

[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
-

[Press release: Strategy seeks one million more disabled people in work by 2027](#)

'Improving lives: the future of work, health and disability' sets out how the government will work with employers, charities, healthcare providers and local authorities to break down employment barriers for disabled people and people with health conditions over the next 10 years. This will be delivered through in-work programmes, personalised financial and employment support, and specialist healthcare services to help more people go as far as their talents will take them.

The UK has near record high employment levels with over 32 million people in work, including 600,000 more disabled people in the last 4 years alone. However, ill health that keeps people out of work costs the economy an estimated £100 billion a year, including £7 billion in costs to the NHS. The government is committed to not only getting people into work, but helping them to remain and progress so they can reap the rewards of having a job.

The government announced today's plans in response to its [Work, health and disability green paper consultation](#) which closed earlier this year and received around 6,000 responses from stakeholders and the public.

Work and Pensions Secretary David Gauke said:

Everyone should be able to go as far as their talents can take them, but for too long disabled people and people with health conditions have been held back from getting on in work.

Today we've set out an ambitious 10-year strategy to end this injustice once and for all. By bringing employers, the welfare system and health services together we're taking significant steps to ensure everyone can reach their potential.

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

Mental ill health can affect anyone, from any walk of life at any time. For too long society has dictated that people with physical and mental health issues or a disability are a burden. Ensuring that more people with disabilities or long-term health conditions can get into and stay in work would not only enhance their lives, but actually enrich our economy too.

This strategy will help shape the future for hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities and mental health issues as we continue to tackle the stigma that so many people face when trying to get into and progress in work.

Two new employment trials will also be launched in the West Midlands and Sheffield City Region combined authorities to provide employment support. The government is also investing around £39 million to more than double the number of Employment Advisors in Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services.

Meanwhile, all 40 recommendations of the recent [Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employers](#) are to be taken forward by the government. This includes establishing a framework for large employers to voluntarily report on mental health and disability within their organisations. Employers are a central part of plans, and encouragingly over 5,000 companies of all sizes have now signed up to the [Disability Confident](#) scheme to promote disability inclusion.

Sarah Kaiser, Diversity and Inclusion lead at Disability Confident employer Fujitsu, said:

It is fantastic to see the government is committing to seeing more disabled people enter the workplace. Fujitsu has significantly benefited from being Disability Confident, giving us access to untapped pools of talent and enabling us to increase our retention of employees with disabilities.

We have also worked with our employees with disabilities to ensure our products and services become even more accessible, benefitting our customers too. This is not just the right thing for employees, but also significantly helps the employer.

Creating an environment where employees feel comfortable to be completely themselves and tell us if they have a disability allows us to put in place the right adjustments to properly enable them to do their work, whilst providing a working environment that emphasises support. This not only results in increased employee satisfaction but also performance, realising value for the organisation too.

Also announced today are the next steps for the [Fit for Work](#) service. Its assessment services will come to an end in England and Wales on 31 March 2018

and 31 May 2018 in Scotland, following low referral rates.

Employers, employees and GPs will continue to be able to use the same Fit for Work helpline, website and web chat, which offer general health and work advice as well as support on sickness absence. An 'Expert Working Group on Occupational Health' has been appointed to champion, shape and drive a programme of work to take an in-depth look at the sector.

In the last year, the government has taken decisive steps to support people with disabilities and health conditions, including:

- Introduced the Personal Support Package, which includes £330 million of funding over 4 years.

*Ending re-assessments for claimants with the most severe lifelong disabilities, illnesses or health conditions on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Universal Credit.

- Recruiting hundreds of additional Disability Employment Advisers and new Community Partners to bring specialist advice and support into the jobcentres.
- Introducing a new 'Health and Work Conversation' between people on ESA and their work coach, focusing on what they can do rather than what they cannot.
- Launching the Disability Confident Business Leaders Group, which helps to drive continued employer engagement through effective leadership and peer-to-peer support.
- A trial voluntary work experience programme for young people with limited capability for work. This will enable young people to benefit from time in the workplace with a mainstream employer to build their confidence and skills, enhance their CV and demonstrate their ability to perform a job role.
- Extending 'Journey to Employment' job clubs to 71 Jobcentre Plus areas with the highest number of people receiving ESA.

Follow DWP on:

Press release: First Secretary encouraged by constructive Cardiff talks

First Secretary of State Damian Green MP said he was encouraged by the constructive nature of the latest round of Brexit talks with the Welsh First Minister in Cardiff today.

He was speaking after the latest bilateral talks in Cardiff with Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns MP and the Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones AM and Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford AM.

Mr Green said the meeting with Carwyn Jones had enabled the two governments to make progress in ensuring that all parts of the UK are ready for our withdrawal from the EU.

The discussions are to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place under the EU (Withdrawal) Bill for distributing powers returned from the European Union and identifying where common frameworks will be required.

First Secretary of State, Damian Green said:

We are now making real progress in ensuring that all parts of the UK are ready for the extra powers that are coming back from the EU to the UK. The talks today with the First Minister were very constructive and I thank him for that.

Everyone accepts that UK frameworks will be required in certain areas to protect the vital advantages of the UK domestic market. Both sides are now getting into the deep detail of how we put in place the best arrangements for the day we leave the EU.

I am confident we can keep up this momentum and have a successful Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) with all the devolved administrations in London next month.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

I am encouraged by our discussions today. We are making good progress in identifying where common approaches will be needed after the UK leaves the EU, in line with the principles for frameworks already agreed.

I am confident this process will deliver agreed UK frameworks in the areas where we need them and a significant increase in powers for the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government.

Our discussions today lay the ground for intensive talks between the two governments up to Christmas and into the New Year.

The UK and Welsh Government ministers met in Cardiff in September, then again in London on 11 October, where they discussed a set of principles to guide the discussions.

These principles were agreed at a meeting of JMC (EN) on 16 October, and the Prime Minister and First Minister held a constructive meeting on 30 October.

ENDS

News story: New chairman appointed for the Central Arbitration Committee

Business Minister Margot James has today (30 November) announced that Stephen Redmond has been appointed as chairman of the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC).

The CAC encourages fair and efficient arrangements in the workplace by resolving collective disputes in England, Scotland and Wales, either by voluntary agreement or, if necessary, through a legal decision.

Mr Redmond, a former NHS Human Resources Director, takes over from Sir Michael Burton.

Biography – Stephen Redmond

Stephen Redmond is an experienced human resources and organisational development professional and was one of four national HR Directors for the NHS in the UK. Stephen has worked in central and devolved government, the NHS, health and social care and the mining industry. He has worked internationally for the British Government in developing countries and as a consultant in Asia, Russia, Eastern Europe and Africa.

Mr Redmond's previous appointments include Independent Panel Chair at the Judicial Appointments Commission, Independent Chair of the Doctor's and Dentist's Disciplinary Appeals Panel, Non-Executive Director at The Coal Authority, Fitness to Practice Chair at the Nursing and Midwifery Council and Member at the Judicial Investigation and Conduct Office.

Press release: Defence Science and Technology Laboratory appoints new Chief Executive

Gary has spent his career in the development and supply of mission-critical wireless communications solutions to public safety, industrial and transportation sectors.

He has previously held senior global positions at Sepura and at Motorola Solutions, where he had commercial responsibility for sales, services, operations and product management.

As Dstl's Chief Executive, Gary will lead an organisation of over 3,800 scientists and engineers providing specialist, and in many cases world-leading expertise, across a wide-range of disciplines.

Ahead of his arrival, Gary said:

I am excited to begin a new challenge at Dstl, in an organisation that provides such essential skills, knowledge and capabilities in support of the defence, security and prosperity of the UK.

[Sir David Pepper](#), Chairman of Dstl said:

I am delighted to welcome Gary to Dstl. He brings a wealth of experience in research and development and in organisational transformation that will be invaluable as Dstl moves into the next phase of its development. I am looking forward to working with him as he takes on his leadership role.

Gary will formally take up post on 1 January 2018. He replaces [David Marsh](#), who has been Acting Chief Executive since the previous Chief Executive Jonathan Lyle left the organisation in September this year.