Woodland Creation

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Aim

The aim of this category is to support the creation of new woodland that will bring economic, environmental and social benefits.

These benefits include:

- meeting our target to increase woodland cover by an extra 100,000 hectares between 2012 and 2022
- helping mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through carbon sequestration
- restoration of 'lost' habitats through developing forest habitat networks
- supporting a sustainable forest industry by providing a reliable timber supply
- protecting soil and water
- providing community benefits through public access
- enhancing urban areas and improving landscapes
- supporting rural development through local businesses and farm diversification

Grant support

The grant support for this category has nine woodland creation options.

There is an initial planting payment and an annual maintenance payment for five years. There are also a range of capital grants available for operations such as fencing and tree protection (see Table 3 – Capital grant operations for woodland creation).

Initial planting and annual maintenance payment rates are shown below as a per hectare rate.

Click on the option to get more detailed information.

Woodland Creation option	Payment rates in standard areas	Payment rates in target areas

	Initial planting payment rate (£/ha)	Annual maintenancepayme rate (£/ha/year) for five years *	Total payment rate (£/ha)	Initial planting payment rate(£/ha)	Annual maintenancepayme rate (£/ha/year) for five years *	Total payment rate (£/ha)
Conifer	1920	208	2960	2160	234	3330
Diverse Conifer	2160	336	3840	2430	378	4320
Broadleaves	2880	528	5520	3240	594	6210
Native Scots Pine	1840	272	3200	2070	306	3600
Native Upland Birch	1840	128	2480	2070	144	2790
Native Broadleaves	1840	272	3200	2070	306	3600
Native Low-density Broadleaves	560	96	1040	630	108	1170
Small or Farm Woodland	2400	400	4400	2700	450	4950
Native Broadleaves in Northern and Western Isles	3600	624	6720	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table 1 – Payment rates for woodland creation

***** *Public bodies are not eligible for 'maintenance' payments'.*

Please note that local authorities are not classed as public bodies.

Farmland Premium payments are not included under the Scottish Rural Development Programme 2014–2020 Forestry Grant Scheme.

However from 2015, farmed land that is eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme and is afforested under the new Forestry Grant Scheme, will continue to be eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme.

Afforested land will be eligible for the duration of the woodland creation contract, which will normally be 20 years. In order to receive the Basic Payment you must have an eligible farming business and eligible land.

Full eligibility rules and how to apply for the Basic Payment Scheme

Target areas

Higher rates are available for the initial planting and annual maintenance payments in the target areas specified below.

– Areas identified as being preferred or potential in the relevant Local Authority Woodland Strategy (or equivalent)

The higher payment rates will apply to the following woodland creation options:

- Conifer
- Diverse Conifer
- Broadleaves

Please discuss with your local conservancy office to confirm that your application meets this requirement.

The document below contains links to all available Local Authority Woodland Strategies.

Local Authority Woodland Strategies (MS Word, Size: 16.4 kB)

doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Local-Authority-Woodland-Strategy-links-December-2015.docx

– Areas identified by Cairngorms National Park Authority as a priority for woodland expansion

The proposed new woodland must be within the area identified by the Cairngorms National Park Authority as a priority for ‘encouraging woodland network expansion’. Select the Forestry Grant Scheme 2014–2020 Target Areas folder on the Forestry Commission Scotland Map Viewer to see if you are eligible.

The higher payment rates will apply to the following woodland creation options:

- Diverse Conifer (predominantly Scots pine)
- Native Scots Pine
- Native Upland Birch
- Native Broadleaves
- Native Low-density Broadleaves

The rate will be dependent on the extent to which the eligible option(s), detailed above, is within the priority woodland network expansion area.

For example, if 50 per cent or more of the eligible option(s) is within the woodland network expansion area then the whole option will receive the higher payment rate. If less than 50 per cent of the eligible option(s) is within the woodland expansion area then the higher payment rate will not be applied.

Please discuss with your local conservancy office to confirm that your application meets this requirement.

– Woodlands for Water

The proposed new woodland must be within one of the target areas identified in the FCS-SEPA opportunity mapping projects as likely to provide multiple benefits for natural flood management and water quality, and be identified as ‘Woodlands for Water’ in the 'FGS (2014-20) Target Areas' folder on the Forestry Commission Scotland Map Viewer.

The higher payment rates will apply to the following woodland creation options:

- Diverse Conifer
- Broadleaves
- Native Scots Pine
- Native Upland Birch
- Native Broadleaves
- Native Low-density Broadleaves
- Small or Farm Woodland

The woodland must be a type which helps to provide opportunities for both natural flood management and water quality. These benefits must be clearly identified in the Woodland Operational Plan.

The rate will be dependent on the extent to which the eligible option(s), detailed above, is within the Woodlands for Water target area.

For example, if 50 per cent or more of the eligible option(s) area is within the target area, then the whole eligible option(s) will receive the higher payment rate. If less than 50 per cent of the eligible option(s) area is within the target area then the higher payment rate will not be applied.

Please discuss with your local conservancy office to confirm that your application meets this requirement.

Please also note that within any of the target areas the capital items such as fences and gates will remain at the standard payment rates.

– Use of genetically-improved Sitka spruce

To encourage the use of the most productive Sitka spruce plants, a capital grant is available under the conifer option to support the use of plants produced by vegetative propagation.

The plants must have been produced by vegetative propagation from seeds derived from controlled pollinations in 'Parents of Families' in the tested category.

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Eligibility criteria

Local woodland strategy

You must ensure that your woodland creation application fits well with the local authority woodland strategy (or equivalent). Further information can be found in the Forestry Commission Scotland Technical Support page.

Suitability of tree species

Your chosen species must be either 'very suitable' or 'suitable' based on the approach outlined in Forestry Commission Bulletin 124 – An Ecological Site Classification for Forestry in Great Britain . For the Native Low-density Broadleaves option, marginal sites will also be considered.

A fundamental consideration when creating woodland is whether or not the tree species is appropriate to the site. You should carry out a site-based assessment of soil and vegetation to match species choice with the particular site.

For the native woodland options you must be able to demonstrate that the National Vegetation Classification woodland type is appropriate to the site. This will be determined by existing vegetation indicators (refer to Forestry Commission Bulletin 112: Creating New Native Woodlands – Rodwell and Patterson 1995), as well as climate conditions, soil moisture and soil nutrients.

The Forestry Commission's Ecological Site Classification Decision Support System helps guide forest managers and planners to select ecologically-suited species to sites.

Ecological Site Classification considers the following climatic and site conditions:

- exposure
- accumulated temperature
- moisture deficit
- continentality
- soil moisture
- soil nutrients

This helps to determine suitability of the chosen species to the site and categorises them as poor, marginal, suitable or very suitable.

Supporting evidence on the suitability of tree species is required in the Woodland Operational Plan.

Please note that Ecological Site Classification Decision Support System is a free service, but online registration is required before you can begin using it.

The assessment of the site should be proportionate to the size and sensitivity of the application. Your local conservancy office will advise you on the level of information required for your application.

We will not support planting on deep peats (defined as peat greater than 50 centimetres in depth).

In order to carry out an assessment of the site conditions you may wish to engage the services of a person, or organisation, with the necessary forestry knowledge and experience.

Deep peat

We will not support planting on deep peats (defined as peat greater than 50 centimetres in depth).

- on sites where it is likely that deep peat may be present we expect an appropriate level of assessment to be carried out to identify its distribution on site
- all areas of contiguous deep peat over 0.25 hectares should be mapped as unplantable land
- areas smaller than 0.25 hectares (unmappable) should, where practicable, be identified on the ground and care should be taken when preparing the site to ensure these areas are not disturbed and remain unplanted – where these areas represent a small proportion of the planting area (up to 10 per cent), they can be included, within mapped planting areas. However such peat should not be planted and the stocking densities should be adjusted accordingly to meet the grant requirements

- where the proportion of unmappable deep peat is over 10 per cent of the planting area this will need careful assessment and discussion with Forestry Commission Scotland to determine whether the site is suitable for planting or whether larger areas should be mapped as unplantable

Further information on how to deal with open ground is provided in the 'Designed Open Ground' guidance on the Forestry Commission Scotland Technical Support page.

Woodland Operational Plan

Your Woodland Operational Plan should demonstrate that your application is based on good knowledge of the sensitivities and local issues, and is well-integrated with other land objectives so as to secure multiple benefits.

Your operational plan will also need to state the methods and techniques you will use to demonstrate delivery of good practice.

- see the Forestry Commission Scotland Technical Support page for further guidance on Woodland Operational Plans

You must also provide a tabular breakdown of the woodland creation component areas

- see the Forestry Commission Scotland Technical Support page for a template of the table

This should clearly outline the total area within the application scheme boundary, areas planted with trees, areas of mapped designed open ground and any areas of mapped 'other land' (unplantable), for which you will not receive grant. This must be completed for each woodland creation option being proposed on the site.

- see the Forestry Commission Scotland Technical Support page for further guidance on designed open ground

Map

In addition to your online application you must also provide a map.

The map is an important part of your application and should accurately represent details such as the woodland creation species boundaries (sub-divided by claim year), the scale of the map and the Ordnance Survey grid reference.

- see Forestry Commission Scotland Technical Support page for further information on the specific detail required on the map

For more general guidance on where to get your map and copyright, see the General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme page.

UK Forestry Standard

All applications will be assessed against the UK Forestry Standard and associated guidelines. To be eligible your proposal must comply with the UK Forestry Standard.

Where particular site sensitivities exist, such as archaeology, you may be required to carry out the relevant surveys. The standard payment rate includes a provision for this work.

Discussing with your neighbours

You should discuss your woodland creation application with those neighbours who might be directly affected. You should record any contact, and results of contact, with neighbours in your accompanying Woodland Creation Operational Plan.

Getting landlord's consent

If you are a tenant then a landlord's declaration must be provided with your application. The control of the land must extend for the duration of the proposed contract.

Landlord's Declaration Form (MS Word, Size: 356.2 kB)

doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Landlords-Declaration-Form---FINAL.docx

If you are a contractual licensee then the Contractual License must be provided with your application. The control of the land must extend for the duration of the proposed contract.

Please note that if you are a crofter you may have to notify the Crofting Commission of your application. Go to the Crofting Commission website for further details.

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Supporting information

You must submit the following supporting documents with your application:

- Woodland Operational Plan
- map (for example, a species map)
- getting landlord's consent (if appropriate)
- Woodland Creation component areas table
- Central Scotland Green Network Contribution supporting statement (if appropriate)

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Additional information

Contract requirements

You must maintain all the works associated with the woodland creation and approved in your contract for 20 years beyond the approval date of the contract.

You must carry out your initial planting to meet the minimum stocking density detailed within the specific option. The minimum stocking density should then be maintained until the trees are successfully established.

Successfully established means that the trees must be present to the minimum stocking densities specified, healthy and in a condition capable of continued growth given no further weeding but subject to normal ongoing maintenance operations. Normal maintenance includes protection from grazing by wild or domestic animals for a period of 20 years following the initial planting payment.

Environmental Impact Assessments

If your application area is above certain thresholds (see Forestry Commission Scotland Environmental Impact Assessment page) you must apply to your local conservancy office for an Environmental Impact Assessment determination.

Forestry Commission Scotland will determine, under the Environment Impact Assessment [Forestry] [Scotland] Regulations 1999, if your application requires their consent. Please discuss your case with your local conservancy office.

Consultation about your application

We may consult or notify local authorities and other statutory organisations about your application. We will take their views into account before considering approval.

All applications containing new woodland creation areas that exceed two hectares are placed on a public register by the local conservancy office. Please note that the overall consultation period is 28 days and this includes the time the case is on the Forestry Commission Scotland public register.

Prior notification of forestry tracks

If your application includes the construction or alteration of forestry tracks (private ways), prior notification will be required.

As this is a new regulatory requirement further guidance and final arrangement are still to be confirmed. Please discuss with your local conservancy office.

Compensatory planting required by planning consent

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Woodland creation that is required as a specific condition in a planning consent, or compensatory planting associated with a development such as a wind farm, are not eligible for grant support.

However where a larger area is proposed to be planted than is required by the planning consent, a Forestry Commission Scotland woodland officer will assess the application on its individual merits.

Any additional area of woodland creation which does not have any specific conditions attached may be eligible for grant support. The additional area will also be considered under the Environmental Impact Assessment [Forestry] [Scotland] Regulations 1999. Your local conservancy office will be able to advise you further.

Ineligible areas and owners

Woodland creation grants are not available for:

- planting in existing woodlands (including grazed woodland)
- Christmas tree growing
- short rotation coppice
- fast-growing trees planted for energy production (such as eucalyptus in short-rotation forestry situations)

Insurance of your land and woodland creation areas

We recommend you are insured against forest fires, natural disasters and catastrophic events. If the woodland creation area does not establish as a result of these types of events, then we may recover all grant funding received.

Large-scheme area threshold

For conifer, native Scots pine and the native broadleaves options, which can be delivered on a very large scale, the payment rates have been reduced to reflect economies of scale and ensure that we deliver value for money.

The threshold is 300 hectares per option, per application, and the reduced payment rates will apply to the area above the threshold (see Table 2 – Payment rates below).

Where there are multiple applications within the same Business Reference Number, that are proposed to be planted contiguously, then this will be treated as one application for the purposes of the large-scheme area threshold.

The reduced rate will only apply to the initial planting and annual maintenance payments. The payment rate for capital items, such as fences and gates, will not be reduced.

Woodland Creation option	Payment rates in standard areas above 300 hectares			Payment rates in target areas above 300 hectares		
	Initial planting payment rate (£/ha)	Annual maintenance payment rate (£/ha/year) for five years	Total payment rate (£/ha)	Initial planting payment rate(£/ha)	Annual maintenance payment rate (£/ha/year) for five years	Total payment rate (£/ha)
Conifer	1440	156	2220	1680	182	2590
Native Scots Pine	1380	204	2400	1610	238	2800
Native Broadleaves	1380	204	2400	1610	238	2800

Table 2 – Payment rates for options above 300 hectares threshold

Central Scotland Green Network Contribution

The Central Scotland Green Network Contribution is a capital item that offers a capital payment in addition to the woodland creation initial planting payment.

This payment recognises the additional costs of establishment where your application supports the delivery of the relevant forest and woodland strategy. It can only be applied to certain woodland creation options.

Refer to the Central Scotland Green Network Contribution page for more details.

Central Scotland Green Network Contribution

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Capital grant operations

In addition to the initial planting grant there is support for a number of operations which may be required to ensure the successful establishment of new woodland. These operations are detailed in the table below.

Capital item	Payment rate
Central Scotland Green Network – Core Area Contribution	£2500/ha
Central Scotland Green Network – Fringe Area Contribution	£750/ha
Genetically-improved Sitka Spruce	£150/ha
Stock Fence	£4.40/m
Deer Fence	£6.80/m
Upgrading Stock to Deer Fence	£3.28/m
Rabbit-proofing of Existing or New Stock or Deer Fence	£1.60/m
Tree Shelter: 1.2 to 1.8 Metres *	£2.00 each
Tree Shelter: 0.6 to 1.1 Metres *	£1.16 each
Vole Guard	£0.19 each
Enhancing or Modifying a Stock Fence Black grouse and capercaillie core areas	£2.00/m
Enhancing or Modifying a Deer Fence – Low Cost Black grouse and capercaillie core areas	£2.00/m
Enhancing or Modifying a Deer Fence – High Cost Black grouse and capercaillie core areas	£4.48/m
Conversion of Deer Fence to Stock Fence Black grouse and capercaillie core areas	£1.60/m
Gate for Stock Fence	£136 each
Gate for Deer Fence	£172 each
Badger Gate	£64 each
Self-closing Gate for Non-vehicular Access	£280 each
Building or Restoring Drystone or Flagstone Dykes	£26.40/square metre
Bracken control supporting the mechanical or chemical removal of bracken for areas of significant contiguous bracken, agreed by the local conservancy. The majority of the application must comprise of either a conifer, diverse conifer or broadleaf woodland creation option, and a minimum two hectares of contiguous bracken requiring treatment.	£225/ha

Table 3 – Capital grant operations for woodland creation

***** The presumption is that fencing will be the preferred method of protecting new woodland. However, tree shelters may be supported where they are a lower-cost option.

In all Woodland Creation cases, we will assess both the silvicultural appropriateness and the benefits to be delivered by the scheme to determine whether the proposed protection costs represent value for money. In cases where they do not, we will limit the grant contribution for protection and may request that you revise your proposals.

Where tree protection capital costs (i.e. fencing, gates, tree shelters) are exceptionally high and more than 150 per cent of the total capital cost for initial planting – please contact your local Forestry Commission Scotland conservancy office in advance before submitting your application. Applications with high protection costs, over 150 per cent of the total capital cost for the initial planting, may still be supported where additional or exceptional scheme benefits are clearly identified.

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Scoring criteria

To make sure that we make the best use of the resources available in delivering the Scottish Government objectives we will assess each application using scoring criteria for forestry options.

Each application will receive a score based on the scoring criteria specific to the Forestry Grant Scheme option and we will set a threshold score for each option.

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Further information and technical guidance

General forestry guidance

- UK Forestry Standard
- The Scottish Forest Strategy
- Best practice steps for establishing new woodlands

Woodland creation

- Forestry Commission Practice Guide – Design Techniques for Forest Management Planning
- Forestry Commission Scotland Practice Guide – Achieving Diversity in Scotland's Forest Landscapes
- Forest Research – Ecological Site Classification Decision Support System
- Forestry Commission Bulletin 124 – An Ecological Site Classification for Forestry in Great Britain
- Forestry Commission Scotland – The Creation of Small Woods on Farms
- Forest Research Bulletin 127 – Choice of Sitka Spruce Seed Origins for Use in British Forests – C.J.A. Samuel, A.M. Fletcher and R. Lines

Native woodlands

- Forestry Commission Scotland Guidance: Seed Sources for Planting Native Trees and Shrubs in Scotland
- Forestry Commission Bulletin 112 – Creating New Native Woodlands – J Rodwell and G Patterson (1994)
- Forestry Commission Scotland Guidance Note 35: Assessing Marginal Sites for New Native Woodlands
- Forestry Commission Scotland – Forest Habitat Networks
- Forestry Commission Scotland Guidance – Developing Native Woodlands Habitat Networks
- Native Woodlands Survey of Scotland

Forest Research – Growing Birch in Scotland for Higher Quality Timber (PDF, Size: 823.5 kB)
doc_external_url: https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Birch-Scotland-Higher-Quality-Timber.PDF

Deer

- Best Practice Guidance
- Scottish Natural Heritage Deer Code
- Wildlife & Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 (WANE Act) authorisation

Fencing

- Joint Agency Fencing Guidance
- Forest Research Forest Fencing Technical Guide

Mapping

- Woodland Creation mapping guidance
- General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme

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Recent changes

Section	Change	Previous text	New text
Supporting information	Addition of Central Scotland Green Network Contribution	-	• Central Scotland Green Network Contribution supporting statement (if appropriate)
Central Scotland Green Network Contribution	The information on the Central Scotland Green Network Contribution has been moved to a dedicated page.		[See Central Scotland Green Network Contribution]

Previous versions

Previous versions of this page

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