

# EWGS 5b: Plant Health

## Woodland Improvement Grant

### 1 Introduction

This guide provides information on the new Plant Health Woodland Improvement Grant (PH WIG) which brings together elements of the following previous grant support:

- removing Rhododendron in the vicinity of *Phytophthora ramorum* and *kernoviae* infections;
- removing *P.ramorum* infected immature larch;
- paying a site fee to cover the costs of professional help in implementing *P.ramorum* infected larch harvesting plans.

This new PH WIG also replaces elements of the previous WIG for removal of recently planted ash on *Chalara fraxinea* infected sites.

This grant is designed to cover the infections mentioned above and any subsequent plant health diseases the Forestry Commission (FC) may decide require action that can be funded through the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS).

### 2 Background

English woodlands have been subjected to an increasing number of pests and diseases over the last two decades. Two of the most recent and serious are *Phytophthora ramorum* and *Chalara fraxinea*. Full supporting information (history, symptoms, distribution, silvicultural advice, etc.) can be found on the FC's [Phytophthora webpage](#) (see also <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/phytophthora>) and [Chalara webpage](#).

As a response to these issues the PH WIG is designed to enable land managers to remove diseased vegetation or trees which pose a threat through the wider spread of the disease. In certain circumstances the grant may be used to support other disease or pest control actions such as clearing vegetation to facilitate access.

Restocking of *Phytophthora* and *Chalara* infected sites may qualify for Woodland Regeneration Grant (WRG) even on those sites where an immature crop has been removed. Please refer to the [WRG guidance](#) and your local Woodland Officer for more information ([Area Pages](#)).

If there are further pests and diseases that the FC decides warrant grant aid these will be included as updated versions of this guidance.

### 3 Eligibility

The general criteria and conditions for WIG apply – please refer to [EWGS 5 WIG Guidance](#) for further details. In addition please note the following:

#### **Rhododendron removal:**

This grant is available for the removal of Rhododendron from woodlands within three kilometres of a site confirmed by the Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) or the FC as infected with *P.ramorum* or *P.kernoviae*.

The grant is available for the removal of both uninfected and infected Rhododendron. There is a flat rate payment per net hectare – the rates are given in section 4. The area to be cleared and rate to be applied will be agreed with the visiting Woodland Officer.

#### **Removal of immature infected larch:**

This grant will support the removal of immature infected larch where infection has been confirmed by FERA or FC. There is a flat rate payment per net hectare – the rates are given in section 4. The area to be cleared and rate to be applied will be agreed with the visiting Woodland Officer.

A lower and a higher rate are offered to reflect the different costs required to achieve the requirements of the Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN). A lower rate will apply to immature stands that could be cleared by clearing saw. The higher rate will apply to situations when other mechanised operations would normally be needed.

These clearance rates are paid on the basis that no timber products are to be recovered from these sites. If the owner decides to recover and sell wood products then the clearance rates will not be payable.

**Any removal of material from site would need to be compliant with the conditions of the Supplementary Plant Health Notice (SPHN).**

#### **Removal of mature larch:**

Operational Site Assessment (OSA) Implementation Fee:

The grant will support the preparation of an OSA and its implementation to reflect the increased level of complexity on these sites and to help with marketing infected timber. The FC will expect to see a completed OSA for the works in order to ensure that all felling takes due consideration of environmental and other issues – full guidance and an

example template can be found at: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-protectedspecies>. We will accept formats other than the FC template but they must contain at least the same information.

There is a flat rate payment per site, irrespective of the level of operational activity on that site – the rate is given in section 4. What constitutes an individual site will be agreed with the visiting Woodland Officer as will the requirements of the plan. The claim for payment must be supported by evidence that felling activities on the site have been completed and be accompanied by a copy of the completed OSA.

**Note: Larch felling and stump treatment:**

*Heterobasidium annosum* (formerly *Fomes annosus*) is a serious and persistent threat to British woodlands, particularly to coniferous stands. Larch stumps pose one of the highest risks of infection. Therefore we strongly recommend that stump treatment is undertaken on all larch felling sites, this is particularly important if it is intended to replant with other conifers.

Current Forest Research guidance is available for [risk-based stump treatment](#).

**Ash removal/disposal:**

The Government believes that in Category A counties (see Table 1 below) there is value in removing ash that is showing evidence of infection (i.e. symptomatic). This is intended to help slow the spread of *Chalara* from those areas in the east, where it is well-established in the wider environment, to the west of the country.

We will therefore provide grant support for the removal and disposal of all ash plants on sites where there are trees symptomatic of Chalara infection and that have been planted under EWGS in Category A counties. Support for removal and disposal **will not** be available in Category B counties.

Where symptomatic ash trees are present on a site we will support removal and disposal of both symptomatic and non-symptomatic ash trees. Removal and disposal will be funded as per section 4. To support a removal and disposal payment we will expect:

- Photographic evidence of symptomatic trees and photographic evidence linking the symptomatic tree to recognisable feature(s) on the site or, if one has been issued, a letter from the Forestry Commission or Fera confirming infection on the site;
- where practical we would expect all non-symptomatic ash trees to also be removed and have the same treatments applied (on very large sites we may accept ash trees being removed from only those sub compartments containing symptomatic trees);

- removal should follow the methodology at Q2 of the [guidance](#) to landowners and managers on the removal and disposal of Chalara infected ash trees. Arisings from this work must be disposed of in a manner which prevents any risk of the spread of infection, usually by burning on site;
- biosecurity measures such as cleaning footwear and tools are to be observed to help prevent further spread of the disease - details are available in the FC [biosecurity guidance](#) document.

We will not support the removal and disposal of infected ash regeneration on the basis that if natural regeneration has become infected then disease is likely to be present in the wider environment, in which case the value of removing infected trees is diminished.

Eligibility criteria are related to priority areas which inform the value of interventions in terms of removal/disposal and replacement. Priority areas are described in the following table.

**Table 1 – Priority areas (identified by categories)**

<b>The following counties are classed as being ‘Category B’. This list will be subject to change as our understanding on the spread of the disease further develops</b>
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, East Sussex, Essex, Greater London, Kent, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Rutland, Suffolk, Surrey, West Sussex.
<b>English counties not in the list above are classed as ‘Category A’</b>

**Sites within Category A will be eligible for removal/disposal payments.**

Payments will be pro-rata according to the amount of ash originally planted on the site (e.g. on a 5 hectare site where ash had originally been planted on 20% of the area, a payment for one hectare will be made).

## 4 Payment Rates

All costs are based on the FC standard costs – see [EWGS 5 Guidance](#). Grant Payment will be based on an 80% contribution rate of Standard Cost.

**Table 2: Standard Cost clearance rates for Rhododendron removal (grant payment will be 80% of these costs):**

	Treatment type £/hectare cost (net area of rhododendron) (Work Item Code)			
Working conditions	Hand cut, treat stump	Machine Flail	Stem Injection	Follow up spray
Rhododendron under 2.5m on an	£3,000 (X2)	£2,400 (X6)	£1,500 (X7)	£400 (V17)

easy to moderate slope.				
Rhododendron is over 2.5m on an easy to moderate slope.	£4,000 (X3)			
Rhododendron is under 2.5m and located on a severe slope or in difficult conditions.	£5,000 (X4)	-	£2,000 (X8)	
Rhododendron is over 2.5m and located on a severe slope or in difficult conditions.	£6,000 (X5)	-		

**Table 3: Stand Cost rates for Removal of immature larch and recently planted ash (grant payment will be 80% of these costs):**

	Age and Treatment type £/hectare cost (net area planted) (Work Item Code)	
Species:	Clearing saw (1-10 years)	Chainsaw/Mechanical (11-25 years)
Larch	£800 (V2)	£1,800 (V4)
Ash	£800 (V2)	-

**Table 4: Stand Cost rates for Mature Larch Operations OSA preparation and Implementation Fee (grant payment will be 80% of these costs):**

Item:	Unit:	Fee (Work Item Code)
Operational Site Assessment creation and implementation (larch only)	Per Site	£1,000 (Z1)

In certain circumstances, normally where an SPHN is involved, the grant may be used to support other disease or pest control actions such as clearing vegetation to facilitate access. In these situations the appropriate standard costs will be agreed on a case by case basis with your local Woodland Officer.

## 5 The Application Process

To apply, the following information must be provided:

- EWGS 1 form
  - Details of any other grant funding recently claimed or being provided e.g. HLS.
- EWGS 5 Application form
  - Give brief details of what work you propose to undertake.
  - Ordnance Survey MasterMap, annotated as per the EWGS guidance and showing:
    - the boundary of the eligible woodland areas that the grant will apply to;
    - which woodland, within the eligible area, will be harvested, and when;
    - detail of the proposed work e.g. location of Rhododendron.
- Additionally complete the [Plant Health WIG calculator](#).
- The calculator is a Microsoft Excel file, and instructions on how to complete it are contained in the file.
- For further information on standard costs and how they are used in EWGS please refer to [Operations Note 9](#).

## 6 Claims and payments

For information relating to claims and payments please refer to [EWGS 5 Guidance Form](#).

## 7 Getting help

The FC will offer advice and help you come to decisions about the management of your woodland but cannot help you draw up your application. To find your local FC office, please refer to the [FC regional directory](#).

### Further advice:

The FC website contains all of the information regarding EWGS and the forms needed to apply, in particular:

- [www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs) – EWGS homepage
- [www.forestry.gov.uk/england-ewgsdocuments](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-ewgsdocuments) – EWGS document library
- [www.forestry.gov.uk/england-lis](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-lis) – The Land Information Search tool, telling you about special designations, features and other grant schemes that are displayed in map form
- [www.forestry.gov.uk/england-grants](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-grants) – FC England Grants and Regulations homepage. This provides links to all aspects of woodland regulations, grants available and public registers of felling/planting proposals.

If you do not have access to the internet, you can request any of the information from your local FC office. We recommend getting professional advice on woodland management and grants. A list of national and regional professional organisations is listed at [www.forestry.gov.uk/england-advice](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-advice) or available from your local FC office.

This document is for information only and does not constitute an agreement of any form nor does it confer any rights. It is intended as a guide to help applicants decide whether the grant is applicable to them and whether the main requirements of any grant agreement can be met.  
The information is subject to change. Full and current details of the grant scheme and the requirements of any EWGS grant contract that may be made between the applicant(s) and the Forestry Commission arising from an application to the grant scheme can be found at [www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs).