

[News story: Countryside Stewardship: detail of new simplified offers](#)

Four new Countryside Stewardship offers will be introduced for farmers and land managers from the New Year to boost biodiversity and help protect and enhance farmland and the countryside.

Significant improvements have been made to the scheme to make it simpler and easier for farmers and land managers to apply.

The four new offers – Online Arable Offer, Lowland Grazing Offer, Upland Offer and Mixed Farming Offer – will provide tailored options covering the full range of different farm types, so farmers and land managers can deliver environmental benefits no matter where they are or what they farm.

The popular Hedgerows and Boundaries Grant will also receive additional funding from 2018, with farmers and land managers able to apply for a maximum grant of £10,000, up from £5,000 in previous application rounds.

Paperwork for the new offers is quicker and easier to get through, due to streamlined evidence checks and shorter application forms designed to help save farmers valuable time. The scheme is also non-competitive, meaning that all farmers who meet the eligibility requirements can get an agreement to deliver as few as 3 options, or as many as 7 up to 14, depending on the offer applied for.

The changes have been made to help more farmers get back into agri-environment schemes, with options such as the popular nectar flower mix which many farmers delivered under the ELS schemes available to apply for in the new CS offers. The new Upland Offer also provides an opportunity for farmers who were on HLS agreements to get into Mid Tier agreements.

These new offers will complement the existing Higher Tier as well as the Mid Tier offer which has been enhanced and will continue to be available, supporting agreements delivering organics, historic, water quality, wet grassland and traditional orchards.

Scheme handbooks with more detail on how to apply and the best options for different farms will be published in the New Year to coincide with the application window opening.

Online Arable Offer

- there are 11 arable options to choose from.
- farmers must pick at least one option from each category and the package delivers the minimum 3% of farmed land under option management which is needed for farmland birds and wild pollinators
- farmers can select more options from the list if they wish, with no maximum amount (subject to any individual options requirements). The

minimum number of options in the 5 year agreement is 3

- delivering the offer provides the year round benefits essential to birds and pollinating insects, and can help protect water quality

Category 1. Nectar and pollen sources for insect pollinators and insect-rich foraging for birds (minimum 1 ha per 100 ha of farmed land included in the agreement, no maximum)

| | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|------|
| AB1 | Nectar flower mix | £511 |
| AB8 | Flower-rich margins and plots | £539 |

Category 2. Winter food for seed-eating birds (minimum 2 ha per 100 ha farmed land included in the agreement, no maximum)

| | | |
|-----|------------------|------|
| AB9 | Winter bird food | £640 |
|-----|------------------|------|

Category 3. Additional resources & habitats (no min or max, apart from individual option requirements)

| | | |
|------|---|---|
| BE3 | Management of hedgerows | £8/100m |
| AB4 | Skylark plots | £18 (£9 per plot, min. 2 plots per ha). |
| AB5 | Nesting plots for lapwing and stone curlew | £524 |
| AB6 | Enhanced overwinter stubble | £436 |
| AB11 | Cultivated areas for arable plants | £532 |
| AB12 | Supplementary winter feeding for farmland birds | £632 per tonne for every 2 ha of AB9 |
| SW1 | 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land | £353 |
| WT2 | Buffering in-field ponds and ditches on arable land | £501 |

Lowland Grazing Offer

- there are 7 options to choose from
- these are divided into 3 categories in the table and delivering the package will provide year round food, shelter and nesting habitat for birds, and nectar sources and habitat for pollinating insects
- farmers must pick at least one option from category 1 and 2. The minimum number of options in the 5 year agreement is 2. Farmers can select more options if they wish

Category 1. Nectar and pollen sources for insect pollinators and insect-rich foraging for birds (minimum 2 ha per 100 ha of farmed land included in the agreement, no maximum)

| | | |
|-----|--|------|
| GS2 | Permanent grassland with very low inputs (outside SDA) | £95 |
| GS4 | Legume and herb-rich swards | £309 |

Category 2. Nesting and shelter for insect pollinators and birds (minimum 500m of BE3 or 1 ha of GS1 per 100 ha farmed land included in the agreement, no maximum)

| | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| BE3 | Management of hedgerows | £8/100m |
| GS1 | Take field corners out of production (outside SDA) | £365 |

Category 3. Optional additional resources & habitats (no min or max, apart from individual option requirements)

| | | |
|------|--|------|
| GS3 | Ryegrass seed-set as winter/spring food for birds | £331 |
| GS17 | Lenient grazing supplement | £44 |
| WT1 | Buffering in-field ponds and ditches in improved grassland | £201 |

Upland Offer

- there are 4 base options and additional supplements farmers can choose from.
- there are no Categories in the Uplands offer.
- as a minimum, farmers must pick 1 base option and 2 supplements or 2 base options and 1 supplement. The minimum number of options/supplements is 3, but Farmers can select more options if they wish.
- selecting the right mix of options/supplements will help provide the right management for flower-rich meadows and nesting and foraging habitat for upland birds, including breeding waders. The option also help protect water quality.

| | | |
|-------------|--|---------|
| GS5 | Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs | £16 |
| UP1 | Enclosed rough grazing | £39 |
| UP2 | Management of rough grazing for birds | £88 |
| BE3 | Management of hedgerows | £8/100m |
| Supplements | | |
| GS15 | Haymaking supplement | £85 |
| GS16 | Rush control supplement | £73 |
| GS17 | Lenient grazing supplement | £44 |
| SP6 | Cattle grazing supplement | £45 |

Mixed Farming Offer

- there are 14 options to choose from.
- these are divided into 3 categories.
- farmers must pick at least one option from category 1, 2 and 3, and delivering the package will provide year round food, shelter and nesting habitat for birds, and nectar sources and habitat for pollinating insects.
- some category 3 options can help protect water quality and aquatic habitats. The minimum number of options in the 5 year agreement is 3.

Category 1. Nectar and pollen sources for insect pollinators and insect-rich foraging for birds (minimum 1 ha per 100 ha of farmed land included in the agreement for AB1 and AB8; 2ha for GS4. No maximum)

| | | |
|-----|-------------------------------|------|
| AB1 | Nectar flower mix | £511 |
| AB8 | Flower-rich margins and plots | £539 |
| GS4 | Legume and herb-rich swards | £309 |

Category 2. Winter food for seed-eating birds (minimum 2 ha per 100 ha farmed land included in the agreement, no maximum)

| | | |
|-----|------------------|------|
| AB9 | Winter bird food | £640 |
|-----|------------------|------|

Category 3. Additional resources & habitats (no min or max, apart from individual option requirements)

| | | |
|------|--|--------------------------------------|
| AB5 | Nesting plots for lapwing and stone curlew | £524 |
| AB6 | Enhanced overwinter stubble | £436 |
| AB11 | Cultivated areas for arable plants | £532 |
| AB12 | Supplementary winter feeding for farmland birds | £632 per tonne for every 2 ha of AB9 |
| GS2 | Permanent grassland with very low inputs (outside SDAs) | £95 |
| GS17 | Lenient grazing supplement | £44 |
| SW1 | 4m to 6m buffer strip on cultivated land | £353 |
| BE3 | Management of hedgerows | £8/100m |
| WT1 | Buffering in-field ponds and ditches in improved grassland | £201 |
| WT2 | Buffering in-field ponds and ditches on arable land | £501 |

Hedgerows and Boundaries

- this offer has been improved for the 2018 application round.
- the application window opens earlier in 2018, the total budget available has been increased to £10 million and the maximum grant individuals can apply rises to £10,000 from £5,000.
- the scoring system has also been simplified and farmers can apply online