

Guidance: Higher Tier: Countryside Stewardship

Updated: Options, supplements and capital items PDF updated to show option SW12 cannot be used on land already receiving funding for Ecological Focus Areas declared for Basic Payment Scheme.

These documents apply to the 2018 application round for Countryside Stewardship (CS).

Higher Tier closed for applications on 13 April 2018.

Use the manual to understand:

- the payments you could receive and how this scheme benefits the environment
- eligibility requirements
- how to apply
- the rules and conditions

Use Higher Tier and Mid Tier guidance on options, supplements and capital items:

- to understand the rules for each option, supplement and capital item
- for advice on carrying out options, supplements and capital items

Use the conversion guidance if:

- you're in the final year of an Environmental Stewardship (ES) agreement and want to put the land into a Higher Tier agreement
- there's a risk of to a site caused by loss of management between the end of your ES agreement and the start of a Higher Tier agreement

The manual has portrait and landscape pages. Before printing, select 'auto rotate' in your printer settings.

Overlap of CS options with Ecological Focus Areas (EFAs) in 2019

You can no longer overlap the following CS options with EFAs declared on your Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2019 application:

- [AB1 Nectar flower mix](#)
- [AB3 Beetle banks](#)
- [AB4 Skylark plots](#)
- [AB5 Nesting plots for lapwing and stone curlew](#)
- [AB6 Enhanced overwinter stubble](#)
- [AB8 Flower rich margins and plots](#)

- [AB9 Winter bird food](#)
- [AB11 Cultivated areas for arable plants](#)
- [AB15 Two year sown legume fallow](#)
- [AB16 Autumn sown bumblebird mix](#)
- [HS2 Take historic and archaeological features out of cultivation](#)
- [OP2 Organic wild bird seed mixture](#)
- [SW1 4 to 6 metre buffer strip on cultivated land](#)
- [SW3 In-field grass strips](#)
- [SW4 12 to 24 metre watercourse buffer strips on cultivated land](#)
- [SW6 Winter cover crops](#)
- [SW12 Making space for water](#)
- [WD3 Woodland edges on arable land](#)
- [WT2 Buffering in-field ponds and ditches on arable land](#)

This is to avoid funding the same activity on the same land parcel under both CS and BPS, known as 'double funding'. You can continue to place CS options and EFAs in the same land parcel but they cannot overlap.

In 2018, your Ecological Focus Area (EFA) cover crops must be established by 1 October 2018 and retained until at least 15 January 2019. Natural England will not consider the retention of the EFA cover crops as an overlap with 1 January 2019 CS agreements. This assumes you'll move the cover crops to a different location in 2019.

Hedges can be used for EFA and for Entry Level Stewardship, Higher Level Stewardship and CS options without payment deductions.

Find out more about CS funding

See:

- [Wildlife Offers](#) for information on the 4 new CS Offers for Wildlife for 2018
- [Countryside Stewardship](#) for details of other funding