

# Public Opinion of Forestry 2015, UK and England

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**Issued by:** Economics & Statistics, Forestry Commission,  
231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh, EH12 7AT

**Enquiries:** Jackie Watson 0300 067 5238  
[statistics@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:statistics@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

**Statistician:** Sheila Ward 0300 067 5236

**Website:** [www.forestry.gov.uk/statistics](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/statistics)

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## Introduction

The Forestry Commission has conducted biennial surveys of public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues since 1995. These surveys are used to inform and monitor policy development.

This publication presents results for the UK and for England from the UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015 on:

- Woodland recreation;
- Importance of forestry;
- Engagement with forest issues;
- Climate change;
- Wood as a fuel; and
- Tree health.

A copy of the questionnaire used in this survey, giving complete wording of questions and response options, is provided in the Annex at the end of this report.

Surveys have also been run in Wales and in Scotland. Separate reports, providing results from these surveys, are available at [www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5zyl9w](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5zyl9w).

Statistics on the proportion of adults who have been actively engaged in forestry have already been released, in Forestry Commission England's *Corporate Plan Performance Indicators and Woodland Indicators 2015* (woodlands indicator 9). Other results from the 2015 survey are published for the first time in this release. Figures for earlier years have not been revised from those previously released. For further details, see the Revisions section of the Annex.

As the data are obtained from a sample survey, there is a range of uncertainty (confidence interval) associated with any results produced. Any differences referred to in the text are statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level unless otherwise stated. For further details, see the Data Sources and Methodology and the Quality sections of the Annex.

## Key findings

In England, and in the UK as a whole:

- Over **one half** of respondents in 2015 have visited forests or woodlands in the last few years, a significant decrease from the 2013 figure of around **two thirds**.
- **4%** of respondents in the UK and **5%** in England were involved in volunteer work, organised tree planting events, community-based woodland groups or consultations associated with woodlands in the past 12 months.

On **climate change**:

- Around **three quarters** agree or strongly agree that 'trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood'.
- Around **two thirds** agree or strongly agree that 'planting more trees can help us cope with climate change by providing shade and reducing the effects of flooding'.
- Around **four fifths** agree or strongly agree that 'a lot more trees should be planted'
- **Around one in ten** respondents use wood as fuel in their home.

On **tree health**:

- Around **three quarters** agree or strongly agree that 'action should be taken by authorities and woodland managers to protect trees from damaging pests and diseases'.
- Over **one half** agree or strongly agree that 'everyone should take action when visiting woodlands to help prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases' and 'would be willing to look out for and report sightings of pests and diseases on trees, if appropriate information and advice was available to [them]'.
- Around **one fifth** agree or strongly agree that 'there is very little that anyone can do to prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases'.

## Woodland recreation

The survey asked respondents a number of questions about visits to woodland. This included whether the respondent had visited woodland in the last few years, reasons for not visiting (more often or at all), type of woodland visited and frequency of visits. In addition, three new questions were introduced in the 2015 survey that were related to visits to Forestry Commission woodland.

### Proportion visiting woodland

As in previous years, respondents to the 2015 survey were asked whether they had visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation in the last few years.

In 2015, over one half of respondents in the UK (56%) and in England (55%) said they had visited forests or woodlands in the last few years for walks, picnics or other recreation (Table 1). This represents a significant decrease over the results in earlier years.

**Table 1: Visits to woodland in last few years**

Year	Percent of respondents	
	UK	England
2003	67	66
2005	65	65
2007	77	76
2009	77	77
2011	67	68
2013	66	65
2015	56	55

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents:

UK - 2003 (4,120), 2005 (3,892), 2007 (4,018), 2009 (2,011), 2011 (2,068), 2013 (1,927), 2015 (1,804);

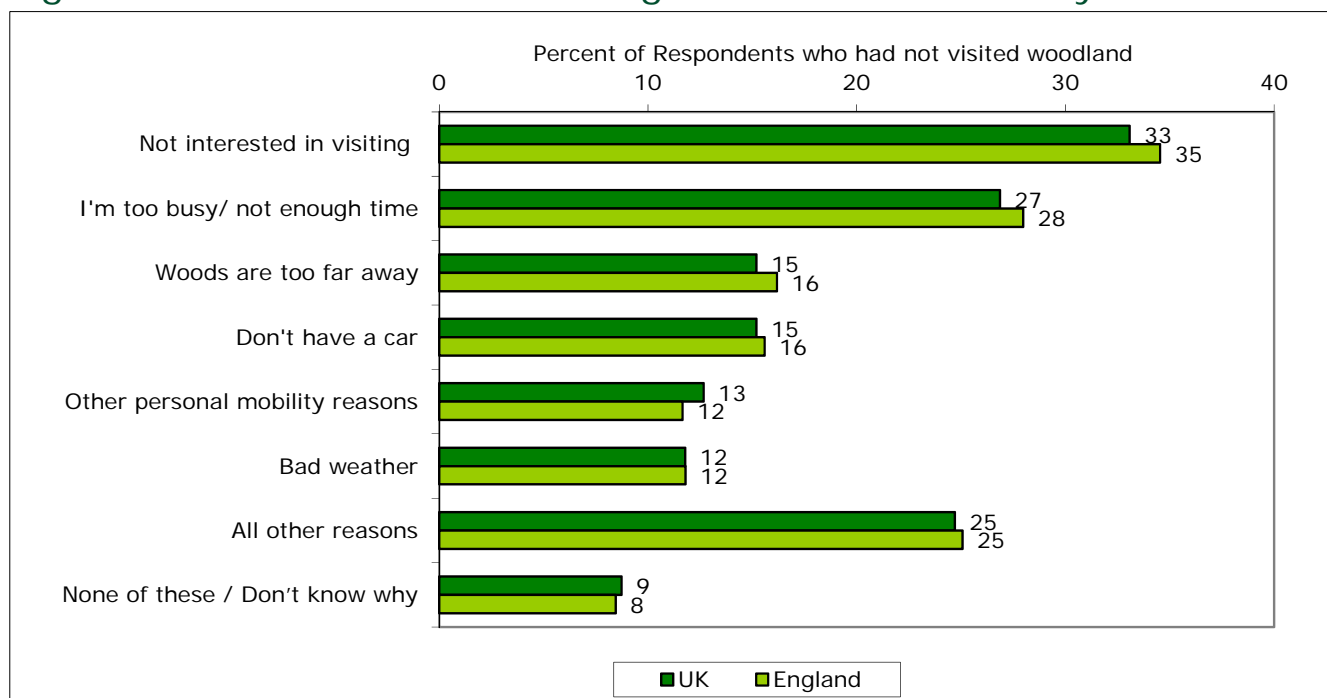
England - 2003 (3,412), 2005 (3,367), 2007 (3,339), 2009 (1,685), 2011 (1,733), 2013 (1,615), 2015 (1,512).

## Reasons for not visiting woodland

All respondents were asked to state their main reasons for not visiting woodland more often or at all.

For those who had not visited woodland or forests in the last few years, 'not interested in visiting', was the most commonly cited reason for not doing so (33% of those in the UK, 35% of those in England) (Figure 1). Other common answers included 'I'm too busy/not enough time' (27% for the UK, 28% for England), 'woods are too far away' (15% for the UK, 16% in England) and 'don't have a car' (15% for the UK, 16% in England).

Figure 1: Reasons for not visiting woodland in last few years



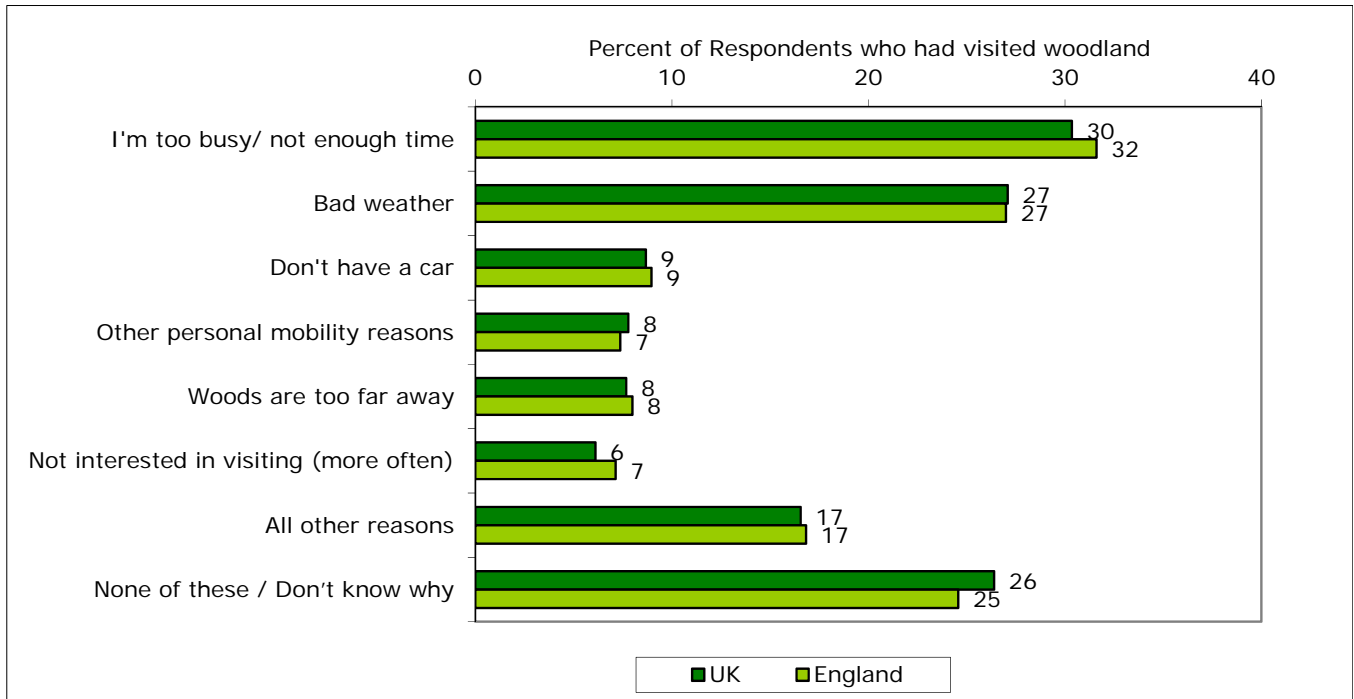
Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had not visited woodland in the last few years: UK (789), England (686).
2. Respondents could provide more than one reason.

Of those respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years, the most commonly stated reasons for not visiting more often were 'I'm too busy/not enough time' (30% for the UK, 32% in England) and 'bad weather' (27% for the UK and for England) (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Reasons for not visiting woodland more often in last few years**



Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: UK (1,015), England (826).
2. Respondents could provide more than one reason.

## Type of woodland visited

Table 2 shows that respondents who had visited woodlands and forests in the last few years were more likely to visit 'woodlands in the countryside' (80% in the UK and 81% in England) than 'woodlands in and around towns' (71% in the UK and 72% in England). Around one half of respondents (51% in the UK and 53% in England) reported visiting woodlands and forests in both locations.

**Table 2: Type of woodland visited**

Type of woodland	Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands							
	UK				England			
	2009	2011	2013	2015	2009	2011	2013	2015
Woodlands in the countryside	86	84	85	80	84	84	85	81
Woodlands in and around towns	64	62	70	71	61	62	68	72
Both	48	47	55	51	45	46	53	53

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

- Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years:  
 UK - 2009 (1,549), 2011 (1,393), 2013 (1,272), 2015 (1,015);  
 England - 2009 (1,291), 2011 (1,170), 2013 (1,056), 2015 (826).
- Responses for those who said they had been to 'both' types of woodlands have been included in the totals for 'woodlands in and around towns' and 'woodlands in the countryside'.



## Frequency of woodland visits

Of the respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years, around two thirds (69% in the UK and 68% in England) said that they visited at least once a month during summer 2014 (between April and September 2014) (Table 3 and Figure 3). Few respondents who had visited woodlands in the past few years said that they did not visit during summer 2014 (3% in both the UK and in England).

**Table 3: Frequency of woodland visits in Summer (April to September)**

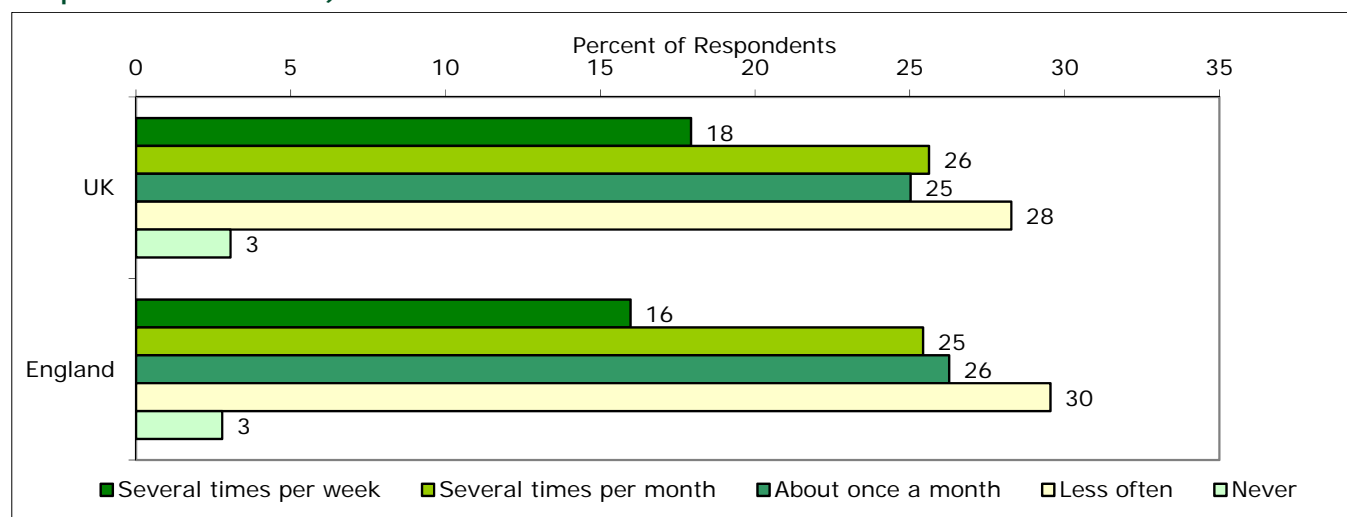
Frequency	Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands							
	UK				England			
	2009	2011	2013	2015	2009	2011	2013	2015
Several times per week	12	15	16	18	12	15	15	16
Several times per month	24	29	31	26	24	29	30	25
About once a month	26	26	26	25	26	25	26	26
Less often	34	27	24	28	34	28	26	30
Never	5	3	3	3	5	4	3	3

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

- Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years:  
 UK - 2009 (1,549), 2011 (1,393), 2013 (1,272), 2015 (1,015);  
 England - 2009 (1,291), 2011 (1,170), 2013 (1,056), 2015 (826).

**Figure 3: Frequency of woodland visits in Summer (April to September 2014)**



Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015.

Note:

- Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: UK (1,015); England (826).

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Of the respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years, around two fifths (42% in the UK and 41% in England) said they visited at least once a month during winter 2014/15 (between October 2014 and March 2015) (Table 4 and Figure 4). Around one fifth (20% in the UK and 21% in England) said they did not visit during the winter.

**Table 4: Frequency of woodland visits in Winter (October to March)**

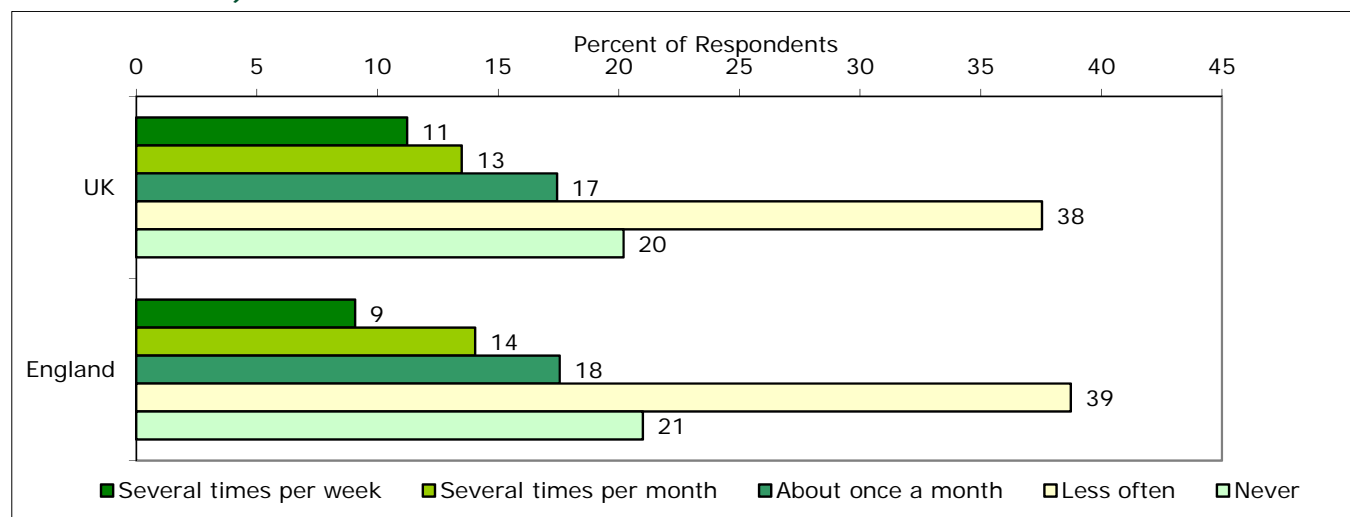
Frequency	Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands							
	UK				England			
	2009	2011	2013	2015	2009	2011	2013	2015
Several times per week	7	9	11	11	7	9	10	9
Several times per month	11	12	13	13	11	13	12	14
About once a month	16	17	17	17	16	17	17	18
Less often	36	32	36	38	36	32	36	39
Never	31	29	23	20	31	29	23	21

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

- Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years:  
 UK - 2009 (1,549), 2011 (1,393), 2013 (1,272), 2015 (1,015);  
 England - 2009 (1,291), 2011 (1,170), 2013 (1,056), 2015 (826).

**Figure 4: Frequency of woodland visits in Winter (October 2014 to March 2015)**



Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015.

Note:

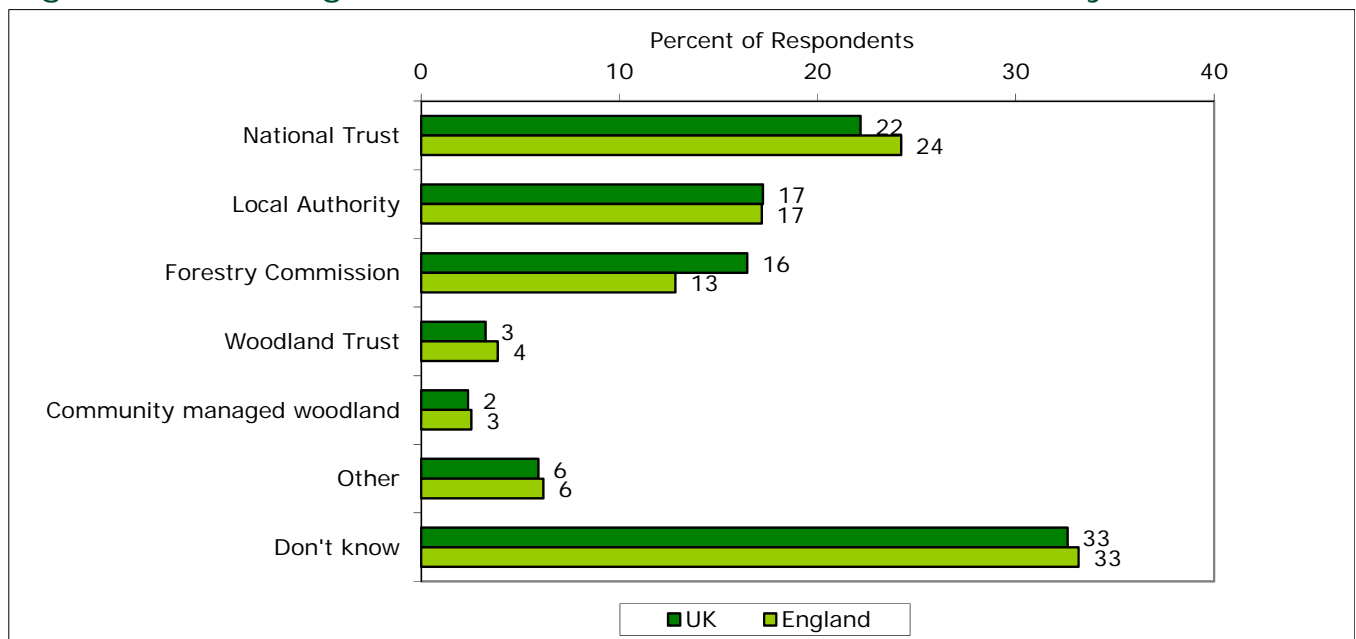
- Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: UK (1,015); England (826).

## Visits to Forestry Commission woodland

Three new questions were included in the 2015 survey that were related to visits to woodland managed by the Forestry Commission.

The first new question asked respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years to identify the manager of the woodland they had visited most recently. One third of respondents (33% in both the UK and in England) reported that they did not know who managed the woodlands they had visited most recently. The National Trust was identified as the manager by around one quarter of respondents (22% in the UK, 24% in England), local authorities by around one in six (17% in the UK and in England) and the Forestry Commission by 16% of respondents in the UK and 13% in England. (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Management of woodland visited most recently



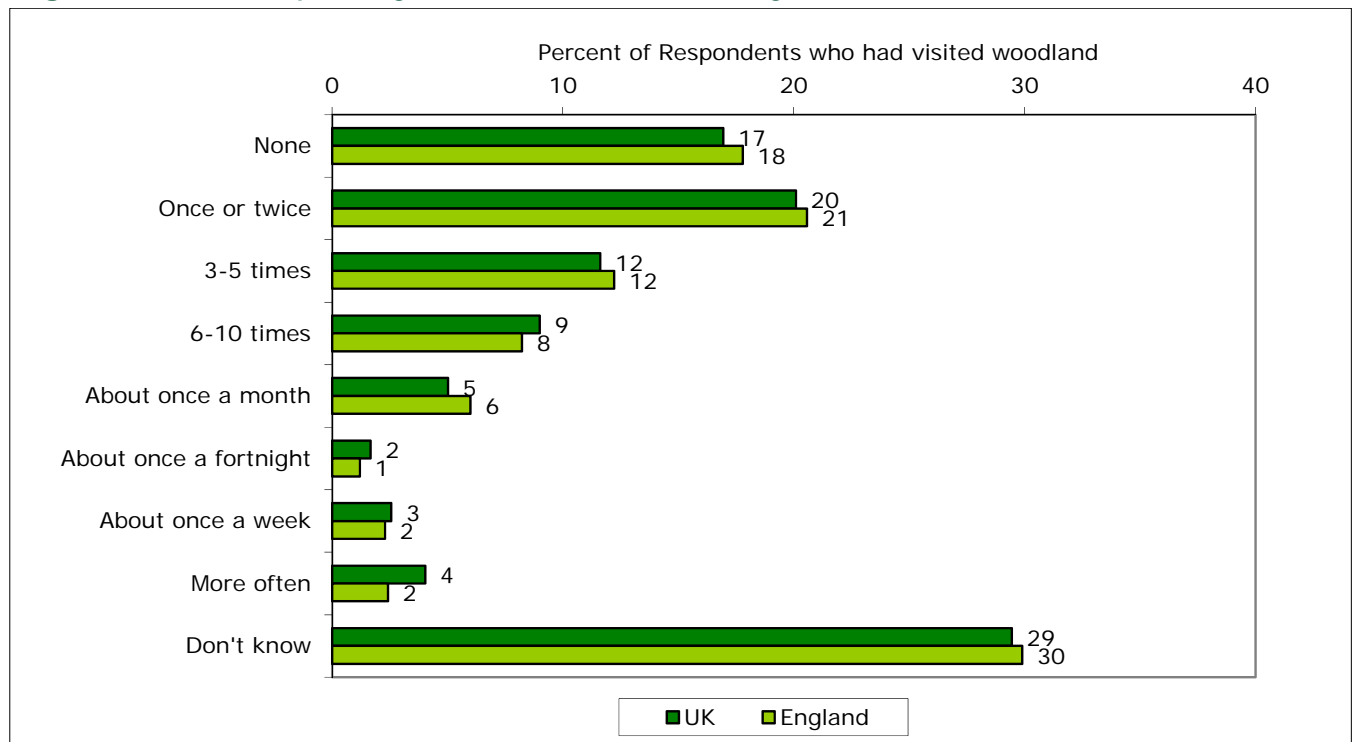
Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: UK (1,015); England (826).

Respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years were then asked to report how often they had visited woodland managed by the Forestry Commission in the previous 12 months. Almost one third (29% in the UK and 30% in England) reported that they did not know how often they had visited Forestry Commission woodland and a further 17% of UK respondents (18% of those in England) reported that they had not visited Forestry Commission woodland in the previous 12 months. More than one in ten respondents who had visited woodlands reported visiting Forestry Commission woodlands at least once a month (13% in the UK and 11% in England) (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Frequency of visits to Forestry Commission woodland**



Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: UK (1,015); England (826).

For the final new question in 2015, all respondents were asked about their membership of various organisations. The majority (87% in the UK and in England) stated that they were not members of any of the organisations listed (Table 5).

**Table 5: Membership of organisations**

	Percent of respondents	
	UK	England
Member of the National Trust or National Trust for Scotland	8	8
Member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	2	2
Member of English Heritage, Historic Scotland or Cadw in Wales	2	2
Member of a wildlife trust	2	2
Member of the Woodland Trust	1	1
Holder of a Forestry Commission England 'Discovery Pass'	1	1
None of the above	87	87

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents: UK (1,804), England (1,512).
2. Respondents could select more than one option.

## Importance of forestry

Respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with a set of statements regarding the purpose and use of woodlands and forests. Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion twice, once for the importance of woodlands and forests to the public and again for the importance to them personally.

Overall, the results suggest that woodlands are viewed as most important for wildlife and for recreation.

## Importance of woodland to the public

Table 6 shows the percentage of respondents who agreed (selected 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree') with each of the statements relating to importance of woodland to the public.

The highest levels of agreement were with the following statements:

- 'They are places where people can have fun and enjoy themselves' (89% in the UK and 88% in England agreed);
- 'They are important places for wildlife' (88% in the UK and 87% in England agreed);
- 'They are places where people can relax and de-stress' (88% in the UK and 87% in England agreed).

The lowest levels of agreements were with the following statements:

- 'They get people involved in local issues' (54% in the UK and 56% in England agreed);
- 'They bring the community together' (57% in the UK and 58% in England agreed);
- 'They contribute to the local economy' (58% in the UK and 57% in England agreed).

**Table 6: Importance of woodlands and forests to the public**

Reason	Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree							
	UK				England			
	2009	2011	2013	2015	2009	2011	2013	2015
People can have fun and enjoy themselves	94	95	91	89	94	95	90	88
They are important places for wildlife	97	97	93	88	97	97	92	87
They are places where people can relax and de-stress	95	95	91	88	95	95	91	87
They are places where people can exercise and keep fit	..	94	89	87	..	94	88	86
People can learn about the environment	91	90	87	84	91	89	86	83
They make areas nicer places to live	96	90	87	83	93	91	86	82
People can learn about local culture or history	69	71	72	68	68	71	71	67
They contribute to the local economy	59	60	60	58	57	60	59	57
They bring the community together	50	54	56	57	51	55	56	58
They get people involved in local issues	63	57	60	54	63	57	60	56

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents:

UK - 2009 (2,011), 2011 (2,068), 2013 (1,927), 2015 (1,804);

England - 2009 (1,685), 2011 (1,733), 2013 (1,615), 2015 (1,512).

2. .. denotes data not available (statement not included in 2009 survey).

## Importance of woodland to individual respondents

Respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years (Table 1) were also asked to state their level of agreement with a list of statements as to why woodlands and forests are important to themselves personally.

Results were generally similar to those reported by all respondents in considering the importance of woodland to the public, with stronger levels of agreement for recreation than for other issues.

As shown in table 7, the majority of respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years agreed (selected 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree') with most of the statements but the statements that had the highest level of agreement were as follows:

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- 'They are places where I can relax and de-stress' (93% in the UK and 92% in England agreed)
- 'They are places where I can have fun and enjoy myself' (91% in the UK and in England agreed)
- 'They are places where I can exercise and keep fit' (85% in the UK and in England agreed).

The lowest levels of agreements were with the following statements:

- 'They get me involved in local issues' (36% in the UK and 38% in England agreed)
- 'They are good places for me to socialise' (59% in the UK and 60% in England agreed)
- 'They are places where I can learn about local culture or history' (66% in the UK and in England agreed).

**Table 7: Importance of woodlands and forests to individuals**

Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree

Reason	UK				England			
	2009	2011	2013	2015	2009	2011	2013	2015
They are places where I can relax and de-stress	94	95	92	93	94	94	92	92
They are places where I can have fun and enjoy myself	91	94	91	91	90	93	90	91
They are places where I can exercise and keep fit	84	90	87	85	84	89	86	85
They are places where I can learn about the environment	80	80	77	79	81	79	76	78
They are places where I feel at home	69	75	74	75	69	75	73	74
They are places where I can learn about local culture or history	..	64	66	66	..	64	65	66
They are good places for me to socialise	50	59	60	59	51	58	61	60
They get me involved in local issues	33	34	37	36	34	35	37	38

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years:  
UK - 2009 (1,549), 2011 (1,393), 2013 (1,272), 2015 (1,015);  
England - 2009 (1,291), 2011 (1,170), 2013 (1,056), 2015 (826).
2. .. denotes data not available (statement not included in 2009 survey).



## Engagement with forest issues

Respondents were asked whether they had been involved in woodland consultations or any volunteer groups and organised events associated with woodlands in the last 12 months.

Table 8 shows that, in the previous 12 months, 4% of respondents to the 2015 survey in the UK and 5% in England said that they had been engaged with forest issues. The UK figure represents a significant decrease from the 2013 figure of 10%.

In terms of the specific types of engagement covered, the results for 2015 showed that:

- 1% of respondents in the UK and 2% in England had been involved in voluntary work in connection with a woodland;
- 2% (in the UK and in England) had been involved in an organised tree planting event;
- fewer than 0.5% in the UK and in England were or had become a member of a community based woodland group; and
- fewer than 0.5% in the UK and in England had been involved or consulted about plans for creating/managing or using woodlands in their area.

**Table 8: Engagement with forest issues in the last 12 months**

Have you ...?	Percent of respondents							
	UK				England			
	2009	2011	2013	2015	2009	2011	2013	2015
Been involved in voluntary work in connection with a woodland (e.g physical work in a wood, admin, fund raising, running a group)	3	4	4	1	3	4	4	2
Been involved in an organised tree planting event	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2
Become or are you a member of a community based woodland group such as a 'Community Trust' or 'Friends of Group'	3	2	3	0	2	2	3	0
Been involved or consulted about plans for creating/managing or using woodlands in your area	3	2	2	0	3	2	2	0
None of these	91	92	90	96	91	92	90	95

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents:

UK - 2009 (2,011), 2011 (2,068), 2013 (1,927), 2015 (1,804);

England - 2009 (1,685), 2011 (1,733), 2013 (1,615), 2015 (1,512).

## Climate change

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with two sets of statements related to woodlands and climate change.

### Woodlands' impact on climate change

Respondents were asked about their level of agreement with a set of statements regarding the ways in which forests and woodlands in the UK can impact on climate change.

Table 9 shows that the highest levels of agreement, where respondents selected 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree', were with the following statements:

- 'Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood' (73% in the UK and 74% in England agreed);
- 'Planting more trees can help us cope with climate change by providing shade and reducing the effects of flooding' (68% in the UK and 67% in England agreed).

The lowest levels of agreement were with the following statements:

- 'Using wood for fuel makes climate change worse because it releases carbon dioxide' (37% in the UK and in England agreed);
- 'Cutting down forests and woodland makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted' (44% in the UK and in England agreed);
- 'Using wood for building is better for climate change than using materials such as concrete or steel' (45% in the UK and 44% in England agreed);
- 'Using wood for fuel is better for climate change than using fuels such as coal and gas' (45% in the UK and 44% in England agreed).

**Table 9: Ways in which forests and woodlands can impact on climate change**

	Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree							
	UK				England			
	2009	2011	2013	2015	2009	2011	2013	2015
Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood	84	82	80	73	85	83	80	74
Planting more trees can help us cope with climate change by providing shade and reducing the effects of flooding	67	73	72	68	67	74	73	67
The UK could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees	49	56	55	51	49	58	55	50
Using wood for fuel is better for climate change than using fuels such as coal and gas	48	47	44	45	47	47	45	44
Using wood for building is better for climate change than using materials such as concrete and steel	43	42	42	45	42	43	43	44
Cutting down forests and woodland makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted	52	52	55	44	53	53	55	44
Using wood for fuel makes climate change worse because it releases carbon dioxide	36	36	37	37	36	37	39	37

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents:

UK - 2009 (2,011), 2011 (2,068), 2013 (1,927), 2015 (1,804);

England - 2009 (1,685), 2011 (1,733), 2013 (1,615), 2015 (1,512).

## Forest management in response to climate change

Respondents were presented with a series of statements regarding the way in which UK forests and woodlands should be managed in response to the threat of climate change.

Table 10 shows that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- 'A lot more trees should be planted' (80% in the UK and 78% in England);
- 'More information should be provided about the ways in which wood can be used to lessen our impact on the environment' (74% in the UK and 73% in England); and
- 'Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates' (67% in both the UK and in England).

Conversely, few respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- 'There is nothing anyone could do that would make any difference' (20% in the UK and 21% in England);
- 'No action is needed; let nature take its course' (22% in the UK and 23% in England);
- 'Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced' (25% in the UK and 26% in England).

**Table 10: Management of UK forests in response to the threat of climate change**

	Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree							
	UK				England			
	2009	2011	2013	2015	2009	2011	2013	2015
A lot more trees should be planted	92	90	86	80	92	90	85	78
More information should be provided about the ways in which wood can be used to lessen our impact on the environment	86	86	80	74	86	86	80	73
Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates	70	74	71	67	70	74	71	67
Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced	17	21	22	25	17	21	23	26
No action is needed; let nature take its course	16	21	18	22	16	20	18	23
There is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference	13	13	17	20	13	13	17	21

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents:

UK - 2009 (2,011), 2011 (2,068), 2013 (1,927), 2015 (1,804);

England - 2009 (1,685), 2011 (1,733), 2013 (1,615), 2015 (1,512).

## Wood as a fuel

All respondents were asked to state whether or not they use wood as a fuel in their home, either on its own or with other fuels.

Around one in ten respondents (9% in the UK and 8% in England) reported that they use wood as a fuel (Table 11). This was not significantly different from the results in previous surveys.

**Table 11: Use of wood as a fuel in the home**

Year	Percent of respondents	
	UK	England
2007	8	8
2009	11	10
2011	12	12
2013	12	12
2015	9	8

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents:

UK - 2007 (4,018), 2009 (2,011), 2011 (2,068), 2013 (1,927), 2015 (1,804);

England - 2007 (3,339), 2009 (1,685), 2011 (1,733), 2013 (1,615), (1,512).

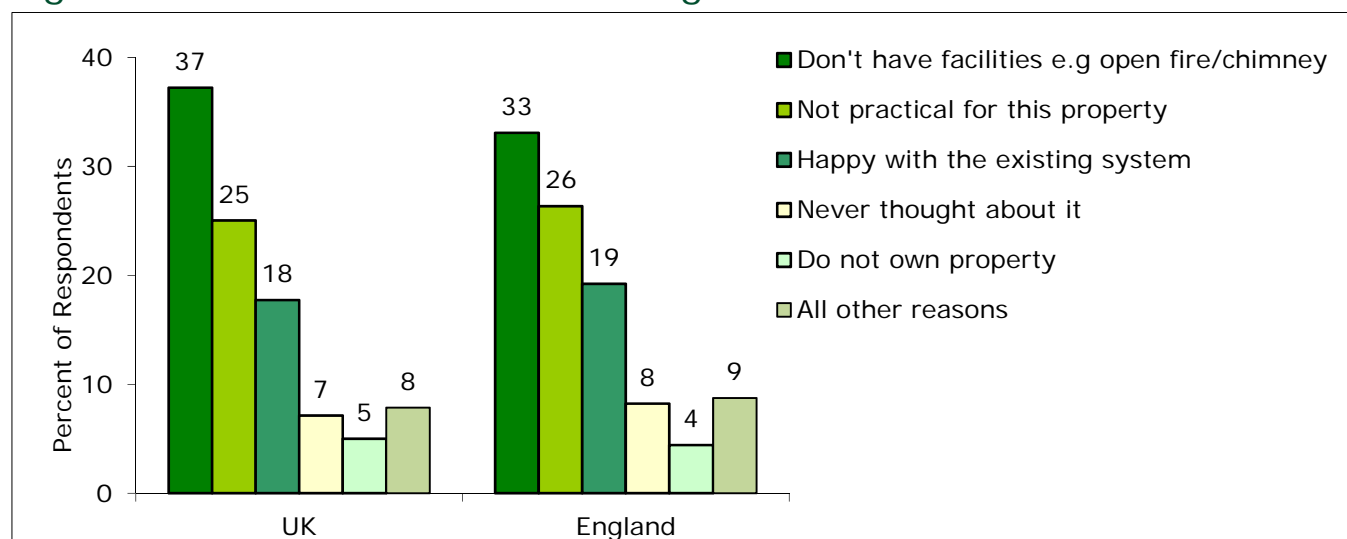
Respondents who said they used wood as a fuel were asked three further questions. The following was reported in 2015:

- Around one half of woodfuel users reported obtaining it 'a few bags at a time' (52% in the UK and 48% in England). Around one quarter (26% in the UK and 28% in England) gathered the wood themselves and around one in five (20% in the UK and 22% in England) received it 'by the truck load';
- Around one half (52% in the UK and 56% in England) said they use wood as a fuel occasionally while the remainder would class themselves as regular users;
- 15% of wood fuel users in the UK and 17% in England said they use wood as the main fuel for heating their home, while the rest mainly use something else.

Respondents who said they did not use wood as a fuel were asked to give the main reason why not. Figure 7 shows that the most common reasons cited by respondents who do not use wood as a fuel, either on its own or with other fuels, were:

- 'Don't have facilities e.g. open fire/ chimney' (37% in the UK and 33% in England),
- 'Not practical for this property' (25% in the UK and 26% in England) and
- 'Happy with the existing system' (18% in the UK and 19% in England).

Figure 7: Main reason for not using wood as a fuel



Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who did not use wood as a fuel: UK (1,641); England (1,384).

## Tree health

A question relating to tree health, introduced for the 2013 survey, was continued in 2015. Respondents were presented with a series of statements and asked to indicate their level of agreement.

Table 12 shows that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- 'Action should be taken by authorities and woodland managers to protect trees from damaging pests and diseases' (75% in the UK and 74% in England);
- 'Everyone should take action when visiting woodlands to help prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases' (57% in the UK and in England); and that
- 'I would be willing to look out for and report sightings of pests and diseases on trees, if appropriate information and advice was available to me' (55% in the UK and in England).

Conversely, few respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- 'There is very little that anyone can do to prevent the spread of damaging pests and diseases' (21% in the UK and 22% in England); and that
- 'I am aware that possible tree pests and diseases can be reported using the Tree Alert app or website' (22% in the UK and in England).

**Table 12: Tree health**

Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree

	UK		England	
	2013	2015	2013	2015
Action should be taken by authorities and woodland managers to protect trees from damaging pests and diseases	80	75	80	74
Everyone should take action when visiting woodlands to help prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases	63	57	64	57
I would be willing to look out for and report sightings of pests and diseases on trees, if appropriate information and advice was available to me	64	55	63	55
If I buy an imported tree, it is more likely to carry tree pests and diseases than a tree grown in the UK	..	42	..	42
I am aware that possible tree pests and diseases can be reported using the Tree Alert app or website	..	22	..	22
There is very little that anyone can do to prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases	22	21	23	22

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

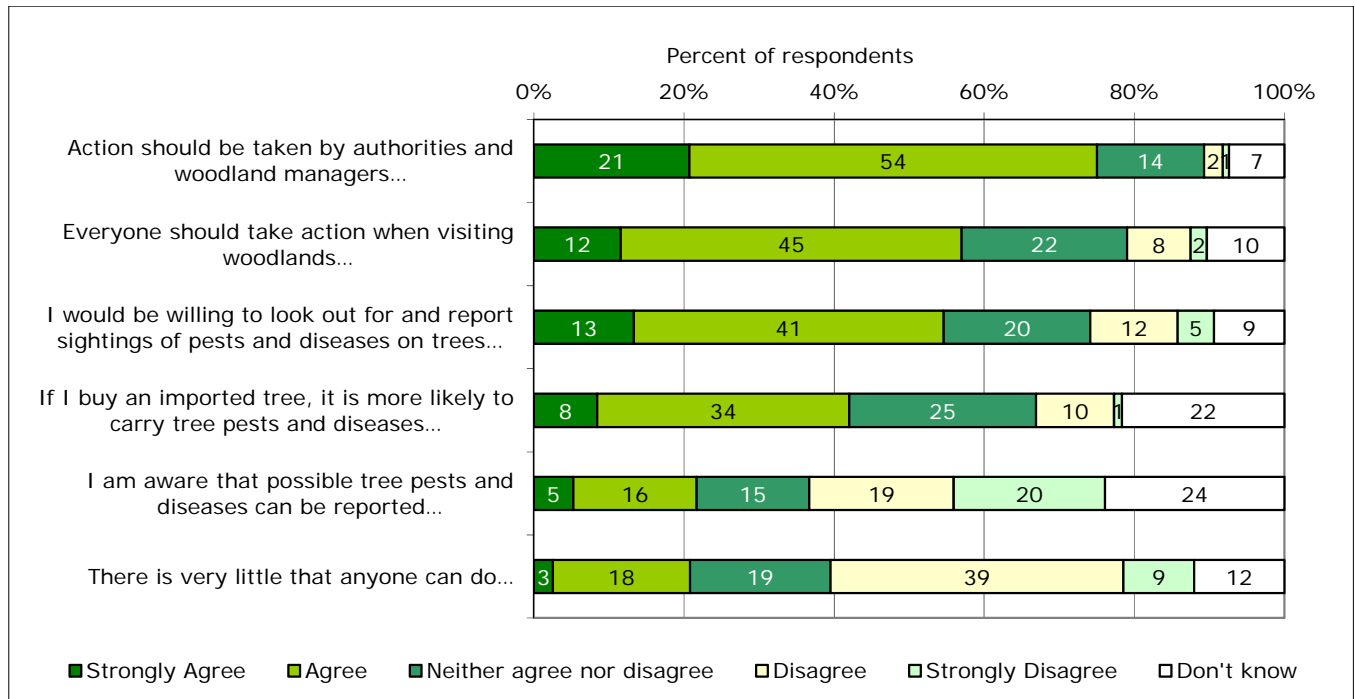
1. Figures are based on all respondents:

UK - 2013 (1,927), 2015 (1,804);

England - 2013 (1,615), (1,512).

2. .. denotes data not available (statement not included in 2013 survey).

## Figure 8: Tree health, UK

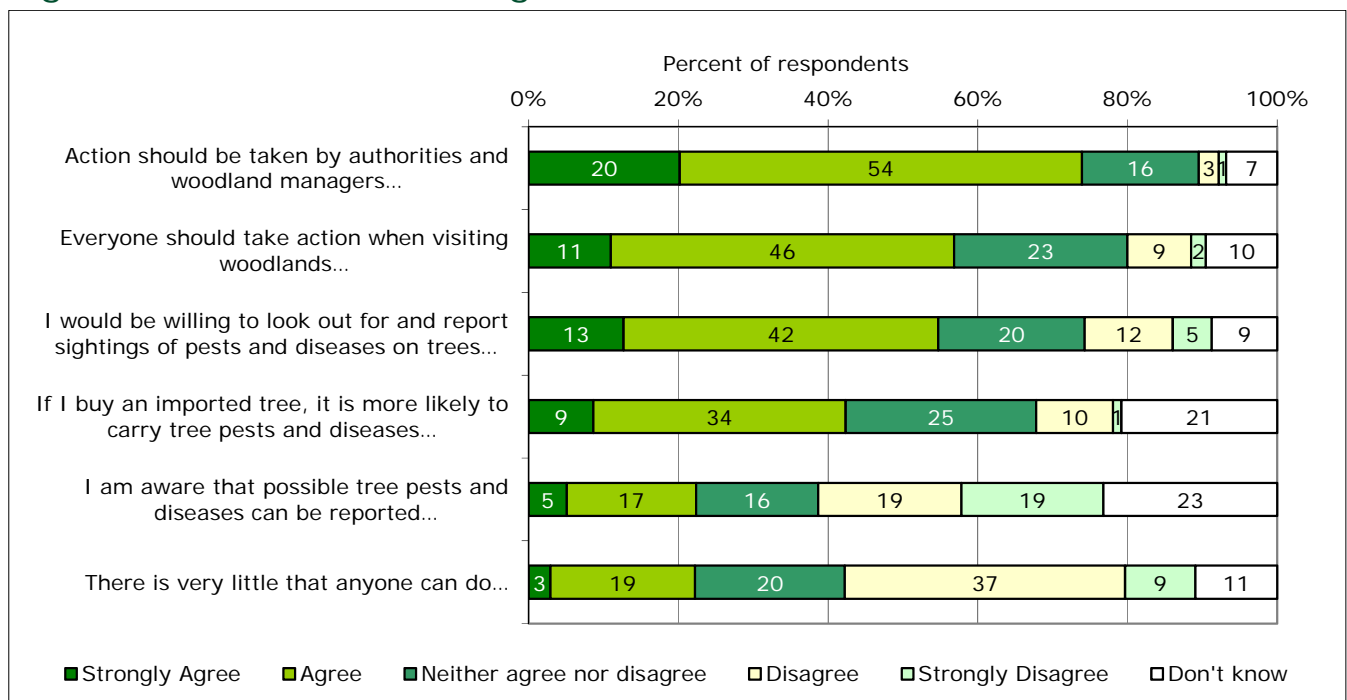


Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents in the UK (1,804).
2. See Table 12 or Questionnaire in Annex for full text of response options.

## Figure 9: Tree health, England



Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents in England (1,512).
2. See Table 12 or Questionnaire in Annex for full text of response options.



## Annex

### Introduction

This annex provides background information on the statistics presented in this release. It covers the data sources and methodology used to produce the statistics, information on quality measures and on any revisions to historic data and links to further information.

### Glossary

**Biosecurity** A set of precautions that aim to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful organisms. These may be pests, pathogens or invasive species.

**Clustering** A sampling technique where the entire population is divided into groups, or clusters, and a random sample of these clusters are selected. All (or a selection of) observations in the selected clusters are included in the sample. Cluster sampling is often used when a random sample would produce a list of subjects so widely scattered that surveying them would prove to be far too expensive.

**Confidence interval** An estimated range of values that is likely to include an unknown population parameter (i.e. a fixed value for the population as a whole). The confidence interval around an estimate is derived from the sample data, and is used to indicate the reliability of the estimate.

**Design factor** A factor applied in the calculation of confidence intervals to take account of the survey design (clustering, weighting, stratification) used in selecting the sample. A design factor of 1.5 is commonly assumed by Market Research companies for omnibus surveys of the population.

**Forest** In the United Kingdom, there is no formal definition of “forest”; the term is often used for large woodland areas (especially conifers) or for old Royal hunting preserves such as the New Forest or the Forest of Dean.

**Forestry Commission (FC)** The government department responsible for forestry matters in England, Scotland and (until March 2013) Wales. The Forestry Commission's functions in Wales transferred to a new organisation, Natural Resources Wales, on 1 April 2013. The responsibility for forestry is devolved.

**Great Britain (GB)** England, Wales and Scotland.

**Quota sampling** A method of sampling where interviewers are each given a fixed number of subjects of specified type to interview.

**Statistical significance** A statistical assessment of whether observations reflect an actual pattern rather than just chance.

**Stratification** A sampling technique where the entire population is divided into groups, or strata, and a random sample is selected within each group. Stratified sampling is often used to ensure that sufficient numbers from each group are included in the overall sample, particularly where results are required for each group.

**United Kingdom (UK)** Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

**Weighting** A set of factors assigned to survey responses to ensure that the resulting weighted results are representative of the population as a whole.

**Woodland** Land under stands of trees with a canopy cover of at least 20% (25% in Northern Ireland), or having the potential to achieve this, including integral open space, and including felled areas that are awaiting restocking.

## Data Sources and Methodology

### Background

The Forestry Commission has conducted biennial surveys of public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues since 1995. The surveys have evolved since then as follows:

- In the initial surveys, a representative sample of 2,000 adults across Great Britain (GB) was surveyed;
- In 2001, with more interest in country-level results within GB, additional questions were asked of representative samples of 1,000 adults in each of Scotland and Wales;
- Information has also been collected for Northern Ireland in the past through UK wide surveys in 2003 and the separate Northern Ireland surveys (1,000 adults) carried out in 2005, 2007, 2010 and 2014;
- In 2015 three separate surveys were carried out for the UK, for Scotland and for Wales. Some questions were asked in all three of the surveys conducted in 2015, but a number of questions have become survey-specific.

The table below is a summary of the previous surveys and presents the approximate number of adults interviewed for each country. England results are a subset of the UK survey.

**Table A1: Sample sizes for Public Opinion of Forestry surveys since 2001**

Approximate number of adults interviewed

Year	UK <sup>1</sup>	England <sup>2</sup>	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
2001	2,000		1,000	1,000	
2003	4,000	3,400	1,000	1,000	
2005	4,000	3,400	1,000	1,000	1,000
2007	4,000	3,300	1,000	1,000	1,000
2009	2,000	1,700	1,000	1,000	
2010					1,000
2011	2,000	1,700	1,000	1,000	
2013	2,000	1,600	1,000	1,000	
2014					1,000
2015	2,000	1,500	1,000	1,000	

Note:

1. 2001 and 2005 surveys covered Great Britain only (i.e. excluding Northern Ireland).
2. Results for England are derived from UK surveys.

## Survey Design

The 2015 survey results presented in this report are taken from the GfK NOP Random Location Omnibus survey carried out from the 12 to 24 March 2015. The survey was based on a representative sample of 1,804 adults (aged 16 or over) across the UK, of whom 1,546 adults were in England. They were selected from within 175 randomly selected sample points across the UK. More details of the sample method are given below.

The 2009 - 2013 surveys were also obtained from the GfK NOP Random Location Omnibus survey.

The UK 2007 survey data were obtained from the TNS CAPI Omnibus survey while the 2003 and 2005 survey data were obtained from the TNS RSGB General Omnibus. These surveys, which had a higher sample size of 4,000 adults for UK/GB, employed a different survey design so comparisons should be taken with care.

## Methodology

### UK 2015 survey

The GfK NOP Random Location Omnibus employs a quota sample of individuals with randomly selected sampling points. The sample design is essentially a 3-stage design, sampling first parliamentary constituencies, and then output areas within those selected constituencies and finally respondents within the output areas. The sample is based on 175 sampling points.

## **Stratification of parliamentary constituencies**

The first-stage sampling units for the survey are parliamentary constituencies, which are initially stratified by government office region. In Scotland, a further stratification is by the Strathclyde Region and the rest of Scotland while in Wales, the South East is stratified separately from the rest of Wales. Within each Standard Region, constituencies are classified into four urban/rural types (Metropolitan county, other 100% urban (greater than 7 persons per hectare), mixed urban/rural and rural). Within each of the resultant 46 cells, as a final stratification, constituencies are listed in order of the percentage of people resident in households whose head is in socio-economic Groups 1, 2, 3, 4 or 13 (approximates to Social Grades A&B).

## **Selection of parliamentary constituencies**

When all the constituencies have been listed in the above way, the electorate of each constituency is entered on the list and a cumulative total of electors by constituency is formed. From the file of constituencies, a sample of 175 must be drawn thus the total number of cumulative electors (N) on the list is divided by 175 and a random number between 1 and  $N/175$  is selected.

This random number identifies an elector, in the cumulative total of electors, and the constituency this elector is in becomes the first selected constituency in the sample. To obtain the other 174 constituencies, the sampling interval  $N/175$  is added on 174 times to the initial random number to select the 175 constituencies required.

## **The Selection of Output Areas**

Within each selected constituency, an output area is selected for each wave of the Omnibus (i.e. each separate run of the survey). These output areas are selected at random, but with some stratification control so that the sample of areas drawn is representative of the sample of constituencies and therefore of the United Kingdom in demographic terms. The variables used for stratification are age, sex, social class, and geodemographic profile (Mosaic classification). Once the areas have been selected, the profile of the aggregated set of areas is checked against the national profile to ensure that it is representative. Each area is a small area containing, on average, around 150 households. Each output area is therefore homogeneous, with the people living within it being fairly similar in social grade terms.

Therefore, when quotas are set for interviewing within each output area, the variables controlled for are age and sex within working status. No quota is set for social grade, as the selection of areas ensures that the sample is balanced in this respect. This procedure is repeated for each wave of the Omnibus, producing a different sample of areas for each week of fieldwork.

## **The Selection of Respondents**

For each selected output area, a list of all residential addresses is taken from the Postal Address File (PAF), which is used by the interviewer to identify the households at which they can interview. In addition to the address listing for an output area, the interviewer is also given a quota sheet in order to target certain groups in terms of age and sex within

working status. Each interviewer must interview 12 people within an output area, and the quotas are different for each area in order to reflect the demographic profile of that area.

## Questionnaire

A copy of the 2015 questionnaire is provided at the end of this release. This covers the questions requested by the Forestry Commission. In addition, a small number of additional questions are included as standard in the omnibus surveys run by Market Research companies (e.g. gender, age, country/ region) and some of these are also used in analysing the results from the survey.

Most questions are retained from one survey to the next, to enable comparisons over time. However, changes are sometimes made to reflect changing circumstances or priorities, or to improve the wording of questions. The following changes were made for the 2015 questionnaire:

- A question that asked about activities participated in when visiting woodlands/ forests has been dropped;
- Three new questions have been added to provide further information on visits to woodland managed by the Forestry Commission (Q3-5);
- One response option has been dropped and two response options have been added to the question on tree health (Q12);
- Three diversity questions, introduced for the 2013 survey have been dropped, to be included in alternate surveys.

## Quality

The data collected in the survey are weighted, to correct for imbalances between the profiles of the sample and the population and therefore ensure that the weighted results are representative of the UK adult population. For the 2015 survey, this weighting has resulted in a decrease in the apparent number of respondents in England, from a total 1,546 adults who were interviewed to a weighted total of 1,512. The results quoted in this report are based on weighted data.

All results are subject to the effects of chance in sampling, so a range of uncertainty (confidence interval) should be associated with any result from the survey. The confidence intervals take into account the effect of clustering, weighting and stratification in the survey design (see methodology, above, for more details) – this is known as a design factor and is commonly assumed to be around 1.5 for surveys of this type.

Confidence intervals are most commonly reported at the 95% level. This means that there is a 95% chance that the true population value lies within the confidence interval. The following provides a guide to interpreting the results in this report on the basis of a 95% confidence interval and assuming a design factor of 1.5:

- For questions asked in 2015 to the whole UK sample of 1,804, the range of uncertainty around any figure should be no more than  $\pm 3.5\%$  ( $\pm 3.8\%$  for the 1,512 respondents in England).
- For responses of subgroups, i.e. questions not posed to the whole sample of respondents, the range of uncertainty is correspondingly higher. For example the uncertainty for statistics asked only to those who visited woodland (1,015 respondents in the UK and 826 in England) should be no more than  $\pm 4.6\%$  for the UK and no more than  $\pm 5.1\%$  for England.
- For questions asked to whole samples, differences of more than 4.8% (UK) or 5.3% (England) between the 2015 results and 2013 results are statistically significant.
- For questions asked only to those who had visited woodland, differences of more than 6.2% (UK) or 6.8% (England) between the 2015 results and 2013 results are statistically significant.

Given the small sample sizes within the UK survey for respondents living in other parts of the UK, it is not recommended that the UK survey be used to provide results for Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. Please refer to the separate survey reports for these countries, available at [www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5zyl9w](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5zyl9w), for relevant results.

Further quality information on FC Official Statistics is available at:  
[www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7zhk85](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7zhk85)

## Revisions

Statistics on the proportion of adults who have been actively engaged in forestry have already been released, in Forestry Commission England's Corporate Plan Performance Indicators and Woodland Indicators 2015 (woodlands indicator 9). Other results from the 2015 survey are published for the first time in this release.

All figures are final. Figures for earlier years have not been revised from those previously released.

The Forestry Commission's revisions policy sets out how revisions and errors to these statistics are dealt with, and can be found at:

[www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCrevisions.pdf/\\$FILE/FCrevisions.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCrevisions.pdf/$FILE/FCrevisions.pdf).

## Further information

Accompanying tables to this release, available at [www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5zyl9w](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5zyl9w), provide more detailed figures, showing standard breakdowns.

Figures in tables have been independently rounded, so may not add to the totals shown.

## Release schedule

The UK Public Opinion of Forestry is a biennial survey, next due to run in early 2017 with results likely to be available in summer 2017.

## Official Statistics

This is an Official Statistics publication. For more information about Official Statistics and the UK Statistics Authority visit [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk).

## UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2015: Questionnaire

### Q1 [All]

**a. In the last few years have you visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation?**

(Single answer)

- Yes
- No

**b. Which of the following, if any, are the main reasons for you not visiting woodland/forests more often or at all?**

(Multi answer)

- Not interested in visiting more often
- Don't have a car
- Lack of suitable public transport
- Other personal mobility reasons (difficulty in walking, unwell, etc.)
- Woods are too far away
- Lack of facilities (play areas, picnic areas, etc.)
- Lack of information about woods to visit
- Prefer other areas of countryside
- Concerns that woods are not safe
- Woodlands are badly maintained
- Cost of visiting
- Lack of confidence
- I'm too busy/ not enough time
- Bad weather
- None of the above

**[Ask if answered yes to Q1a. Others to Q5]**

**c. Did you visit woodlands in the countryside or woodlands in and around towns or both?**

(Single answer)

- Woodlands in the countryside
- Woodlands in and around towns
- Both



**Q2 [If answered yes to Q1a]**

**How frequently did you visit forests and woodlands last summer, i.e. between April and September 2014?**

(Single answer)

- Several times per week
- Several times per month
- About once a month
- Less often
- Never

**[If answered yes to Q1a]**

**And how often this winter, i.e. since October 2014?**

(Single answer)

- Several times per week
- Several times per month
- About once a month
- Less often
- Never

**Q3 [If answered yes to Q1a]**

**Who managed the woodland you visited most recently?**

(Single answer)

- Community Managed Woodland
- Forestry Commission
- Local Authority
- National Trust
- Woodland Trust
- Other (specify)
- Don't know

## Q4 [If answered yes to Q1a]

Thinking back about all your visits to woodland over the last 12 months, what is your best estimate of how many times you visited a woodland managed by the Forestry Commission?

(Single answer)

- None
- Once or twice
- 3-5 times
- 6-10 times
- About once a month
- About once a fortnight
- About once a week
- More often
- Don't know

## Q5 [All]

Are you a ...?

(Multi answer)

- Member of English Heritage, Historic Scotland or Cadw in Wales
- Holder of a Forestry Commission England 'Discovery Pass'
- Member of the National Trust or National Trust for Scotland
- Member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Member of a wildlife trust
- Member of the Woodland Trust
- None of the above

## Q6 [All]

Have you in the past 12 months...

(Multi answer)

- Been involved or consulted about plans for creating/ managing or using woodlands in your area.
- Been involved in an organised tree planting event
- Been involved in voluntary work in connection with a woodland (e.g. physical work in a wood, admin, fund raising, running a group)
- Become or are a member of a community based woodland group such as a 'Community Trust' or 'Friends of' group
- None of these

## Q7 [All]

**Now thinking specifically about woodlands and forests and why they are important to the public please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements.**

**I think woodlands and forests are important to the public because:**

(1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree or disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree, and (6) don't know

- They contribute to the local economy
- They are places where people can relax and de-stress
- They are places where people can exercise and keep fit
- They are places where people can have fun and enjoy themselves
- They are places where people can learn about the environment
- They are places where people can learn about local culture or history
- They are important places for wildlife
- They bring the community together
- They make areas nicer places to live
- They get people involved in local issues

## Q8 [If answered yes to Q1a. Others to Q9]

**Now thinking specifically about woodlands and forests you have visited and why they are important TO YOU PERSONALLY please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements.**

**Woodlands and forests are important to me because:**

(1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree or disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree, and (6) don't know

- They are places where I can relax and de-stress
- They are places where I can exercise and keep fit
- They are places where I can have fun and enjoy myself
- They are good places for me to socialise
- They are places where I can learn about the environment
- They are places where I can learn about local culture or history
- They get me involved in local issues
- They are places where I feel at home

## Q9 [All]

**Would you agree or disagree with the following statements about the ways in which forests and woodlands in the UK can impact on climate change?**

(1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree or disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree, and( 6) don't know

- Trees are good because they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it in wood
- Cutting down forests and woodland for timber always makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted
- Using wood for fuel is better for climate change than using fuels such as coal and gas
- Using wood for fuel makes climate change worse because it releases carbon dioxide
- Using wood for building is better for climate change than using materials such as concrete and steel
- The UK could offset all its greenhouse gas emissions by planting more trees
- Planting more trees can help us cope with climate change by providing shade and reducing the effects of flooding

## Q10 [All]

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding how UK forests and woodlands should be managed in response to the threat of climate change?**

(1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree or disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree, and (6) don't know

- There is nothing that anyone could do that would make any difference
- No action is needed; let nature take its course
- A lot more trees should be planted
- Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced
- Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates
- More information should be provided about the ways in which wood can be used to lessen our impact on the environment

**Q11 [All]**

**a. Do you ever use wood as a fuel in your home, either on its own or with other fuels?**

(Single answer)

- Yes
- No (Go to Q11e)

**[Ask if answered yes to Q11a]**

**b. Do you get the wood by the truck load, or a few bags at a time, or gather it yourself?**

(Single answer)

- by the truck load
- a few bags at a time
- gather it yourself
- Other

**[Ask if answered yes to Q11a]**

**c. Do you use wood as a fuel regularly or only occasionally?**

(Single answer)

- regularly
- occasionally

**[Ask if answered yes to Q11a]**

**d. Is the wood the main fuel for heating your home, or do you mainly use something else?**

(Single answer)

- main fuel
- something else

**[After Q11d, skip to Q12]**

**[Ask if answered no to Q11a]**

**e. What is the main reason that you do not use wood as a fuel in your home?**

(Single answer)

- Never thought about it
- Happy with the existing system/ other fuels
- Not practical for this property
- Concerned about cost
- Concerned about efficiency
- Concerned about ease of use
- Concerned about environmental issues
- Do not own property
- Lack of local help/suppliers
- Don't have facilities (e.g. open fire/ chimney)
- Other (specify)

**Q12 [All]**

**Would you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to tree health?**

(1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree or disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree, and( 6) don't know

- Everyone should take action when visiting woodlands to help prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases (e.g. by washing shoes/ boots, bikes etc before and after their visit and by brushing soil & plant material from clothes).
- I would be willing to look out for and report sightings of pests and diseases on trees, if appropriate information and advice was available to me.
- There is very little that anyone can do to prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases.
- Action should be taken by authorities and woodland managers to protect trees from damaging pests and diseases.
- If I buy an imported tree, it is more likely to carry tree pests and diseases than a tree grown in the UK.
- I am aware that possible tree pests and diseases can be reported using the Tree Alert app or website.

## Q13 [All]

**a. Do you consider yourself to have any of the following disabilities or health problems?**

(Multi answer)

- Mobility disability
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Mental health problem
- Physical disability
- Other
- None of the above

**[Ask all with a disability. Others to Q14]**

**b. Does your disability affect your use of woodlands/ forests or other greenspaces?**

(Single answer)

- Yes
- No (Go to Q14)

**[Ask if answered yes to Q13b. Others to Q14]**

**c. If so, in which of the following ways?**

(Multi answer)

- Lack of public transport to the woodland/forest or other green space
- Lack of suitable paths around the woodland/forest or other green space
- Lack of accessible facilities, eg toilets, cafe, visitor centre etc
- Lack of suitable activities at the woodland/forest or other green space
- Lack of information to help inform a visit to the woodland/forest or other green space
- Lack of information at the woodland/forest or other green space
- Lack of information in a suitable format for your disability
- Attitude of staff at the woodland/forest or other green space
- Attitude of other visitors at the woodland/forest or other green space
- The cost of reaching the woodland/forest or other green space
- Cost once at the woodland/forest or other green space
- Concern that woods are not a safe place
- Other (specify)

## Q14 [All]

Which of these best describes your ethnic origin?

(Single answer)

### 1. White

Includes:

- English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background

### 2. Mixed / multiple ethnic groups

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any Other Mixed / multiple ethnic background

### 3. Asian / Asian British

Includes:

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any Other Asian background

### 4. Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

Includes:

- African
- Caribbean
- Any Other Black / African / Caribbean background

### 5. Other ethnic group

Includes:

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group