

Detailed guide: Agreement holders' information: Environmental Stewardship

Updated: Link to guidance for those finding it difficult to meet scheme requirements due to hot and dry weather conditions.

Hot and dry weather conditions

See the [guidance](#) for farmers finding it difficult to meet scheme requirements.

Environmental Stewardship (ES) is a land management scheme. It's closed to new applicants. Natural England manages existing agreements until they reach their agreed end date.

There are 3 levels to the scheme:

- Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) – includes Uplands ELS: simple and effective land management agreements with priority options
- Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) – includes Uplands OELS: organic and conventional mixed farming agreements
- Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) – more complex types of management and agreements tailored to local circumstances

Payments

Natural England is continuing to make ES payments for the 2017 agreement year. The majority of agreement holders have received at least 75% of their annual payment.

Changes to the payment split for multi-year grants

You'll now get 75% of your annual grant as an advance payment. You'll get the remaining 25% as a final payment (subject to any penalties or reductions). The change is effective immediately and includes your 2017 agreement payments.

You don't need to do anything, Natural England will adjust your payments for you. There are no changes to how and when you make a claim.

Changes to digital maps

Find out how [changes to digital maps](#) on the Rural Payments service may affect your agreement.

Use the correct handbook for your agreement

The terms and conditions of your existing agreements are determined by the relevant scheme handbook.

Handbook 1: agreement start dates from 1 February 2006 to 30 September 2008

ELS handbook:

- [1st edition: February 2005 \(PB10355\)](#)
- [Addendum: new options for ES May 2006](#)

OELS handbook:

- [1st edition: February 2005 \(PB10381\)](#)
- [Addendum: new options for ES May 2006](#)

HLS handbook

- [1st edition: February 2005 \(PB10382\)](#)
- [Addendum: new options for ES May 2006](#)

Handbook 2: agreement start dates from 1 October 2008 to 31 December 2009

ELS handbook:

- [2nd edition: October 2008 \(NE106\)](#)
- [Addendum: May 2009](#)

OELS handbook:

- [2nd edition: October 2008 \(NE107\)](#)
- [Addendum: May 2009](#)

HLS handbook:

- [2nd edition: October 2008 \(NE108\)](#)
- [options, capital items and management conditions: 2nd edition October 2008](#)
- [payments booklet: 2nd edition October 2008](#)

Handbook 3: agreement start dates from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2012

ELS handbook:

- [3rd edition: February 2010 and official list of changes: November 2010 \(NE226\)](#)

- [ES – supplement for 1st, 2nd and 3rd editions \(NE358\)](#)

OELS handbook:

- [3rd edition: February 2010 and official list of changes: November 2010 \(NE228\)](#)
- [ES – supplement for 1st, 2nd and 3rd editions \(NE360\)](#)

HLS handbook:

- [3rd edition: February 2010 and official list of changes: November 2010 \(NE227\)](#)
- [ES – supplement for 1st, 2nd and 3rd editions \(NE359\)](#)

Handbook 4: agreement start dates from 1 January 2013 to 1 December 2014

- [ELS: 4th edition January 2013 – includes uplands ELS \(NE349\)](#)
- [OELS: 4th edition January 2013 – includes uplands OELS \(NE351\)](#)
- [HLS: 4th edition January 2013 \(NE350\)](#)

Forms and guidance

Use the [forms and guidance](#) to help you manage your ES agreement.

Contact

Contact the office for your county.

County	Office	Address, email, telephone
Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Isles of Scilly, Somerset, Wiltshire	Bristol	Natural England, PO Box 3135, Bristol BS1 9GN – Email ts.bristol@naturalengland.org.uk – Telephone 020 8026 6964
Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Essex, Greater London, Greater Manchester, Hertfordshire, Lancashire, Merseyside, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Suffolk, Surrey	Cambridge	Natural England, PO Box 247, Cambridge CB2 2WW – Email ts.cambridge@naturalengland.org.uk – Telephone 020 8026 5996

County	Office	Address, email, telephone
Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Humberside, Northumberland, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Tyne & Wear, West Yorkshire	Leeds	Natural England, PO Box 798, Leeds LS1 9NA – Email ts.leeds@naturalengland.org.uk - Telephone 020 8026 8779
Derbyshire, Dorset, East Sussex, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Herefordshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands, West Sussex, Worcestershire	Worcester	Natural England, PO Box 530, Worcester WR5 2WZ – Email ts.worcester@naturalengland.org.uk – Telephone 020 8026 1090