

# Landmark £15 million woodland creation grant opens for applications

The Forestry Commission has today opened a new multimillion tree planting grant scheme – the England Woodland Creation Offer – to provide greater financial incentives for landowners and farmers to plant and manage trees.

With £15.9 million available in its first year, the grant scheme, now open to applications, will provide enhanced payments rates. It will give greater recognition of the public and environmental benefits that woodlands bring, by providing additional incentives to ensure the right tree is planted in the right place, and for the right reason.

The new grant scheme for landowners and farmers will support the creation of a range of woodland types and sizes, including: along rivers to improve the water environment; through natural colonisation where woodlands are created through natural processes by trees which grow from seeds which fall and germinate there; and where their location and design will provide public benefits including greater access.

The grant can cover 100 per cent of eligible standard capital costs of woodland creation, meaning costs are covered for buying and planting the trees, and then maintaining them for 10 years. Additional financial contributions are available for well-designed woodland that provide public and wider environmental benefits.

Additional contributions will be available for:

- nature and species recovery – between £1,100/ha to £2,800/ha available where woodland creation will help woodland-dependent priority species to recover;
- tree planting near watercourses and rivers (riparian buffers) – £1,600/ha available where the creation of native broadleaved woodland along water courses will improve river habitats;
- reduced flood risk – £500/ha available where woodland creation can help reduce the risk of flooding;
- improved public access – £2,200/ha available where woodland creation will provide long-term permissive access to the public to enjoy
- close to settlements – £500/ha available where woodland creation will provide social and environmental benefits by being close to people;
- improved water quality – £400/ha available for woodlands that clean our water by reducing pollutants through land use change by intercepting pollution and sediment before it reaches watercourses.

EWCO will be designed to allow farmers to make the most of green finance opportunities. For example, applicants will be supported to register their planting under the Woodland Carbon Code wherever eligible, to allow the future sale of high quality woodland carbon credits to private buyers. The government aims to maximise private investment in new woodlands and will

regularly review its approach to additional contributions to maximise private investment and direct public funding where it is most needed.

**Forestry Commission Chair, Sir William Worsley, said:**

This exciting new grant offer is flexible to allow landowners to create a woodland that meets their own objectives. From planting a small one hectare block, a strip of trees along rivers to reduce flood risk, to large mixed woodlands. This improved grant gives everyone the opportunity to see woodland creation as a financially and environmentally rewarding option. This will help with our journey to reach net zero by 2050.

**Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:**

Our ambition is not just to treble tree planting rates by the end of Parliament but to create diverse treescapes across the country which benefit wildlife, the environment and people.

This grant, backed by £15.9 million in its first year, provides an exciting range of options for farmers and landowners so they can plant and manage trees in a way that meets their individual needs and ambition.

From planting trees along rivers to reduce flood risk and improve water quality, to creating habitat for woodland dependent species, and improving public access – this grant will help deliver the woodlands of the future.

Recognising the manifold benefits that trees bring, the new grant scheme will support diverse woodland types at different scales (from a minimum size woodland of just 1 hectare per application and 0.1 hectare per block). The grant will continue the current approach of focusing funding predominantly on the creation of native broadleaf woodlands at a large scale, but also supporting well-designed majority conifer and mixed woodlands, providing scope for well-designed productive forestry to grow alongside significant increases in majority broadleaf woodland.

The England Woodland Creation Offer also addresses wider barriers to woodland creation, by improving regulatory processes, consultation arrangements and advice and guidance as part of the application process.

Today's announcement follows the publication of the England Trees Action Plan. This was announced through the [Environment Secretary's recent speech from Delamere Forest](#) where he outlined plans to treble tree planting rates in England during this Parliament, funded through an expected £500 million from the Nature for Climate Fund. Also recently announced, the [Tree Health Pilot](#) is taking action against pests and diseases which attack our trees, woods and forests.

[Apply for the England Woodland Creation Offer here.](#)