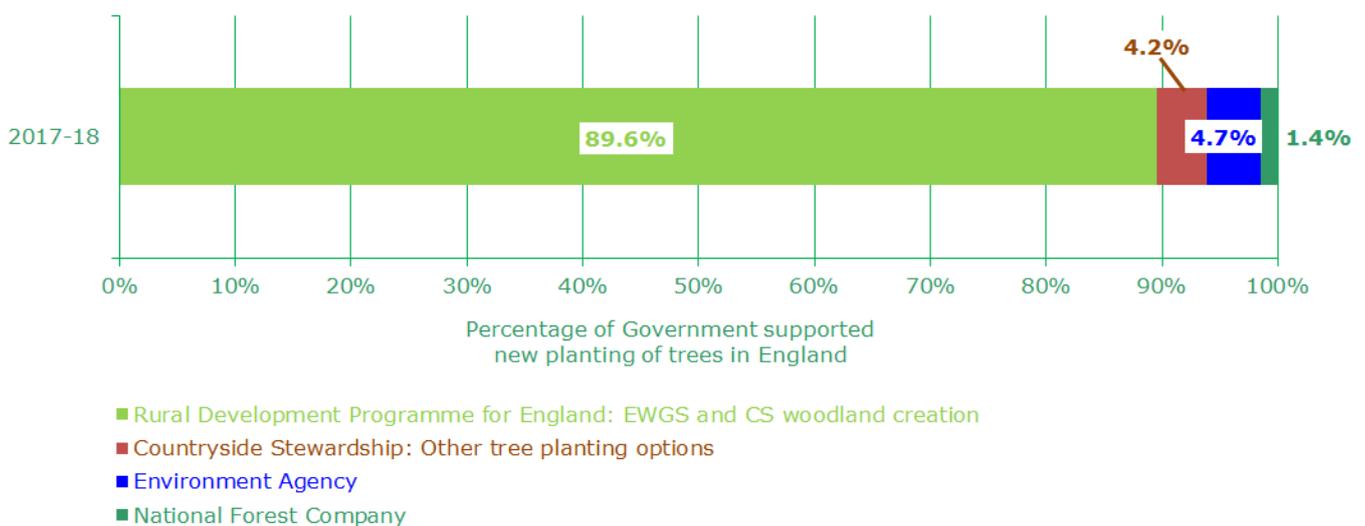


Table 1: Government supported new planting of trees in England, 2017-18, by source

Source of Government support for new planting ¹		Number of trees ³	Approximate equivalent in hectares ³
1	Rural Development Programme for England: EWGS and CS woodland creation ²	1,415,000	895
2	Woodland Carbon Fund	0	0
3	High Speed 2 Woodland Fund	0	0
4	Forest Enterprise England	0	0
5	Countryside Stewardship: other tree planting options	67,000	42
6	Environment Agency	75,000	71
7	New Northern Forest	0	0
8	National Forest Company	23,000	37
9	Ministry of Defence	0	0
10	Highways England	0	0
Total		1,579,000	1,045

1. Includes trees in areas counting as woodland, and some tree cover outside woodland.

2. EWGS: English Woodland Grant Scheme; CS: Countryside Stewardship.

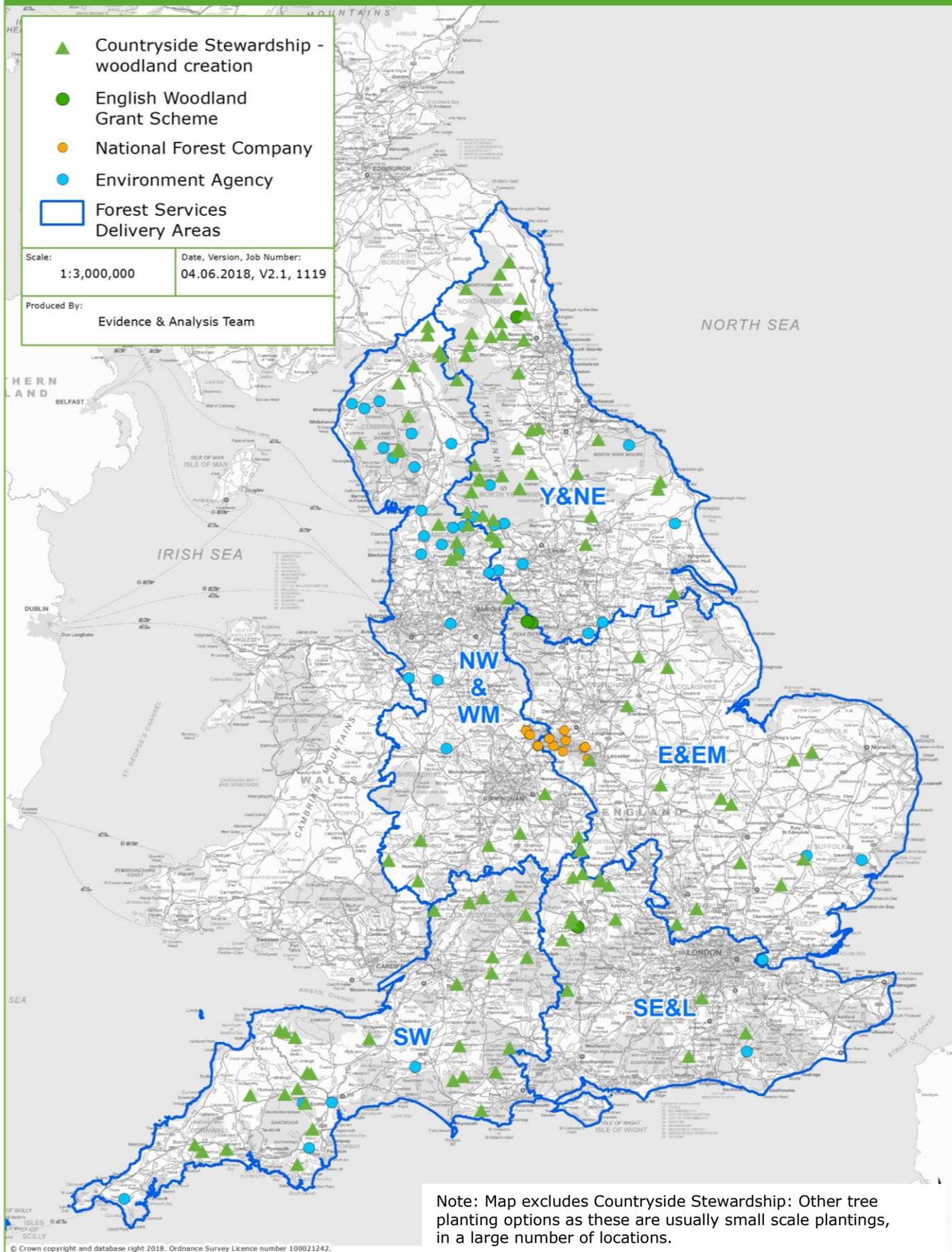
3. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Source for Figures 1 and 2, Table 1 and Map 1: Forestry Commission, Natural England, Environment Agency and National Forest Company administrative data.

Interpretation

Government funding supported the planting of 1.6 million trees in 2017-18. Although fewer trees were planted than required to meet the commitment on a straight line trajectory, the number of trees associated with signed grant agreements, grant applications and Woodland Creation Design Plans gives confidence that government's commitment to plant 11 million trees this Parliament will be achieved.

Map 1: Government supported new planting of trees in England 2017-18



Annex 1: Methodology

This annex provides the rationale for inclusion of sources of government-supported tree planting that should contribute to the indicator tracking progress towards meeting the 11 million tree commitment.

Scope of this '11 million trees indicator'

1. There was previously no indicator that reports on all government supported tree planting that contributes to the 11m trees planting target. Previously only tree planting funded by Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant (CS WCG), its predecessor the English Woodland Grant Scheme Woodland Creation Grant (EWGS WCG), was reported as a Forestry Commission England Headline Indicator. In defining what else to include in this new '11 million trees indicator', we have worked to ensure that only appropriate new planting is counted.

Principles of what new planting to count

2. The following principles have been applied. This indicator will count government supported new planting of trees in England that is:
 - a. New planting only, not replanting or replacement
 - b. Largely and directly funded by government, recognising there may be match funding; for example, CS WCG applicants are expected to contribute 20% of planting and establishment costs.
 - c. Reporting should exclude:
 - i. Double counting; for example, National Forest Company new planting figures must exclude any funded by CS WCG and therefore already counted; or with the government commitment to plant 1 million trees in urban areas;
 - ii. direct compensation for trees lost to development, illegal felling or open habitat restoration;
 - iii. trees planted as an integral component of schemes likely to have resulted in tree felling and woodland loss; and
 - iv. planting of types that the public would not recognise as trees or woodland.

New planting that is or will be counted

3. In line with these principles, **all** new tree planting through the following initiatives are counted as part of this government supported new planting of trees indicator:
 - a. **Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant** and **English Woodland Grant Scheme Woodland Creation Grant**; each part of the Rural Development Programme for England;
 - b. **Woodland Carbon Fund**;

- c. **High Speed 2 Woodland Fund** woodland creation option;
- d. **Forest Enterprise England**-funded planting on the Public Forest Estate.

New planting that is counted when conditions are met

4. **Some** tree planting through the following initiatives is also counted, subject to the relevant conditions described being met:
- a. **Countryside Stewardship other tree planting options (NE)**, administered by Natural England, and excluding high density planting of trees to establish new hedgerows, which the public would not recognise as trees or woodland.
 - b. **Environment Agency (EA)**. Tree planting included:
 - EA only funded tree planting in some catchment flood risk management schemes to help achieve Biodiversity 2020 targets.
 - EA only funded Water Environment Grant.
 - Woodland creation directly funded by the Natural Flood Management (NFM) scheme, for which there was £15m funding in the March 2016 Budget.
 - c. **New Northern Forest**. Some £5.7m government funding has been allocated to support the development of the Northern Forest. We will count this new planting of trees in this indicator, excluding those considered as counting towards the 1 million urban trees commitment.
 - d. **National Forest Company (NFC)**. The NFC and its Changing Landscape Scheme are sponsored by Defra. This delivers woodland and parkland trees. Discussions with the NFC's Head of Forestry concluded that all NFC planting is supported by government and should be counted towards the 11m tree indicator. Trees funded by any other initiative listed here or that are considered as counting towards the 1 million urban tree commitment are excluded.
 - e. **Ministry of Defence (MoD)**. Any tree planting on MoD land funded largely and directly by government will be counted in this indicator, ensuring there is no double-counting with other sources counted. Trees planted on MoD land through the tree-planting partnership with The Woodland Trust, through which The Woodland Trust sponsors tree planting on MoD land are excluded.
 - f. **Highways England (HE)**. HE plant significant numbers of trees associated with road-building and road widening schemes, many of which are likely to be associated with areas of woodland being felled. Most HE funded planting therefore falls outside the principles outlined above that define the 11m trees indicator and are therefore excluded. However, trees planted outside the curtilage of road widening schemes and new planting planned to manage highway flood risk will be included.

New planting that is not counted

5. Further in line with these principles, the following trees are **not** counted as part of the 11m trees indicator:
- a. **Trees for Schools.** This is a Defra initiative delivered by The Woodland Trust and Community Forests. The government has said that trees planted through this initiative are additional to the 11m trees commitment. They are therefore excluded from the 11m trees indicator.
 - b. **High Speed 2 compensatory tree planting.** HS2 Ltd has allocated significant funds to tree planting over HS 2 Phase One (London to the West Midlands), to 2024. These are excluded from the counting towards this 11m trees indicator, because they are to compensate for trees lost to development. This is different from trees planted through the separate HS2 Woodland Fund, which are counted.
 - c. **Local Authorities.** Tree planting on Local Authority owned/managed land can be funded through partnerships, which may sometimes include central government funding. However, Local Authorities act largely independently of central government and there is no national reporting structure for tree planting. Until there is an agreement that it would be feasible, reasonable and cost-effective to provide reliable reporting it is not possible to count any Local Authority new planting towards this 11m indicator, and so this source of tree planting will not be included.

Definition of a tree

6. This indicator counts the new planting of a) individual trees, b) trees in groups and c) trees in woodlands, each in plantings comprising predominantly 'tree' species.
7. The definition of a 'tree' used is that required to meet eligibility criteria for government support for woodland creation/tree planting, which vary slightly from scheme to scheme.
8. Typically, the definition is equivalent to the eligibility for Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant³ (CS WCG), in which 'trees' means plants with at least one woody stem capable of achieving a total height of five metres or more. All of the ca. 130 species listed in the CS WCG documentation Annex 2 species list are therefore included.
9. This definition is comparable to that of 'trees' used in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN FAO, 2012) '*Forest Resources Assessment Working Paper 180: FRA 2015 Terms and Definitions*', Rome: UN FAO, page 27, available from here: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/ap862e/ap862e00.pdf>
10. It is recognised that planting schemes sometimes include a proportion of shrubs. These are counted when planted as a proportion of tree planting schemes.

³ Natural England (2017) *Countryside Stewardship Manual: Woodland Creation Grant 2018*, at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-woodland-creation-grant-manual-2018>

Further information

Media enquiries

For media enquiries about these statistics the contact is 020 8225 7319.

Open Data

The Forestry Commission helps Defra provide Open Data. The locations of new planting of trees supported by the Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant and English Woodland Grant Scheme Woodland Creation Grant are available as geographical data from the [Forestry Commission map-based Open Data website](http://data-forestry.opendata.arcgis.com/) at <http://data-forestry.opendata.arcgis.com/>. The latest National Forest Inventory woodland map is available for download from the same link.

Other statistics on new planting of trees and woodland area

Forestry Commission England Corporate Plan Performance Headline Indicator Updates, including those on woodland creation supported by Countryside Stewardship (updated quarterly), available from <https://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-8kmhu6>

Forestry Commission National Statistics on **all** new planting of woodland including that supported in other ways, and the total woodland area in England (each updated annually), available from:

- a. Provisional statistics in Woodland Area, Planting and Publicly Funded Restocking (each June) at <https://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7aqknx>
- b. Confirmed statistics in Forestry Statistics and Forestry Facts and Figures (each September) at <https://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7aqdgc>

Release schedule for these statistics

These statistics are released twice per year. The next anticipated release, covering new planting between April and September 2018, is expected in November 2018.

Official Statistics

This is an Official Statistics publication. This indicator has been developed to meet the standards set out in the new Code of Practice for Statistics (Office for Statistics Regulation and UK Statistics Authority, 2018) available from <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/>

For more information about Official Statistics and the UK Statistics Authority visit www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk.