Entry Level Stewardship

Environmental Stewardship Handbook
Third Edition – February 2010

www.naturalengland.org.uk
What is Environmental Stewardship?

Environmental Stewardship (ES) is an agri-environment scheme that is open to all farmers and is funded by the UK Government and the European Union (EU). Farmers and land managers across England enter into voluntary management agreements with Natural England in order to deliver the scheme. In return for looking after England’s countryside – our wildlife, landscapes, historic features and natural resources (soils and water) – and providing new opportunities for public access in some cases, ES provides farmers and land managers with a financial incentive that supports and rewards them for this work. ES is managed by Natural England on behalf of Defra.

Who is ES for?
There are three elements within ES – Entry Level Stewardship (ELS), Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) and Higher Level Stewardship (HLS). Each element is designed to fit with the needs of different types of land, farmers and land managers. The basics are outlined in the diagram below and table opposite.

Who has put the scheme together?
Farming organisations have worked with Natural England and Defra to agree the details of these elements, making sure they are workable and fair for farmers.

What are the benefits of ES?
ES is an effective way for the Government, Natural England and the farming sector to work together to bring environmental benefits to the wider countryside. Tens of thousands of farmers are already in ES because it makes sense for their farming business.

Environmental Stewardship in the wider context

Grants to statutory sites (eg Natural England’s Conservation & Enhancement Scheme (CES) on non-agricultural Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) outside the scope of Environmental Stewardship)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry Level Stewardship (ELS)</th>
<th>Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS)</th>
<th>Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The simplest level in ES</td>
<td>The organic version of ELS</td>
<td>A more demanding level that asks a farmer to achieve more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>Open to farmers with organic land, land entering conversion or farms that combine conventional and organic enterprises</td>
<td>Negotiated with farmers in target areas or, outside of those areas, using target themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>10 years, though some options can run longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment</td>
<td>Standard payment of £30 per ha per year (£8 per ha per year on land parcels of 15 hectares or more above the Moorland Line)</td>
<td>Standard payment of £60 per hectare per year (improved land for the first two years) and £600 per ha (top fruit orchards for the first three years) Requires a greater input in management terms, and so attracts higher payments. The actual payment varies according to the management required under the specific agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What's new in 2010</td>
<td>A new Uplands ELS strand is available from July 2010 to address the particular needs of upland areas. It will have a standard payment rate of £62 per ha per year, and £23 per ha per year on land parcels of 15 hectares or more above the Moorland Line, 15 new ELS options are now available. More advice and information is available now for applicants and in certain circumstances one-to-one visits may be arranged</td>
<td>A new Uplands OELS strand is available from July 2010 to address the particular needs of upland areas. It will have a standard payment rate of £92 per ha per year. 15 new OELS options are now available. If you are entering land for organic conversion for the first time, free support and advice is available through the Organic Conversion Information Service (OCIS). The helpline contact number is 0800 980 0048. More advice and information is available now for applicants and in certain circumstances one-to-one visits may be arranged. A new simplified Farm Environment Plan (FEP) Manual will be published in Spring 2010. One new option and four new capital items are available.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before you read about ES in more detail, you can see what farmers themselves have to say about the scheme in the **Look After Your Land with Environmental Stewardship** booklet available from Natural England. You will also find a summary of each element of the scheme and how it works.
The ELS Handbook – a Quick Guide

This handbook provides full details about ELS, the application procedure and the rules that apply to farmers and other land managers who join. This quick guide explains what the key sections cover and will help you find the answers to questions you may have.

Section 1
Will I be accepted for ELS?
ELS is a whole farm scheme. Section 1.2 explains who can apply; Section 1.3 sets out what land is eligible. ELS is designed as a simple-to-enter element that can be readily applied to most farms. You are guaranteed an agreement if you agree to deliver enough land management options on your eligible land and meet basic scheme conditions.

What will I need to do if I join ELS?
Section 1.1.4 explains what you will be required to do.

What payment would I receive?
We know that farming is a business and it needs to pay its way. Sections 1.1.5 and 1.1.6 tell you what payment you would receive and when and how you would be paid. The standard payment rate is £30 per ha, with £8 per ha per year on land parcels of 35 ha or more above the Moorland Line. There are higher payments for Uplands ELS – up to £62 per ha.

Section 2
How do I apply?
There is a step-by-step guide in Section 2. This Section tells you what you need to do before applying and how to apply online or by post. You can apply through an intermediary, such as a land agent, if you prefer.

Section 3
How do I find out more about the options?
There are over 60 ELS options and these are summarised in Section 3. This Section explains the detailed management requirements for the options.

Section 4
Is anything different for upland farms?
We are introducing an Uplands ELS for farmers in 2010 – this is explained in Section 4. The Uplands ELS succeeds the Hill Farm Allowance (HFA) but land eligibility is different so you must check this carefully.

Is there any information or advice available to help me apply?
ELS is straightforward to enter and apply. All the information you need is contained in this handbook, but we are now providing more information and advice to help you choose options and understand the environmental objectives of the scheme. Details of advice events can be obtained from the ‘Farmers and Land Managers’ section of our website www.naturalengland.org.uk (see Appendix 2 for the full web address).

Which edition of the ELS Handbook should I use?
This handbook will apply to all ELS agreements starting on or after 1 February 2010. If this applies to you, this handbook – including all the rules and requirements that it contains – will form a part of your legal agreement with Natural England and must be retained for reference. It is for this reason the handbook needs to include a lot of detail and this explains why it is so comprehensive.

ELS agreements starting before 1 February 2010 will continue to be governed by previous handbook editions, until they are either replaced by a new agreement or reach the end of their five-year term, as follows:

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Section 1

Entry Level Stewardship

1.1 How does ELS work?

1.1.1 What is Environmental Stewardship?

ES has three elements:
- Entry Level Stewardship (including the new uplands strand of ELS, referred to as ‘Uplands ELS’).
- Organic Entry Level Stewardship (including the new uplands strand of OELS, referred to as ‘Uplands OELS’).
- Higher Level Stewardship.

The primary objectives of Environmental Stewardship are to:
- conserve wildlife (biodiversity);
- maintain and enhance landscape quality and character, by helping to maintain important features such as traditional field boundaries;
- protect the historic environment, including archaeological features and traditional farm buildings;
- promote public access and understanding of the countryside; and
- protect natural resources, by improving water quality and reducing soil erosion and surface run-off.

Within the primary objectives, ES also has secondary objectives of genetic conservation and flood management.

In meeting these objectives, Environmental Stewardship will:
- support the adaptation of the natural environment to climate change; and
- enhance the contribution of agriculture and land management to climate change mitigation, for example, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and providing and protecting carbon storage.

There have been some changes to ELS since the scheme was launched in 2005. These changes include:
- The revision of the management prescriptions for several options.
- The removal of the ‘management plan’ options.
- The introduction of new options for Resource Protection.
- The introduction of several new options in 2010. These new options are highlighted in Section 3.

1.1.2 Am I guaranteed an agreement?
ELS is a ‘whole-farm scheme’ open to all farmers and land managers in England. It is non-competitive; provided you agree to deliver enough management options on your eligible land and meet all scheme conditions, you will automatically be guaranteed an agreement.

1.1.3 Can I renew an existing ELS agreement?
In 2010, several thousand ELS agreements, set up when the scheme was first launched in 2005 will come to the end of their five-year term. We are keen to retain these areas under agreement to maintain the environmental benefits that have been achieved. The renewed agreements will be covered by this 3rd edition Handbook and hence the changes made to ELS since it was launched will apply to the renewed agreements. Therefore, if you are renewing your agreement please look carefully at this handbook to see how the scheme changes will affect what you want to do.
1.1.4 What will I be required to do?
In applying for and undertaking an ELS agreement, you are required to:

- Identify, map and retain your Farm Environment Record (FER) features (see Section 2.3.2 Step 2).
- Choose sufficient options from the range described in this handbook to reach your **points target**. The **points target will be equivalent to 30 points per ha** (or 8 points per ha on land parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line). Each option will earn points towards your points target and you will earn 3 points per ha for completing your FER.
- Deliver the options that you selected in accordance with the management prescriptions set out in Section 3.
- Adhere to all the scheme terms and conditions contained in this handbook, in particular to follow cross compliance requirements across all your land, and to comply with the other additional requirements contained in Section 1.6.

1.1.5 What payments will I receive?
For all the land you enter into ELS, you will receive a payment rate of £30 per ha per year, with the exception of land parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line, for which you will receive £8 per ha per year. A higher rate of payment applies for Uplands ELS - see Section U.

Subject to the EU rule changes referred to at paragraph 1.4.7, the payment rates you receive will remain the same for the five years of your agreement, even if the rates are reviewed during that period.

1.1.6 How and when will I be paid?
If you are accepted, you will receive a payment every 6 months of your agreement. Each payment will be half of your annual payment and will be made automatically, apart from the final payment.

Towards the end of the final year of your agreement, you will be sent a form to claim for the remaining payment. When making this final claim, you will need to sign a declaration to confirm that you have complied with the terms of your agreement throughout the 5 years of your agreement.

Following the introduction of EC Regulation 885/2006, all payments must be made directly into your bank account; payments by cheque will not be available. If the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) does not have your bank details, please contact the RPA and request a bank details registration form (see Appendix 1 for contact details). If you do not provide bank details to enable payment to be made direct to your account, the RPA will not be able to pay you.

1.1.7 Can I apply for capital works?
Payments for capital works are not available in ELS.

1.1.8 When will my agreement start and how long will it last?
There are monthly start dates. Your agreement will start on the next monthly start date after the application is processed, unless you choose a later start date. Our target is to provide you with an agreement within 3 months of receipt of an application that meets all ELS eligibility criteria. Agreements will commence on the first date of a month.

Agreements will last 5 years. Your agreement with Natural England will be legally binding and you will be required to fulfil your obligations for the full term of your agreement. You will incur a penalty if you withdraw from the scheme early or breach the terms of your agreement (see Section 1.5). There is no penalty for transferring, with Natural England’s approval into Uplands ELS, OELS or HLS.

1.1.9 Can I get help to understand the scheme and complete my application?
Natural England hopes to provide enough information in this handbook to enable you to complete your application. In addition, we run a programme of farm events that includes advice on how to manage land under ELS. Details can be found in the ‘Farmers and Land Managers’ section of the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk (see Appendix 2 for the full web address). You can also contact Natural England for help with general enquiries (contact details are in Appendix 1).
1.1.10 Can an agent act on my behalf?
The application process has been designed to be as simple as possible, to enable you to complete and submit the application form yourself. However, if you prefer, you can authorise an agent to submit an application on your behalf. You can also authorise an agent to act on your behalf on all matters relating to the maintenance of your agreement. Your payments can also be made to an agent.

To authorise an agent to act on your behalf, you will need to complete, sign and return the relevant sections of the agent authorisation form (NE-auth) with your application. If you did not request this form with your application pack, you can obtain one from Natural England (see Appendix 1 for contact details) or download one from the ‘Farmers and Land Managers’ section of the Natural England website www.naturalengland.org.uk (see Appendix 2 for the full web address).

Please note that any payment you make to an agent to help with your application will not be reimbursed by Natural England.

1.1.11 How is the scheme inspected and monitored?
The RPA will visit a percentage of agreements every year to assess compliance with the scheme requirements. If your agreement is selected for inspection, you must assist the inspector with their work. See Section 1.6.7 for details.

Natural England and Defra monitor agreements to assess the environmental and economic impacts of the scheme. By applying to join the scheme, you are agreeing to co-operate with any scheme monitoring.

1.1.12 Will my details be made public?
The data controller is Natural England, 1 East Parade, Sheffield, S1 2ET.

Your information will be stored and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This Act gives you, as an individual, the right to know what data we hold on you, how we use it, with whom we share it and that it is accurate.

The data will be used for administering and analysing applications, agreements and claims under ES. It will be circulated and discussed in confidence with those persons or organisations helping Natural England to assess and monitor applications, agreements and claims. Some information will be shared with other grant distribution bodies and government departments, to enable them to detect fraudulent applications, agreements and claims and to co-ordinate the processing of complementary applications, agreements and claims. To do this, we may have to discuss applications, agreements and claims with third parties or disclose information about funding decisions.

As participation in this scheme involves expenditure of public money and there is public interest in how the money is spent, Natural England, in line with European Regulations, makes information about applications, agreements and claims publicly available, for example on a website such as www.natureonthemap.org.uk. Details disclosed include, but are not limited to, your name, the name and address of your farm or business, postal town/parish, first part of your postcode, grid references, the total area under agreement, the payments you receive, the location of parcels, details of the environmental features and management options they contain and details of inspections by Defra or its agents (see Section 1.6.7). On request, copies of individual agreements will be made available.

Natural England or its appointed agents may use the name, address and other details on your application form to contact you in connection with occasional customer research aimed at improving the services that Natural England provides to you.

We will respect personal privacy, while complying with access to information requests to the extent necessary to enable Natural England to comply with its statutory obligations under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
1.2 Who can apply?

1.2.1 Who can join the scheme?
ELS is open to all farmers and land managers who are one of the following:
- freehold owners
- tenants
- contractual licensees
- common land rights holders (see Section 1.2.6).

You must have management control of the land for the entire 5 years of your agreement. If you are not certain to have management control lasting 5 years, you must make a countersigned application with a person who undertakes to carry on your agreement if your management control of the land ceases. Further guidance on countersigned applications is provided in Section 1.2.2.

Eligibility of public bodies and their tenants is set out in Section 1.2.5.

1.2.2 What if I do not own some or all the land?
If you are a tenant or contractual licensee, you must ensure that by joining and participating in ELS you do not breach the conditions of your tenancy/licence. If you do not have sufficient control over the management of the land because your tenancy/licence has less than 5 years to run (even if you are expecting an extension), your landlord/the landowner should agree to take over the ELS agreement in the event of your control lapsing. They should countersign your application to this effect.

If you need to make a countersigned application, you must discuss the proposal with your landlord/the landowner and complete Section 2 of the application form. The relevant person should sign the declaration at Section 2 of the application form to confirm they will ensure that your agreement commitments are fulfilled, if for any reason you cease to have control over the land during the 5 years of your agreement.

If a countersigned agreement is not possible on a part of your farm, this part may be omitted from the application and an agreement made on the remaining part.

If you have more than one tenancy/licence with less than 5 years to run, you will need to complete a supplementary land ownership and control form (NE-LOC) for each additional tenancy/licence. These forms are available from Natural England (see Appendix 1 for contact details) and can be downloaded from the Environmental Stewardship pages in the ‘Farmers and Land Managers’ section of the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk (see Appendix 2 for the full web address).

1.2.3 What if I own land that is let to a tenant or licensee?
Provided you have sufficient management control over the land, and you are confident that your obligations under an ELS agreement can be met in full, you can apply for an agreement on land that has been let to a tenant or licensee.

If your tenant(s) or licensee(s) have a long-term tenancy/licence, they may wish to apply for ELS. Where your tenant/licensee does not have management control for 5 years, you will need to countersign their application.

If you set up a tenancy/licence on land covered by your ELS agreement, you should notify the tenant/licensee(s) about the ELS agreement and your obligations under that agreement. It will be your responsibility to ensure that they do not breach the terms of your agreement. It may be appropriate to transfer the agreement to the tenant or set up a countersigned agreement (see Section 1.4.2).
1.2.4 Are business partnerships and trusts eligible?
If you are a business partnership, trust, or similar, you can make an application, but Natural England will not become involved in any disputes between individuals and you must comply with the following conditions:
- All members of the business partnership/trust must appoint a signatory to make an application on their behalf and that person must agree to take full responsibility for the agreement.
- The signatory must sign any amendment and claim forms, where these are necessary.
- The signatory must take on the responsibility for delivery of the whole agreement.
- The signatory will receive all the payments and must be responsible for paying back any grant, if there is a breach of the agreement.

1.2.5 Are public bodies and their tenants eligible?
Payment cannot be made for any environmental management that is already required by statutory duty, through payment from Exchequer funds or grant aid from any other public body, or any other form of legally binding obligation.

Crown bodies and non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) are therefore not eligible for ES agreements. This includes those that are Trading Funds or that otherwise do not receive funding direct from the Exchequer. Crown bodies include all government departments and their executive agencies. They include the Ministry of Defence, the Forestry Commission, the Crown Estate, the Duchy of Lancaster, Forest Enterprise and the Royal Parks. NDPBs are public bodies that have a role in the processes of national government but are not a government department, nor part of one. These include the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage and the National Forest Company.

Other public bodies, including local authorities, national park authorities and public corporations, are not eligible for ELS, but are eligible for HLS.

Parish councils and former college farms are not considered to be public bodies.

Tenants of public bodies with security of tenure for the term of an agreement are eligible for ELS.

A list of NDPBs and other public bodies can be found on the Civil Service website at www.civilservice.gov.uk (see Appendix 2 for the full web address).

Table 1 Summary of the eligibility of public bodies for ES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landowners</th>
<th>OELS/ELS</th>
<th>HLS</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government departments, executive agencies and NDPBs</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other public bodies</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>Eligible for HLS provided the work does not form part of their obligations as a public body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenants of public bodies</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
<td>Ineligible where the work is already a requirement of the tenancy agreement. Tenants must have security of tenure for the full term of the agreement, as the public body cannot countersign the agreement. See also Section 1.3.18.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2.6 Is common land and shared grazing eligible?
Common land and shared grazing is eligible for ELS, but an appropriate individual must sign the application and be responsible for maintaining the agreement. The signatory must either be the owner of the common or shared area, a member of the commons’ association or, if no such association exists, any other commoner or grazer who personally agrees to take responsibility for the ELS commitment and any liabilities for non-compliance.

When making the application, the signatory must comply with the following conditions:

a The signatory must sign both the ELS application form and a common land and shared grazing supplementary application form (NE-CLA3), which contains additional declarations. This supplementary form must also be signed by the owner of the common/shared area, or their appointed representative, unless the owner is making the application or there is no known owner. The supplementary form is available on request from Natural England (see Appendix 1 for contact details) and can also be downloaded from Natural England’s website at www.naturalengland.org.uk (see Appendix 2 for the full web address).

b The application must cover the whole common or shared area and must not include any other land (eg privately managed in-bye land). You should make a separate application covering your other land.

c The signatory must go to reasonable lengths to contact all graziers or persons who are entitled to exercise rights of common, in particular those actively exercising rights on the land, and provide opportunity for them to comment. This will also include contact with commons associations or commons councils. Details of land to which rights are normally attached, or details of persons holding rights directly, are given in the local authority commons register. The application should provide an outline of the rights associated with the common and the steps taken to contact persons entitled to exercise rights of common.

d The signatory must confirm that all graziers or persons exercising rights of common who are party to the application have agreed to abide by the prescriptions of the options that have been chosen, and the general rules and conditions of the scheme. The signatory must also confirm that those who are not party to the application are not in a position to jeopardise the objective and requirements of the agreement.

e The signatory must take on the responsibility for the delivery of the whole agreement.

f All payments will be made to the signatory who must be responsible for paying back any grant if there is found to be a breach of the agreement.

The shared responsibility for the agreement can be supported by an internal agreement between all the owners and commons rights holders or, in the case of shared grazing, the owners and graziers. However, Natural England cannot become involved in any disputes among rights holders or graziers, or between commoners/grazers and landowners or occupiers, relating to an application or any subsequent agreement, distribution or use of the annual payment or dispute that arises from it. In the event of any serious dispute coming to its attention, Natural England may terminate the agreement.

1.2.7 What if others hold rights over my land?
You should discuss an intended application with any sporting tenants and anyone else with rights over your land, such as profit à prendre and easements. You should make sure that any activities, and the exercise of other rights, will not conflict with the delivery of the required management of the scheme options.
1.3 What land is eligible?

1.3.1 What land can I enter into the scheme?
Land entered into the scheme must be registered on the Rural Land Register (RLR) and must be part of the farmed environment. By ‘farmed environment’ we mean:

- all your farmed land. ELS is a whole-farm scheme, so your application must include all the eligible farmland that you manage; and
- other non-farmed land. You may also enter other land that does not contribute to your farming system but is still considered part of the farmed environment. For example, large blocks of woodland, parcels of scrub, disused mineral sites and neglected areas.

Please note: entering non-farmed land into ELS will increase the whole-farm area and therefore your points target that must be delivered, as well as the overall payment. Placing options on non-farmed land may, however, be difficult, inappropriate or impossible. Where this is the case, you will have to locate additional options elsewhere to meet your points target. Where such land covers a large proportion of your farm, you may find it difficult to deliver enough options to reach your points target. If this is the case, you may prefer to exclude some of these areas from your application (although you will not receive payment for the excluded area).

Your application may include land registered under more than one County Parish Holding (CPH) number.

Any land parcels entered into the scheme must be entirely within England. Parcels that are either partly or entirely within Scotland or Wales are not eligible for ELS.

1.3.2 What land must be excluded from my application?
The following land must not be included:

- Developed land and hard standing (including permanent caravan sites and areas used for permanent storage). Although this land will not contribute to the points target, you can earn points on developed land where it contains a traditional farm building that is recorded in your FER and is managed under the appropriate option.
- Significant areas (1 ha or more) of standing and running water, with the exception of intertidal habitats.
- Land that is already subject to another scheme or obligation that is incompatible with ELS (see Section 1.3.3-1.3.19).
- Common land or shared grazings with multiple rights holders or graziers (which can enter ELS but only as a stand-alone agreement separate from an agreement on your other land – see Section 1.2.6).

1.3.3 Is land that is subject to another scheme or obligation eligible?
As a general rule, Natural England cannot pay you for management that you, or your landlord, are required to do under an existing scheme or obligation.

If land that you intend entering into ELS is in receipt of funding from another grant scheme, you cannot also receive ELS funding for the same work. Work that is outside the scope of ELS may, however, be eligible for grants from other organisations, including local authorities.

You must make sure that there are no other duties or obligations on you or the land that would conflict with your ELS agreement.

The following paragraphs list the most frequently occurring alternative schemes and obligations. Please look through this section to check if any of the guidance applies to your land.

1.3.4 Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA)
If you already have a CSS or ESA agreement covering some of your land, as a general rule you cannot apply for ELS on the same land. You may, however, be able to apply for ELS on any land that is not receiving funding under the CSS or ESA agreement.
Follow the instructions below, to determine which land parcels should be included in your ELS application:

- If a CSS or ESA option covers a **whole parcel**, it should not be included in your ELS application or points target. This means that you can do one of the following:
  - ask Natural England to delete the relevant parcel number before sending your pre-filled application form; or
  - if you already have your pre-filled application form, you can cross out the relevant parcel number on Annex 2 of your application form (your Field Data Sheet) and on your application maps (see Section 2.3.2 Step 1 for detailed instructions on how to do this). If you need to delete several parcels, you may prefer to ask Natural England for a new set of forms and application maps.

- If the CSS/ESA option covers only **part of a parcel** (for example, grass margins), you must include the whole parcel in your ELS application. However, to avoid being paid twice for the same thing, you must not locate any ELS options on top of any of your CSS/ESA options.

- **Land in CSS/ESA rotational options** should be included in your ELS application, but you must ensure that each year there is no overlap of CSS/ESA and ELS options on the ground.

- **Land in receipt of CSS/ESA open, linear and educational access payments** only, should also be included in your ELS application and points target. You must ensure, however, that any ELS options sited on the land do not obstruct or otherwise conflict with the objectives of the access.

- **CSS boundaries** – ELS boundary options can be located on boundaries that are included within CSS options (whether that is a CSS whole-parcel option or a capital grant). This is because the two schemes (CSS and ES) have different and complementary management prescriptions.

- **ESA boundaries** – ELS boundary options must not be located within the area covered by the ESA agreement.

**Early transfer from CSS or ESA agreements**

There are limited opportunities for early transfer from CSS or ESA agreements into ELS – mainly when ELS is to be combined with HLS. If you are considering early transfer, you should discuss this with your CSS/ESA adviser within Natural England before submitting an application. The adviser will decide on the most appropriate course of action, taking into account the environmental benefits that can be achieved through each scheme and value for money. If you do not know who your CSS/ESA adviser is, please contact Natural England (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

**1.3.5 Energy Crops Scheme (ECS)**

Land in the ECS can count towards the area used to calculate your ELS points target and associated payment, but you may not locate any ELS options on land planted under the ECS (including any ECS paid area of open ground). Where ECS planting (including paid areas of open ground) is on a part-parcel basis, ELS options may be located within the land parcel, provided there is no overlap of ELS options with ECS-payable areas on the ground.

Boundaries surrounding ECS parcels may be entered into ELS boundary management options.

**1.3.6 The Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2006**

These regulations seek to protect environmentally important land from agricultural intensification. Land managers are required to seek approval from Natural England before carrying out any work that would intensify the agricultural use of uncultivated land or semi-natural areas. The type of agricultural operations (‘projects’) covered include ploughing; cultivation; digging; scraping; draining; liming; re-seeding; spreading soil or manure or any soil improver; increased application of fertiliser; broadcast spraying of any wide spectrum; and/or selective herbicide or any other work that increases the productivity of the land.

It is unlikely that ELS options will alter the status of land in relation to these regulations, but you should consider this before you apply. Enquiries about the regulations should be addressed to the Environmental Impact Assessment Helpline on 0800 028 2140.
1.3.7 Farm assurance schemes and the Pesticide Industry Voluntary Initiative
If you are already taking part in one or more farm assurance schemes or the Voluntary Initiative, this will not affect your eligibility to apply for ELS. You may find it easier to accumulate points towards your points target as a result of the management you are already following. This is particularly the case for assurance schemes that aim for improved environmental standards, such as the Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF) marque.

1.3.8 Felling Licences/Tree Preservation Orders
Where your ELS management involves removing trees or managing overgrown hedges, you must ensure that you have obtained any necessary Felling Licences or other required permissions before starting work.

When felling more than 5 m³ of timber in a calendar quarter, you may need a Forestry Commission (FC) Felling Licence. For further information, the FC has produced the guidance Tree Felling – getting permission (available at www.forestry.gov.uk).

You may also need permission for work on trees that are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Ask your local authority Tree Officer.

1.3.9 Habitat Scheme
Land in a Habitat Scheme agreement may be included in your ELS-eligible area, and contribute to your points target and payment. However, you may not locate any ELS options on this land. If this makes it harder to achieve your points target, you can exclude this land from your application.

1.3.10 Hill Farm Allowance (HFA)/Uplands Transitional Payment (UTP)
Land on which you are claiming HFA is eligible to count towards your ELS points target, and you may put ELS options on HFA land.

If you are in receipt of UTP, you are not eligible for Uplands ELS on any of your land. However, you can apply for ELS, and may put non-Uplands ELS options on land covered by the UTP (see Section 1.3.4).

1.3.11 Inheritance Tax/Capital Gains Tax exemption
Land designated by HM Revenue and Customs as conditionally exempt from Inheritance Tax or as the object of a maintenance fund is normally eligible for ELS. However, you must not claim for work that is a formal requirement of the undertakings agreed with HM Revenue and Customs. Owners should ensure that tenants are aware of such designations and are properly informed of relevant undertakings. Tenants can find out if land is designated by checking the website www.hmrc.gov.uk/heritage. You will need to look carefully at the relevant ELS options that are available for this land, to ensure you do not include ineligible work in your application.

Keep a copy of a map on which you have clearly marked the boundary of any exempt or designated land, and be prepared on any subsequent compliance inspection to be able to demonstrate on a parcel-by-parcel basis how the selected options do not overlap with your existing undertakings. Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure your application meets these scheme rules.

A guidance note on Environmental Stewardship – Environmental Stewardship for heritage properties designated under the Inheritance Tax Act 1984, for heritage properties designated under the Inheritance Tax Act 1984 (Natural England, 2009) is available. It provides more detailed information for owners and tenants of Inheritance Tax exempt properties and their advisers. It can be downloaded from the publications catalogue on the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk (see Appendix 2 for the full web address) or you can request a paper copy from Natural England (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

1.3.12 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs)
If you are in an NVZ, you must make sure that you are fully aware of the mandatory NVZ Action Programme rules. These rules apply to the way you manage your land to minimise the risk of diffuse nitrate pollution. If your land is within an NVZ (including the new areas designated in 2009), it is your responsibility to ensure you can meet the rules of both the NVZ Action Programme and ELS. Where the rules overlap, you must meet those that are the most demanding.
Further information on the NVZ Action Programme measures and detailed maps of NVZ locations are available on the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk.

1.3.13 Producer Organisation Aid Scheme
The Producer Organisation Aid Scheme operates under Pillar 1 of the Common Agricultural Policy. Management funded under the Producer Organisation Aid Scheme (for example, Operation Bumble Bee) cannot also be funded under ELS.

1.3.14 Protected species
Some species are partly or fully protected by legislation. Examples of the most commonly encountered protected wildlife include:
- All wild birds, their eggs and nests that are in use or being built are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.
- Bats, otters, dormice and great crested newts, plus other species of more restricted distributions, are protected by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations 1994, (European Protected Species). These European protected species are protected from disturbance and from damage to the places they use to rest and shelter (for example, bat roosts, otter holts).

It is very unlikely that ELS management will conflict with species protection obligations. For example, the hedge management options restrict maintenance works to outside the bird nesting season. However, if protected species are present on your farm, you should consider their protection requirements before undertaking management activities. Choosing appropriate options can help to maintain suitable habitat.

Advice about protected species is available in the 'Wildlife Management and Licensing Service' section of the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk (see Appendix 2 for the full web address).

Details of the wildlife legislation can be viewed at www.statutelaw.gov.uk.

1.3.15 Scheduled Monuments
Scheduled Monuments and other land covered by an English Heritage (EH) management agreement can count towards the area used to calculate your ELS points target and associated payment, provided there is no overlap between the requirements of the EH agreement and the general ELS requirements.

Similarly, you may only locate ELS options on land covered by an EH management agreement if there is no overlap between the requirements of the EH agreement and the ELS option prescriptions.

You should be prepared, on any compliance inspection, to be able to demonstrate on a parcel-by-parcel basis how the selected options do not overlap with your existing undertakings. Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure your application meets these scheme rules.

Scheduled Monuments in respect of which you are not receiving payment from EH are eligible for ELS. You must ensure there is no conflict between ELS management and the management requirements of the Scheduled Monuments.
1.3.16 Single Payment Scheme (SPS)
Land used to claim payments under the SPS may be entered into ELS.

Natural England cross-checks all agri-environment applications and payments against the SPS. Therefore, when completing your ELS and SPS forms, you must ensure that the ELS options and SPS codes you use are compatible. Natural England will investigate any case where the land use declared for the SPS conflicts, or appears to conflict, with the prescriptions of the ELS option, for example, an ELS option for arable land on land registered as permanent pasture.

For your SPS claim form, and unless superceded by any RPA instructions, note in particular that:

- ELS grassland options should be coded as PP4 (Permanent pasture on EU agri-environment scheme land).
- Part-parcel ELS arable options, such as buffer strips, field corners, conservation headlands and beetle banks, should not have a separate SPS code from the rest of the land parcel. Use the appropriate SPS code for the crop that is growing in the parcel.
- SPS code AE1 can be used for land in ELS that does not fit into any other SPS code.

For further details of SPS codes, please consult the SPS Guidance Handbook or contact the RPA’s Customer Service Centre (see Appendix 1 for contact details). For details of how the cross compliance rules apply to ELS, please see Section 1.6.1.

1.3.17 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
ELS management must not conflict with the management requirements of any SSSI land included in your agreement. As the relevant authority for the management of SSSIs, Natural England will consider whether to consent to any management options proposed on an SSSI before issuing an ELS agreement.

When giving such consent, it may be necessary for Natural England to amend an ELS application to ensure it is consistent with the SSSI management requirements, by either adding or removing options from the SSSI or adding one or two conditions to the standard option prescriptions. Where this is necessary, Natural England will discuss it with you first.

Consents for management activities on SSSI land granted as part of an ELS agreement are limited to the duration of that agreement and do not transfer from one land manager to another.

Please note also the specific requirements about derogations on SSSI land at Section 1.4.6.

This procedure will also apply to any SPAs (Special Protection Areas) and SACs (Special Areas of Conservation) included in an ELS application.

1.3.18 Tenancy conditions
ELS options cannot be used for management that a tenant or landlord is required to carry out as an obligation of a legal undertaking, including a tenancy agreement. ELS options can be placed on features (for example, buildings or walls) already covered by a tenancy agreement provided the work undertaken for the option is over and above that required by the existing obligation.

1.3.19 Woodland schemes
Woodlands under Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS), Farm Woodland Scheme (FWS), Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) and the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) agreements can count towards your eligible land area. However, ELS options may not be co-located with any land, including open space, funded under those schemes.
1.4 Can changes be made to my agreement?

1.4.1 Can I make changes to my agreement?
We hope you will be able to carry out the options and management required under your agreement without difficulty. However, the situation may arise where you may need to change the choice or location of your management options. Subject to Natural England’s approval, an amendment may be made to your agreement in such a situation.

It is important that there is continuity of management during your agreement if the environmental benefits are to be achieved. Amendments are therefore only to be used for changes that are absolutely necessary.

You must tell Natural England about your proposed amendment before you make any changes to your options. We will provide you with a Land Transfer and Amendment request form (ERDP/LTA1), which you should complete and return. Your amendment will not be valid until you have received a letter from Natural England agreeing to the amendment and advising you of the date from which the amendment will take effect. If your request is successful, our target is to provide you with confirmation within 3 months of receipt of a valid request form.

We would not expect to amend an agreement more than once during its five-year term. Once an amendment has been made, further amendments are only permitted in very exceptional circumstances.

1.4.2 What if I let, sell or transfer my land to another party?
Please notify Natural England as early as possible in advance of any change in occupancy or ownership (including sale, transfer, inheritance or lease) of all or any part of your agreement land. If advance notification is not possible, you must inform Natural England within 3 months of the land being transferred. If you do not, you will be in breach of your agreement and you are likely to have to repay the grant you have received, unless force majeure or other exceptional circumstances apply (see Section 1.4.8).

You must tell the prospective owner or occupier about your agreement before you transfer any existing agreement land. If the new owner or occupier does not continue with the agreement on the transferred land, and/or Natural England does not receive their new application within 4 months of the actual date of transfer, you, not the new owner or occupier, will be in breach of your agreement and you are likely to have to repay all or a part of the grant you have received.

If you transfer all of your agreement land, you must contact Natural England in writing to confirm the lease, sale or transfer, identifying the new owner or occupier. As indicated above, your whole agreement must be transferred to the new owner or occupier and either continue to its original expiry date or be restarted as a new agreement.

If you transfer part of your agreement land, you should contact Natural England and ask us to send you a Land Transfer and Amendment request form (ERDP/LTA3). You will then have to complete and return the form no later than 3 months after the commencement date of lease, the completion date of sale or the actual date of transfer, to amend your agreement.

You will be expected to continue with your existing options on the land that you have retained in your amended agreement. Where necessary, you may need to add further options to meet your revised points target. The amended agreement will run for the remaining term of the original agreement. Alternatively, you may choose to start a new agreement (including any other eligible land that you have), provided that you meet the scheme rules at that time.

If, following a partial transfer, your remaining land will no longer meet the ELS entry criteria (for example, if you do not add sufficient options to meet your revised points target), the agreement may need to be closed early. In this case, unless force majeure or other exceptional circumstances apply (see Section 1.4.8), you will be in breach of your agreement, and you are likely to have to repay all or a part of the grant you have received.
1.4.3 What if I acquire land?

If you acquire additional land, it will be in your interests to notify Natural England of the acquisition as soon as possible, to avoid a delay or break in payment. Where the acquired land is already under an Environmental Stewardship agreement and does not remain at the same or higher level of management, the original agreement holder will be in breach of their agreement.

One of the following options will be available, depending on your proposed level of management for the acquired land. For example, on acquisition of new land, you may wish to upgrade your agreement from ELS to ELS/HLS. A Natural England adviser can discuss the individual circumstances with you and propose the best solution for your needs:

- **Option 1** – You can set up a new agreement to include all your eligible land, including the new land and any existing agreements that you may have, subject to Natural England’s approval. You will have to meet the eligibility and entry conditions at the time the new agreement is set up.

- **Option 2** – You can take over the agreement on the acquired land for its remaining term. This would be a separate agreement from any pre-existing ES agreement that you may have. Where you take on land forming a part, but not the whole, of an existing ES agreement, you may need to add new options to the land to meet the points target.

- **Option 3** – You can apply for a separate agreement on the new land, and, if applicable, wait until your first existing agreement expires and consolidate all your eligible land into one new agreement at that time.

- **Option 4** – If the acquired land will be managed in the same scheme as your existing agreement, and the additional conditions below are met, you can add it to your existing agreement subject to the following conditions:
  - Land cannot be added to an agreement during the final 2 years of that agreement.
  - The land to be added must be no more than 50 per cent of the size of the original agreement (for example, if you have an agreement of 100 ha, you may add up to 50 ha.)
  - For acquired land already under agreement, the land to be added must have the same, or earlier, agreement start date than your existing agreement (ie if your agreement starts on 1 February 2010, you can only add land that entered ELS on or before 1 February 2010). This is to ensure that the normal 5 years management is achieved. The entry criteria for both agreements must also be the same.

Option 4 can only take effect on the mid-year or end-of-year payment date applicable to your agreement. Additionally, where you have acquired only part of another agreement holder’s land, the two agreements must have common payment dates (for example, if your agreement payment dates are 1 February and 1 August, the payment dates on the agreement from which the land is being transferred must be the same). If it is not possible to align the dates, you will need to bring the land in using Option 1, 2 or 3.

1.4.4 When will agreement transfers take effect?

Subject to advance notification of the transfer, Natural England will carry out transfers on the dates specified below. If advance notification is not received, these dates may not apply and the transfer may be delayed until the next available monthly date following the notification, or an alternative agreed with your adviser.

Natural England can only carry out transfers on an ELS start date, ie first of a month. Transfers of land into an existing agreement will be applied on the first of the month following the actual date of sale, lease or transfer. Where the transferred land is coming from another agreement, it will be transferred out of that agreement on the last day of the previous month. For example, if the actual date of sale, lease or transfer is 15 March, Natural England will start the new or amended agreement on 1 April, and, where applicable, transfer the land out of the original agreement on 31 March.

For transfer of land between parties, where the actual transfer date does not align with the date on which Natural England effects the transfer of the agreement, it will be the responsibility of the parties involved to apportion any payments for this period. The transferor (that is, the party disposing of their interest in the land) will also remain responsible for the agreement and will be liable if there is a breach
of agreement until such time as Natural England has effected the agreement transfer. Natural England recommends that the parties’ respective obligations or liabilities to each other in these circumstances are built into the relevant contract of sale or the lease agreement.

These dates apply except:

- Where the land is being added to an existing agreement (see Section 1.4.3 Option 4), in which case the transfer in date is restricted to the agreement’s payment dates. In these cases, Natural England will start the amended agreement on the next payment date, and any land coming from another agreement will be transferred out on the last day of the month preceding the payment date.
- Where late notification is received, or a transfer is being made between different schemes, or where transferred land is not continued at the same level of management by the new agreement holder, or their application is not received within the deadline. In these cases, Natural England will advise you of the dates depending on the circumstances of the transfer.

**1.4.5 What if I want to upgrade my agreement?**

If, on acquisition of land, or at any other time, you wish to upgrade your agreement, for example, from ELS to HLS, you should contact Natural England first to discuss your plans. You will need to submit a new application for the relevant scheme and, if your application is successful, a new agreement will be set up and your existing agreement will be closed.

**1.4.6 Derogations**

A derogation is required where a minor and temporary change from the agreed management prescriptions is needed on a single occasion. This may involve permission to control serious weed infestations using herbicides; a relaxation from a time-based prescription; permission to alter cutting or cultivation prescriptions due to practical problems; or to allow metal detecting on known archaeological features on permanent grassland.

The derogation notice form (NE-DN) is available on request from Natural England (see Appendix 1 for contact details), and can also be downloaded from Natural England’s website at www.naturalengland.org.uk (see Appendix 2 for the full web address). You must complete this form and return it to Natural England. You need to tell us:

- why the derogation is needed;
- the exact proposed course of action (including precise location details, choice of pesticide and application rate, where relevant);
- confirmation that the situation was unforeseen and that other solutions that are within the allowed management prescriptions have been considered; and
- countersignature by a third party to confirm that the request is reasonable, will not compromise the objectives of the agreement and is the most appropriate response in the situation concerned. The counter-signatory must be independent from the agreement holder and trained in environmental management. This could be a private agronomist or one employed by a conservation organisation, such as the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group or the RSPB.

You must inform Natural England about your proposed derogation before you make any changes to your management.

You may go ahead with the proposed changes to management as soon as you have returned the derogation notice form to Natural England. The exceptions to this are:

- where the proposed derogation would affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), in which case you will need to receive consent from Natural England before carrying out the operation; and
- where a derogation is required for an activity that would affect an archaeological site, in which case Natural England may request additional information, including the proposed methodology and research aims of any planned activity and may consult with local authority archaeologists and, where relevant, English Heritage. The work may not go ahead until you have received written approval from Natural England.
As a guide, we would not expect to see more than three derogations during the course of a
5-year agreement.

The derogation notice form will be kept by Natural England and all details, including those of the
countersigning adviser, will be checked during any compliance inspection.

**Derogations to use pesticides**

When the derogation involves the use of pesticides on conventional land, it must be countersigned
by a suitably qualified BASIS (British Agrochemical Standards Inspection Scheme) agronomist, who is
independent from the agreement holder and trained in environmental management.

**1.4.7 Variation of your agreement by Natural England**

Very rarely, it may be necessary for Natural England to vary your agreement in line with changes to
European law and in other exceptional circumstances. In applying for the scheme, you are accepting
that such changes may be made at any time. You will be given notice of any such changes in writing.

The European Commission (and, as a result, Natural England) does not have legal authority to make
payment commitments beyond 2015. While there is clear precedent in the current programme
(RDPE 2007–2013) for continuing to make payments on agreements carried over from the previous
programming period, the continuation of and financial provision for agreements that run beyond 2015
will be reviewed in 2012.

**1.4.8 Exceptional circumstances (force majeure)**

Where you are unable to continue with any part or all of the agreement, and where this is due to
circumstances beyond your control that could not have been avoided by reasonable action, Natural
England has discretion not to take action to recover or withhold payments. The EU Commission
Regulations governing the administration of ELS require that in order for force majeure to be taken into
account, you must have notified Natural England of the force majeure event in writing within 10 working
days of you, or your representative, being in a position to do so. Where you are not in a position to
notify Natural England immediately after the event giving rise to the exceptional circumstances, you
should state the date on which you were first in a position to notify us and explain the delay.

Please note that these categories are very narrow and cover only the most exceptional circumstances.

Examples of force majeure may include:

| Death of the agreement holder; |
| — Long-term professional incapacity of the agreement holder; |
| — Expropriation by government agency of a large part of the land, provided that this could not have |
  been anticipated when the agreement was signed; |
| — Severe natural disaster gravely affecting the land, including exceptional flooding; |
| — Accidental destruction of livestock buildings on the land; and |
| — An epizootic (such as foot and mouth disease) affecting part or all of the agreement holder’s |
  livestock. |

Examples of circumstances that are not force majeure include:

| If a water company has already given notice that it will be putting a pipeline over your land during the |
  proposed lifetime of the agreement; |
| — If you are selling the land as part of a long-term plan to retire from farming; and |
| — Flooding of low-lying farmland that is regularly flooded during predictable weather conditions. |
1.5 Disputes: What happens if I fail to keep to the terms of my agreement or wish to make a complaint?

1.5.1 What is a breach of agreement?
You will be in breach of your agreement if you:

- fail to comply with any agreement conditions; or
- are in breach of any requirement which you are subject to under Article 14(2) of Council Regulation 1257/1999, Council Regulation 1698/2005, Commission Regulation 1974/2006, the Rural Development (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2007 or any other relevant European or United Kingdom legislation; or
- make any false or misleading statements in your application or in any other correspondence relating to your agreement.

This is the case whether it is you or anybody else who causes a breach. It is your responsibility to ensure that all agreement conditions are fulfilled, and that all information in your application and other correspondence is accurate.

1.5.2 What penalties could be applied?
If you breach your agreement, you may be liable to one or more of the following penalties, depending on the circumstances of the breach:

- part or all of any future payments due under your agreement may be withheld;
- part or all of the payments already made to you under the agreement may be recovered (and interest charged);
- your agreement may be terminated; or
- you may be prohibited from entering into a new agreement under this scheme or any other EU agriculture/environment scheme for up to 2 years.

When penalties are imposed, you will be given a written explanation of the reasons for the proposed steps and an opportunity to make any written representations.

When Natural England seeks to recover payments already made to you, interest will continue to accrue from the date of our notification of the breach to you, to the time of reimbursement of the payments from you to Natural England, including during any period when the penalty is being appealed or otherwise under review.

In all cases, any penalties applied will be proportionate to the severity, extent and permanence of the breach.

Penalties will not be applied where Natural England have agreed with you in writing that exceptional circumstances have occurred in relation to any breach (see Section 1.4.8).

The legislation which governs enforcement of breaches of your agreement is the Rural Development (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2007.

Penalties will be applied to the following types of breaches, although Natural England retains discretion to apply penalties in any circumstance specified in Section 1.5.1, above:

1. Where the total area of eligible land you have declared, or the points you are claiming for a particular option in a specific location, are found to be incorrect or the option is not in that location (for example, a length of hedgerow on the boundary of one field is too short or is not there at all). See below.

2. Where the management requirements for an option are not being followed (for example, where a hedgerow has been entered into a hedgerow management option that only permits cutting every other year, but has subsequently been cut annually). See below.

3. Where your Farm Environment Record (FER) features have been removed or damaged. See below.

4. Where the requirements of cross compliance are not being followed. See below.
5 Other breaches of the additional requirements set out at Section 1.6.
6 Failure to notify Natural England that you have let, sold or transferred some or all of your agreement land to another party or that you no longer have management control of the land (see Section 1.4).
7 Where cross-checks identify that the options you have selected are incompatible with or duplicative of options or management declared under other schemes (such as Single Payment Scheme, CSS, ESA or Forestry schemes).

With respect to any category of breach referred to in this handbook, where a breach is determined by Natural England to be the result of serious negligence on your part you can, in addition to any other penalty, be excluded from all agri-environment measures for the calendar year in question. Where your breach is determined by Natural England to be reckless or intentional, you can be excluded for the following year as well (two years in total) and you may also be required to pay an additional penalty of up to 10 per cent of the payment made or payable to you.

Points claimed cannot be found or management requirements are not being followed
Where checks reveal that:

- there is a discrepancy between what you are claiming for a particular option in a particular location and the actual length/area/number on the ground; or
- you have not followed the management requirements for a particular option,

the points relating to that discrepancy will be deducted from your total points.

This shortfall can be offset against any surplus points from other additional options on land receiving the same area payment (ie £30/ha or £8/ha in ELS or £62/ha or £23/ha in Uplands ELS).

Where the deductions relating to a shortfall reduces your ELS total points below your target points, your annual payment for that year will be reduced and penalties applied on a sliding scale, as follows.

Table 2 Penalties for difference between target points claimed and target points found

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difference between target points and points found (as a percentage of points found)</th>
<th>Penalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Points found are less than your target points, but the difference is not more than 3%</td>
<td>Payment will be reduced (or recovered), based on points found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The difference is more than 3%, but not more than 20%</td>
<td>Difference between target and found points multiplied by two and deducted from found points. Payment reduced (or recovered) accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference is more than 20%, but not more than 50%</td>
<td>All payment for the whole agreement concerned is withheld (or recovered) for the year(s) concerned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference is more than 50%</td>
<td>All payment for the whole agreement concerned is withheld (or recovered) for the year(s) concerned, plus an amount equal to the difference will be deducted from the following year(s) payment(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Damage or removal of FER features
If you damage or remove any of your FER features, your annual payment will be reduced. Any penalty will be proportionate to the severity, extent and permanence of the breach, and whether it is repeated.

Consideration will be given to the control you had over the damage or removal; for instance where this might have been wholly or partly due to the action of a third party.
Breaches of Cross Compliance

Breaches of cross compliance will be dealt with in proportion to the extent, severity and permanence of the breach, and whether it is the first time such a breach has occurred. Please contact the RPA for more detail on cross compliance penalties (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

1.5.3 What do I do if I receive an overpayment?

It is your responsibility to check that payments you receive are in accordance with the details set out in your agreement. If you are paid more than you are entitled to under your agreement, you will be liable to reimburse the amount overpaid. You may also be liable to pay interest on that amount covering the period between the date we notify you of the overpayment and reimbursement. We will write to you explaining how the sum has been calculated and how the overpayment must be repaid.

1.5.4 What if I disagree with any Natural England decision or proposed action regarding my application or agreement?

If you are unhappy with the decisions that we have taken in respect of your application or agreement, you should write to the ISS (Incentive Scheme Services) manager at your Natural England office (see Appendix 1 for contact details), who will ensure that your case is properly investigated and advise you of the procedure to be followed.

Where the issue cannot be resolved within the team that originally handled your case, the ISS manager will ask a Natural England adviser who has not been involved in your agreement to review your case. The adviser will consider any points you have raised and report to the ISS manager with their view on the steps proposed to resolve the dispute.

If you remain dissatisfied with the decision of the Natural England adviser, you can have the matter referred to an independent person or body, nominated by Natural England, for further consideration.

1.5.5 How do I make a complaint?

If you are unhappy about the way a member of staff helped you, or with the level of service you have received, you have recourse to our complaints procedure, details of which are available from Natural England, or via the ‘Contact us’ section of our website: www.naturalengland.org.uk (see Appendix 2 for the full web address).

1.6 What additional requirements will apply to my agreement?

1.6.1 Cross compliance

The cross compliance requirements apply to Environmental Stewardship agreements, whether or not you are also claiming under the Single Payment Scheme (SPS). Therefore, when joining the scheme, you will be agreeing to:

- maintain your land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) by meeting a range of standards that relate to the protection of soils, habitats and landscape features; and
- meet a range of Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) covering the environment, public and plant health, animal health and welfare, and livestock identification and tracing.

You must comply with the requirements across the whole agricultural area of your farm, including common land over which you exercise or hold rights of common.

A proportion of agreement holders will be inspected each year to check for compliance with the cross compliance standards and requirements. If any non-compliance is found, it will normally be necessary to reduce your payments, depending on the seriousness of the non-compliance. Cross compliance applies to a number of schemes (including Environmental Stewardship and the Single Payment Scheme), therefore any reductions due as a result of a non-compliance will be applied to payments due under each of the schemes for which you have submitted a claim.
Full details about cross compliance can be found in the latest version of *The Guide to Cross Compliance in England* and the associated publication *Management of Habitats and Landscape Features: Guidance for Cross Compliance in England*. Copies of these are available on the RPA website at www.rpa.gov.uk/crosscompliance. In addition, there is a dedicated cross compliance advice website at www.crosscompliance.org.uk and a cross compliance advice line, which can be contacted by telephone (0845 345 1302) and by e-mail: advice@crosscompliance.org.uk.

For details of how ELS boundary management options and buffer strip options fit with cross compliance margins, please see the relevant option details in Section 3 of this handbook.

1.6.2 Avoidance of under-utilisation and overgrazing

It is a requirement of the Rural Development Programme for England that under-utilisation and overgrazing is avoided on farms with ELS agreements. Stock should be distributed across your farm to ensure that under-utilisation and overgrazing is avoided.

Under-utilisation is defined as occurring where annual growth is not being fully utilised, or where scrub or coarse vegetation is becoming evident, and this is detrimental to the environmental interests of the site.

Overgrazing means grazing land with so many livestock that the growth, quality or diversity of vegetation is adversely affected, and this is detrimental to the environmental interests of the site.

Cases of suspected under-utilisation and overgrazing will be investigated. Failure to follow subsequent professional advice would be a breach of your agreement.

1.6.3 Public Rights of Way

As a condition of joining the scheme, you must maintain existing public rights of way on your land and abide by the relevant legislation. Further information on public rights of way, including the duties of landowners and occupiers of land, can be found at www.naturalengland.org.uk (see Appendix 2 for the full web address).

1.6.4 Protection of historic features

Your annotated Farm Environment Record (FER), which includes information supplied by Natural England on the Environmental Information Map (see Section 2.1.6), will show the location of some of the historic features (including archaeological features and traditional farm buildings) on your land. For any of these features, and for any additional features of which you are subsequently advised in writing by Natural England, you must meet the following scheme conditions:

- Do not cause ground disturbance, including poaching by livestock, on known archaeological features or areas of historic interest under grassland as defined in Appendix 7.
- Do not sub-soil or de-stone on areas containing known archaeological features, unless these operations have been demonstrably undertaken as a routine in the past 5 years.
- Do not deliberately plough more deeply or undertake additional groundworks or drainage on those areas already under cultivation that contain known archaeological features.
- Do not run free-range pigs on archaeological features.
- Do not remove any useable building stone, walling stone or traditional roofing material off the land, excluding materials produced from established quarries.
- Do not damage, demolish or remove building material from substantially complete ruined traditional farm buildings or parcel boundaries.

1.6.5 Archaeological fieldwork and metal detecting on your land

With the exception of Scheduled Monuments (SMs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and known archaeological sites under grassland, metal detecting is allowed on land within an ELS agreement, provided that it is undertaken in accordance with the principles of best practice laid down in the most up-to-date Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales and that you agree that all finds are reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme. For details of this code, please see www.finds.org.uk/documents/CofP1.pdf
By known archaeological sites, we mean archaeological sites identified in your FER and any additional sites of which you are subsequently advised in writing by Natural England.

You must also ensure that the metal detecting does not conflict with the requirements of your ELS agreement, specifically:

- Where the act or timing of the proposed detecting will affect your ability to meet any option prescriptions, a derogation from Natural England will be required. Section 1.4.6 explains how to apply for a derogation.

- As part of your ELS agreement you are required to protect and retain archaeological sites and other environmental features (ie the features identified in your FER) over the entire area under agreement. You must ensure that no damage is caused to these features, and any additional features of which you are subsequently advised in writing by Natural England, wherever metal detecting takes place.

Damage to archaeological sites is taken to mean disturbance of previously undisturbed deposits in and on archaeological sites and monuments, and any removal, loss and/or disruption of standing masonry or other upstanding structural material. If you are in any doubt about whether any operations will damage environmental features, please contact Natural England (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

Natural England must be notified of the details of large scale metal detecting events, including metal detecting rallies, on any ELS agreement land at least 12 weeks before the event. You should provide all available details including the date, location, a map showing the parcels to be searched (marked with any areas excluded), and the expected number of participants. This will enable us to provide you with additional advice to ensure that the event does not conflict with the requirements and objectives of the ELS agreement.

On Scheduled Monuments, a licence is required from English Heritage before metal detecting can take place. Detecting without such a licence is a criminal offence.

On SSSIs, where actions resulting from metal detecting (eg digging or vegetation disturbance) are listed as ‘operations likely to damage the special interest’ of the SSSI, written notice must be given to Natural England of these operations. Detecting can only proceed with written consent.

A derogation is required for any proposed fieldwork (such as test-pitting or excavation) that would cause, or is expected to cause, ground disturbance or damage (see above) to any known archaeological sites. Section 1.4.6 explains how to apply for a derogation.

In addition, any archaeological fieldwork (including the use of ground penetrating radar or remote sensing) on Scheduled Monuments requires written consent from English Heritage before fieldwork can commence. Any archaeological fieldwork (including the use of ground-penetrating radar or remote sensing) on SSSIs requires written consent from Natural England (as above) before fieldwork can commence.

1.6.6 Other activities on your land

Subject to any other existing restrictions, country pursuits such as shooting, hunting and fishing are allowed, provided they are compatible with your agreement. You should make sure that any activities, and the exercise of other rights, will not conflict with the delivery of the required management of the scheme options.

1.6.7 Allow inspection

Authorised Defra staff or their agents may visit you to inspect your land during the course of your agreement. EU regulations require that, in many cases, there will be no warning of an inspection. You must give inspecting officers access at any reasonable time and you may be asked to accompany them to help identify work and discuss the requirements of your agreement. Deliberate failure to be available to accompany the officer will be treated as unacceptable and potentially as a breach of agreement. In addition, if you refuse an inspection, payment on your agreement will not be made.
1.6.8 Agricultural Waste Regulations
You must abide by the Agricultural Waste Regulations. These regulations affect whether you can burn, bury or store your waste, use your waste on the farm or send it elsewhere. These regulations also control the spreading of ditch dredgings from farm ditches on agricultural land. You must hold an exemption to carry out this practice on your farm.

1.6.9 Plaques
EU regulations require that for certain types of agreement you display a plaque acknowledging the support provided under the RDPE. Where this is the case Natural England will supply you with a suitable plaque.

1.6.10 Keep necessary records
If your application is successful, Natural England will send you a letter to confirm your acceptance into the scheme. Your FER and Options Maps (see Section 2.1.6) will be returned to you. You must retain these documents as part of your agreement because Defra staff or their agents may ask to see them during inspections.

You must also keep records of the location and timing of ‘rotational options’ and any specific records referred to in the management options in Section 3 of this handbook.

1.6.11 Other funding
You must not accept any other European Union (EU) funding or enter into another agreement that applies to the agreement land or capital works covered by your ELS agreement without the written consent of Natural England. EU regulations do not permit more than one source of EU funding for the same activity.

1.6.12 Publicity
For any publicity, events, information or interpretative material on or about the agreement land, you must acknowledge the support of the Environmental Stewardship Scheme, as part of the Rural Development Programme for England.

1.6.13 Photographs
If you are required to supply photographs in support of your application, (because an option you have selected requires you to do so), each photograph must clearly show the feature to be managed. Ideally, the whole of the feature should be on one photograph, but where necessary you should use more, for instance, to show all sides of a traditional farm building in Uplands ELS.

Each photograph should display the date on which it was taken and must be clearly numbered. The photographs should be cross-referenced with a map showing the position the photographs were taken from, the number of the photograph and an arrow indicating the direction of the shot.

The photographs can be provided in either digital format (on a CD) or as colour prints (at least 6”x4”).
Section 2
How to apply

2.1 What do I need to do before I submit my application?

2.1.1 Register your land on the Rural Land Register (RLR)
Before you can apply for ELS, all of the land that you intend to enter into the scheme must be registered on the RLR of the Rural Payment Agency (RPA). Contact the RPA for information on how to register your land (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

2.1.2 Ensure you have an RPA vendor number and a County Parish Holding (CPH) number
You must also make sure you have a vendor number – a unique trader registration number – allocated by the RPA. If you have previously claimed payments under the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS), Single Payment Scheme (SPS) or an England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) scheme, you will already have been issued with a vendor number. The CPH number enables Natural England to identify the location of your farm and provide your application maps. If you do not have a vendor number or CPH number, you must obtain one from the RPA (contact details in Appendix 1).

2.1.3 Decide which application method to use
ELS applications may be submitted via the Internet or by post.

Once the land you wish to enter into the scheme is on the RLR and you have an RPA vendor number and CPH number you can apply for ELS on-line (see Section 2.1.4).

To apply by post you will need to request a pre-filled application form and maps before applying (see Section 2.1.5).

2.1.4 Check the minimum PC requirements if applying online
If you wish to apply via the Internet and your land is RLR-registered, you do not need to receive any information through the post.

ELS Online is a software package that will enable anyone who wishes to apply for ELS only – either for themselves or acting as an agent or intermediary for someone else – to prepare an application on their computer and submit it to Natural England via the Internet. It is a secure process and the package includes a step-by-step guide to using the software to complete your application.

Applying for ELS via the Internet using the ELS Online service has many advantages:
- It cuts down the time and effort it takes for you to complete the application process.
- User friendly software contains time-saving devices, such as the boundary measurement tool, the automatic points calculator and scribble map facility.
- An online team provides dedicated customer support.
- There is no limit to the number of online applications you can submit or work on; this is of particular benefit if you are an agent who deals with multiple applications.
- It improves the accuracy of ELS applications as it allows you to check the fields entered and to measure and input option amounts more accurately.
- It limits the number of mistakes you can make on an application and decreases the time we take to process them.
- If you are an agent, you can complete the application on a PC with your customer. If the application is on a laptop, you can take it to the farm and complete it in the farmhouse or estate office.
The minimum PC specification for the ELS Online package is as follows:
- Windows 98, 2000, NT XP or Vista
- Internet Explorer 4.0 or Netscape 3.0 or above
- Pentium II or faster processor
- 256MB memory
- 100MB free hard disk space
- Internet access*.

*You will need a connection to the Internet, preferably by broadband, due to the large size of the software application and supporting information. The software application is almost 20 megabytes (MB) in size and although a conventional 56 kb ‘dial-up’ modem will work, the download could take approximately 60 minutes. Please also note that Apple Macintosh computers are not supported.

For further information about ELS Online, contact the ELS Online Team at els.online@naturalengland.org.uk or go online to the Whole Farm Approach website at www.wholefarm.defra.gov.uk.

2.1.5 Obtain an application form and maps if applying by post
To apply by post, you will have to obtain an application pack. To do so, you should telephone your local Natural England office (contact details in Appendix 1).

You will be asked to confirm the following:
- your name and correspondence address;
- your vendor number;
- the CPH numbers covering the eligible RLR land parcels you are entering into ELS.

You should also have a list of your land parcel details to hand, in case you also need to confirm one or both of the following:
- Individual RLR parcel number(s) for any ineligible land registered under your CPH number(s), so that these parcels can be omitted from your application (see Section 1.3.2).
- Individual RLR parcel number(s) for any additional eligible parcels that are not registered under your CPH number(s) so that these can be added to your application (see Section 1.3.4).

You may also request the following forms:
- Common land supplementary application form (NE-CLA3) (see Section 1.2.6)
- Agent authorisation form (NE-auth) (see Section 1.1.10)
- Supplementary land ownership and control form (NE-LOC) (see Section 1.2.2).

Natural England will then send you the pre-filled application form and application maps that you will need in order to prepare your postal application (see Section 2.3 for how to complete these).

Please note that requesting and receiving a set of maps and a personalised application form does not oblige you to apply for the scheme. Your commitment to the scheme will only be made once you send in your application and have received confirmation of acceptance into the scheme from Natural England.
2.1.6 Check your application pack is complete

Your postal application pack will include:

- A personalised application form, which has been pre-filled with information about you and your land, including RLR field numbers and areas. You must use this form to submit your application.
- Your Environmental Information Map. This map shows national designations on your land such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Monuments and Severely Disadvantaged Areas, along with a selection of other undesignated environmental features. This map should help you to identify high-priority features on your land that would benefit from the introduction of appropriate scheme options.
- Your Farm Environment Record (FER) Map. This map of your land should be used to prepare your FER (see Section 2.3.2 Step 2 and the example FER Map included with this handbook), and should be returned with your application form.
- Your Options Map. This map of your land should be used to mark where you are putting your scheme options (see Section 2.3.2 Step 4 and the example Options Map included with this handbook) and should be returned with your application form.

2.2 What do I need to consider when completing my application?

Step-by-step advice on completing the application form is given in Section 2.3.

2.2.1 How should I choose which options to put in my application?

Section 3 contains the complete list of ELS options. It describes the management to be carried out for each option and the standards that must be met. If you include any option in your application, you are agreeing to carry out the management prescriptions for that option. You should read the guidelines for each option carefully, to help you choose which ones to include in your application.

The Environmental Information Map included in your application pack will show any features of particular historic, landscape or wildlife interest on your farm. As part of your application, you will have to identify and record the environmental features on your farm (the Farm Environment Record or FER). Together the Environmental Information Map and FER will help you select and locate options to protect and manage these environmental features. You must ensure that you do not locate any options where they would be detrimental to an environmental feature.

Natural England runs ELS training and advice events to explain the option prescriptions and to provide opportunities for applicants to see the options on the ground. Details of these events can be obtained from the 'Farmers and Land Managers’ section of our website at www.naturalengland.org.uk. Alternatively, contact Natural England by telephone for details (contact details are in Appendix 1).

2.2.2 Can I have more than one option on the same area of land?

Under ELS, there are a number of instances where you can have more than one land management option overlapping on the same area of land at the same time. Table 7 in Appendix 3 shows combinations of options that may be located in the same place at the same time. **Only combinations of options shown in this table are permitted.**

Other combinations of part-field options may be placed in the same land parcel, as long as they do not overlap on the ground.

2.2.3 Should I exceed my points target?

Your ELS points target and the associated payment rates are fixed. This means that there is no higher payment for delivery of additional options over and above your required target.

If you are very confident that the measurements (length, area, etc) of your options are accurate, there is no need to deliver more than your points target. However, if you want to make sure that there is some margin for error, you may wish to consider delivering options slightly in excess of your target in case, on inspection, questions are raised about the eligibility of particular options or your compliance with
option prescriptions. It is essential that you do not fall below your points target or you will be in breach of your agreement (see Section 1.5).

If you feel that you could deliver a higher level of commitment than that required by ELS, you may wish to consider applying for Higher Level Stewardship (HLS). Under HLS, there is a wider range of options and payment rates with more detailed management prescriptions. Discuss this with your Natural England adviser before applying for HLS.

2.2.4 What should I do if I have already sown my crops?
If you have a crop in place at the start of your agreement, and the crop would need to be destroyed to establish your option (for example, nectar mixture or buffer strips), you may keep the crop in place until harvest. However, you must ensure that the land concerned does not receive any fertiliser, spray or other inputs between the agreement start date and harvest. The scheme options should then be established as soon as possible after harvest, and this must be within 12 months of your agreement start date. For all other options, you must comply with the management prescriptions from the start date of your agreement.

2.2.5 What happens once I have submitted my application?
Once your application has been received by Natural England, it will be checked to see:

- if you meet the eligibility requirements;
- that all the necessary details have been entered on your application form; and
- that all your maps have been completed.

If your application passes these simple checks, Natural England will notify you, that you have been accepted into the scheme, and provide you with an agreement reference number that you should quote in future correspondence.

2.2.6 What will I receive if my application has been successful?
If your application has been completed accurately and you have met your ELS points target, Natural England will send you a letter confirming:

- your acceptance into the scheme;
- your agreement start date (see Section 2.3.2 Step 6);
- your total annual payment; and
- the ELS options you have chosen, locations for non-rotational options, and the total amounts for each option, including rotational options.

Your FER and Options Maps will also be returned to you. You must retain these documents as you may be asked to show them during inspections (see Section 1.6.7).

You must also retain this handbook, as it forms part of your legal contract with Natural England.

2.2.7 What if my application is unsuccessful?
Provided your application has been completed correctly and you have met your points target, it is very unlikely that your application will be unsuccessful.

If your application is unsuccessful, you will receive a letter explaining the reasons for the decision.

2.3 How do I complete my application?

2.3.1 Applying by post
To mark up your FER and Options Maps, you will need a number of different coloured pencils. Please keep to the colours shown on the colour keys for individual maps.

If any of your details change between receiving the pre-filled application form and being ready to apply, the form will be out of date. If this is the case, do not amend the application form; contact your Natural England office for an updated form before applying.
Detailed instructions and guidance on how to complete the application form and how to prepare the maps are provided below. Table 3 provides a step-by-step summary of the application process.

### 2.3.2 Step-by-step summary of how to apply by post
Please read Section 1 of this handbook to make sure that you and your land are eligible before you start to complete your application. If you are applying for Uplands ELS, you should also read Section U of this handbook. This step-by-step guide covers both ELS and Uplands ELS. In this Section text specific to Uplands ELS is shown in purple font.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Check that your maps and the pre-filled details on your application form are correct. Check that your RLR field details on your Field Data Sheet at Annex 2 of your application form are correct and that all the land is eligible. If you delete any fields you must also check and amend your ELS points target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Complete your Farm Environment Record (FER) by marking the features on your land on your FER Map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Identify and record on your FER Map any fields at risk from soil erosion or run-off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Choose which options to include on your ELS-eligible land, mark your ELS option choices on the Options Map, and add the options to Annex 1 or 2 of the application form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Check that you have met or exceeded your points target on your ELS-eligible land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Choose your preferred agreement start date and tick the relevant box in Section 2 of your application form. Make sure you have checked the box to confirm which scheme you are applying to join.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Make sure you have read and understood all the terms and conditions contained in this handbook before reading and signing the declaration at Section 4 of the application form. Check that you have completed all sections of the application form and included any supplementary forms or photographs if required with your application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 8</td>
<td>Submit your application to your Natural England office in the envelope provided.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.3.3 How to fill in your application form and mark up your maps

**Step 1: Check your pre-filled details and maps**
Please note that if your application is approved, it will form part of your legal agreement with Natural England. Therefore, do not use correcting fluid. If you have to make any alterations to your application form, they must be made in block capitals using black ink and must be initialled by you. It may be helpful to make a rough copy of your application and transfer this onto your application form when you are sure it is correct.

Please check the following pre-filled details in Section 1 and Annex 2 of your application form:

- **Section 1 – Applicant’s details.** Your application form should have been pre-filled with your contact details, vendor number and legal trading status. Please check that these details are correct and complete any missing information. Please also ensure you confirm your preferred method of communication and main contact details if they differ from those pre-recorded on the form.

- **Annex 2 – Field Data Sheet.** It is your responsibility to ensure that all the land listed at Annex 2 (the Field Data Sheet) and identified on your maps is fully eligible for the scheme by carefully studying the rules on eligibility in Section 1 of this handbook.
If you find that some of your eligible land parcels have not been included in the Field Data Sheet, you must contact your Natural England office for a new application form and maps. You must not add any field parcels to your pre-filled details on the Field Data Sheet.

If you need to delete any of your field details, for example, if a CSS or ESA option covers the whole field and therefore is not eligible for ELS, please follow these instructions:

- Using the Field Data Sheet(s) at Annex 2 of your application form, delete each ineligible parcel number and associated gross parcel area from the RLR field size column.
- Amend the corresponding total area of land in Box 1 or Box 2 as appropriate at the base of the RLR field size column. For Uplands ELS applications, Box 1a, 1b, 2a or 2b should be amended.
- At Table A, Section 3 of your application form, make the corresponding amendments to the total land area(s). For applications which include SDA land, this will be Part 1 of Table A if you are applying for ELS without Uplands, or Part 2 of Table A if you are applying for Uplands ELS.
- If you have deleted any fields from your application you should now check and amend your points target.

Alternatively you may find it easier to contact Natural England and ask for a replacement application form and map(s) covering the correct field parcels.

When you have checked that your land is eligible and you are sure that the pre-filled land parcel details listed at Annex 2 of your application form are correct, proceed to Step 2.

**Step 2: Complete your Farm Environment Record (FER)**

You will need:

- your FER Map(s)
- the example FER Map (included in this handbook), which will help to show you how to mark your map
- Section 3 and Annex 1 of your application form.

As a condition of the scheme, you must agree to identify, map and retain the features listed and described on the FER Map key that are present on your land. These are your ‘FER features’. Please complete your FER by marking your FER features on your FER Map(s). Walking your farm and marking the features on a copy of your FER Map as you go may help to make sure that you do not miss any.

Use the colours on the map key for marking each feature. Confirm that you have a feature on your land by marking the corresponding blank symbol on the right side of the map key with the coloured pencil you have used to mark that feature on the map. The completed map(s) must be submitted as part of your application. If you are applying for Uplands ELS you will need to map additional features (marked with an asterisk on the map key) on your land **below the Moorland Line only**, that is, your non-moorland parcels. Please note that for scrub, you are only required to map scrub that is covered by the UX2 requirement.

Your Environmental Information Map may also indicate features that require marking on your FER Map(s).

Older versions of the map key will indicate that all boundary trees should be counted and their number marked, within a green circle, by each field boundary. This requirement has been relaxed so that now only boundaries with, on average, 1 or more eligible trees per 100 m need to be marked as ‘boundaries with trees’. For example, a hedgerow of 400 m would need to have at least four eligible trees along its length. Eligible trees are those that are native species, standing within 1 m of a hedgerow and over 30 cm diameter at breast height. These boundaries are simply marked with a green cross over the boundary line. This is illustrated on the example FER map in this handbook. (In-field trees still need to be counted and marked as shown on the key.)

You will receive 3 points per ha of land for completing your FER and retaining all your FER features for the lifetime of your agreement. Take time to complete it as clearly and accurately as you can. As long as the markings you make are clear and understandable, Natural England will be able to accept your map(s).
Record your points score for the FER as follows:

- Refer to your total eligible land area in hectares recorded at Table A in Section 3 of the application form or, where necessary, calculate your total eligible land area by adding the areas recorded in the ‘Area (ha)’ column of Table A. For applications which include SDA land, this will be Part 1 of Table A if you are applying for ELS without Uplands, or Part 2 of Table A if you are applying for Uplands ELS.

- Multiply your total ELS-eligible land area by three to give your points score for your FER on your ELS-eligible land. Record your points score in the Compulsory Farm Environment Record row of the table at Annex 1 of the application form.

Step 3: Identify fields where soil erosion and run-off occur, or may do so in the future

You will need:

- your FER Map
- Annex 2 of your application form (your Field Data Sheet)
- question 11 of your application form.

As part of your FER, you must consider whether any of your land is at risk from soil erosion or run-off. Controlling the problem could protect the environment and improve the productivity of your land. Please read Section 3J (Options to protect soil and water) of this handbook for further information on soil erosion.

First identify where soil erosion and run-off occur. Consider each of your fields and mark them in dark brown hatching on your FER Map, and put a tick in the column titled ‘Soil erosion/run off risk’ of Annex 2, if any of the following apply (even if this happens occasionally or only when a certain crop is grown in that field or when stock have poached the soil):

- if rills or gullies develop in wet weather, including along tramlines;
- if muddy water from the field enters a ditch, stream or river, or sediment is deposited on a road or on neighbouring properties; or
- if wind erosion of sandy or peaty soil occurs from fine, dry seedbeds.

Then identify where soil erosion and run-off may occur in the future. Mark your FER Map in the same way (dark brown hatching), and tick the column titled ‘Soil erosion/run off risk’ of Annex 2, if all of the following apply, and you intend to change the management of the land (particularly if you want to cultivate grassland or increase the intensity of cropping or grazing):

- the soil is sandy or silty;
- there are slopes in all or part of the field that may cause run-off and erosion; and
- run-off will reach ditches, streams, rivers, roads, or neighbouring properties down-slope of the field.

If you have identified that soil erosion and run-off occur, or are likely to occur, consider choosing management options to reduce run-off and soil erosion. See Section 3J (Options to protect soil and water) of this handbook.

Complete Question 11 on your application form.

Step 4: Choose which options to include on your ELS-eligible land

You will need:

- Annexes 1 and 2 and Section 3 of your application form
- your Options Map
- the example Options Map (included in this handbook), which will help to show you how to mark your map.
You must include sufficient options to meet your points target. Section 1.1.4 (and U1.1.4) explain how your points target is calculated. Your points target will be shown in Table A on your application form.

Read Section 3 of this handbook to find out which ELS options can be located on your ELS-eligible land. You will see that there is a wide range of options designed for a variety of farming systems. Please read through all of the ELS options and decide which ones you would like to include in your application. Refer to your Environmental Information Map and FER to ensure that your options choices will help to protect and manage the environmental features on your land. For Uplands ELS applications only, compulsory requirements UX2 (Upland grassland and arable requirements) and UX3 (Moorland requirements) must be included where the respective land type forms part of your application.

For each option you wish to include on your ELS-eligible land you must:
- Decide where the option is to be located on the land (you may decide you want to have the option in more than one location).
- Mark every instance of the option with a coloured pencil on your Options Map(s), using the appropriate colour for that option as specified on the Options Map key. Do not mark rotational options on your Options Map – these options are recorded at Annex 1 of your application form.
- Write the appropriate option code, using a fine black pen, on or against the option in each place that you have marked it on your Options Map(s).

In addition, if you have any CSS, ESA or ECS non-rotational options on a part-field basis, you must mark their location on your Options Map(s). Please note that if a CSS or ESA option covers a whole field, the field is not eligible for ELS. See Section 1.3.4 for details. If you have any CSS or ESA options on a part field that field is not eligible for Uplands ELS. See Section U1 for details.

Please take care to measure option lengths or areas then calculate the points values accurately, as errors may lead to the reduction of payments and to penalties being imposed.

Having marked your Options Map(s), you will now need to record your choices and calculate the points you have accumulated on your ELS-eligible land, using Annexes 1 and 2 of your application form:
- Use Annex 1 for ELS boundary, rotational and traditional farm building options. Instructions and guidance on how to complete Annex 1 are provided in Figure 1.
- Use Annex 2 (the Field Data Sheet) for ELS non-rotational options within fields (eg buffer strips). Instructions and guidance on how to complete Annex 2 are provided in Figure 2.

**Step 5: Check that you have met your points target on your ELS-eligible land**

You will need:
- Annexes 1 and 2 and Section 3 of the application form.

Once you have chosen your ELS options, calculate the total ELS points that you have accumulated, as follows:
- Transfer your total ELS points from Annex 1 and Annex 2 (including any continuation sheets) to the corresponding boxes in Table B, Section 3 of the application form.
- Add these two figures to determine your total ELS points and record this in Table B. This figure must meet or exceed your Total ELS Points Target (Table A) to qualify for entry to the scheme.

Remember that you are responsible for ensuring that all the options listed at Annex 1 and Annex 2 of your application form are delivered. This information forms the basis of your agreement with Natural England.
**Step 6: Choose your agreement start date**

You will need:
- Section 2 of the application form.

Your farming system and choice of options may influence the time of year when you would like your agreement to start. ELS has monthly start dates with agreements commencing on the first date of each month. At Section 2 of your application form, you can select your preferred agreement start date or simply opt for the next one available.

**Step 7: Declarations and undertakings**

You will need:
- Sections 2 and 4 of the application form.

Please read these carefully, and complete and sign the declaration at Section 4. Tick the relevant box to confirm whether you are applying for ELS or Uplands ELS, ensuring you tick only one box. If you need to make a countysigned application (see Section 1.2 of this handbook), you will need to get the relevant person to complete Section 2 of the application form and sign the declaration in that section.

**Step 8: Submit your application**

Natural England contact details are provided in Appendix 1 of this handbook.

Please return the following to your Natural England office in the envelope provided with your application pack:
- Your completed and signed application form.
- Annexes 1 and 2 of your application form.
- Your FER Map marked with your FER features.
- Your Options Map marked with the options you have chosen.

Where appropriate you should also include:
- A Common Land Supplementary Application Form (NE-CLA3) – see Section 1.2.6.
- An Agent Authorisation form (NE-auth) – see Section 1.1.10.
- Supplementary Land Ownership and control Form(s) (NE-LOC) – see Section 1.2.2.
- Any photographs you are required to submit (Uplands ELS options UB14, UB15, UB16 and UB17, UD12 and UD13).

It is recommended that you obtain proof of postage for these and any other documents you send to Natural England. You are advised to retain a copy of your completed application form and your FER and Options Maps.
Annex 1.
Please record your choice of ELS boundary, rotational and traditional farm buildings options on the table below. Completion of the Farm Environment Record and map and selection of option EAs is compulsory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points available</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Your points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EA1</td>
<td>Compulsory Farm Environment Record</td>
<td>3 per ha</td>
<td>65 ha</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA2</td>
<td>Hedgerow management (both sides of hedge)</td>
<td>11 per 300 m</td>
<td>26.1 m</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA3</td>
<td>Hedgerow management (one side of hedge)</td>
<td>13 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA4</td>
<td>Stone faced hedge bank management on both sides</td>
<td>26 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA5</td>
<td>Stone faced hedge bank management on one side</td>
<td>8 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA6</td>
<td>Ditch management</td>
<td>6 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA7</td>
<td>Half ditch management</td>
<td>8 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA8</td>
<td>Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EA2 hedgerow management)</td>
<td>20 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA9</td>
<td>Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EA2 hedgerow management)</td>
<td>20 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA10</td>
<td>Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EA2 hedgerow management)</td>
<td>20 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA11</td>
<td>Stone wall protection and maintenance</td>
<td>16 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA12</td>
<td>Earth bank management on both sides</td>
<td>24 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA13</td>
<td>Earth bank management on one side</td>
<td>14 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA14</td>
<td>Maintenance of woodland fences</td>
<td>6 per 100 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA15</td>
<td>Establishment of hedgerow trees by tagging</td>
<td>2 per 100 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA16</td>
<td>Maintenance of traditional farm buildings</td>
<td>1 per m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA17</td>
<td>Wild bird seed mixture</td>
<td>100 per ha</td>
<td>0.40 ha</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA18</td>
<td>Over wintered stubble</td>
<td>100 per ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA19</td>
<td>Skylark plots</td>
<td>5 per 10 plots</td>
<td>10 plots</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA20</td>
<td>Unfertilised cereal headland within arable fields</td>
<td>100 per ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA21</td>
<td>Unharvested cereal headland within arable fields</td>
<td>100 per ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA22</td>
<td>Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds</td>
<td>100 per ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA23</td>
<td>Reduced herbicide cereal crops followed by overwintered stubble</td>
<td>100 per ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA24</td>
<td>Extended overwintered stubble</td>
<td>100 per ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA25</td>
<td>Cereals for whole crop silage followed by overwintered stubble</td>
<td>100 per ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA26</td>
<td>Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion</td>
<td>10 per ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA27</td>
<td>Enhanced management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion and run-off</td>
<td>20 per ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA28</td>
<td>Maintenance of watercourse fencing</td>
<td>1 per 100 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA29</td>
<td>Winter cover crops</td>
<td>0.5 per ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following options can only be chosen if you are applying for Uplands ELS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points available</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
<th>Your points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UBA1</td>
<td>Stone faced hedge bank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line</td>
<td>18 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBA2</td>
<td>Stone faced hedge bank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line</td>
<td>21 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBA3</td>
<td>Stone wall protection and maintenance on or above the Moorland Line</td>
<td>12 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBA4</td>
<td>Earth bank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line</td>
<td>18 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBA5</td>
<td>Earth bank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line</td>
<td>16 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBA6</td>
<td>Hedgerow restoration</td>
<td>10 per m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBA7</td>
<td>Stone faced hedge bank restoration</td>
<td>15 per m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBA8</td>
<td>Earth bank restoration</td>
<td>16 per 10 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBA9</td>
<td>Stone wall restoration</td>
<td>10 per m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCA1</td>
<td>Sheep fencing around woodlands</td>
<td>10 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCA2</td>
<td>Maintenance of weather proof traditional farm buildings in remote locations</td>
<td>1 per m²</td>
<td>m²</td>
<td>m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCA3</td>
<td>Post and wire fencing along watercourses</td>
<td>10 per 300 m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total points for Annex 1
Please enter this total in the box at Section 3 table B of this application form

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Figure 1 How to complete Annex 1

To record your FER:
- Record the total ELS-eligible area in the ‘Measurement’ column.
- Convert the measurement to points (Multiply the total ELS-eligible area by 3 points per ha) and record this figure, to the nearest whole point, in the “Your points” column.

To record Boundary options (including EAs):
- Measure the total length of each option you have selected. Please note that it is acceptable to use the maps provided to measure boundary lengths. You do not have to measure boundary lengths on the ground.
- Record each measurement, to the nearest metre, in the relevant row.
- Convert the measurement to points, to the nearest whole point, and record this figure in the ‘Your points’ column.

To record buildings to be managed under the ‘Maintenance of Traditional Farm Buildings’ option:
- Measure the total ground floor area of buildings to be included in this option.
- Record the total area in the measurement column.
- Convert the measurement to points, to the nearest whole point, and record this figure in the ‘Your points’ column.

To record rotational options:
- Assess the area of land to be managed under the rotational option.
- Record the area in the ‘measurement’ column of the relevant row. Record the area measurement to the nearest 0.01 ha (or for EA8 Skylark plots, record the number of plots).
- Convert the measurement to points and record this in the ‘Your points’ column.

Do not mark the location of rotational options in the Options Map as these will move location from year to year. However, you must ensure that the area is entered at Annex 1 and that the declared area and required management is delivered in every year of your agreement.

For applications that include SDA land, Uplands ELS boundary and building options will also be listed on Annex 1. If you are applying for Uplands ELS, these should be recorded in the same way.

Once you have recorded all your chosen options at Annex 1, you must calculate your total ELS points for these options and record this figure at the base of the ‘Your points’ column. Copy this figure to Table B in Section 3 of your application form.
**Annex 2: Field Data Sheet for ELS non-rotational options within fields**

Please enter all ELS non-rotational options within fields that you have chosen into this data sheet. Details of the options available are provided in the ELS Handbook and supplements (if any).

**Application reference**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RLR field no./boundary no.</th>
<th>RLR field size (ha)</th>
<th>LFA Status*</th>
<th>Soil erosion/run-off risk (tick if YES)</th>
<th>UG1 upland grassland &amp; arable requirement (ha)</th>
<th>UG3 Moorland requirement (ha)</th>
<th><strong>EE 2</strong> (ha/ha/ha)</th>
<th><strong>EE 3</strong> (ha/ha/ha)</th>
<th><strong>EE 4</strong></th>
<th><strong>EE 7</strong> (ha/ha/ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XX1239 5628</td>
<td>8.63</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX1239 6789</td>
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<td>1.18</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX1239 7890</td>
<td>21.54</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX1239 8901</td>
<td>8.24</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.93</td>
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<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX1239 9022</td>
<td>8.95</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX1239 0123</td>
<td>10.27</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX1239 1234</td>
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<td>0.93</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX1239 2345</td>
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<td>0.93</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total amount (ha/ha/ha):**

- **EE 2:** 0.93
- **EE 3:** 2.10
- **EE 4:** 1.18
- **EE 7:** 0.80

**ELS points per unit:**

- 460

**ELS points:**

- 172

**EE 2 per unit Uplands ELS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land area totals</th>
<th>ELS (without Uplands)</th>
<th>ELS ELS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total area of land, excluding parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line and ineligible land (this sheet)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>102.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total area of parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line, excluding ineligible land (this sheet)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>102.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Uplands ELS**

| 1a | Total area of non-LFA land (ha) - Disadvantaged land (D) and parcels under 15 ha of Disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line (MD), excluding ineligible land (this sheet) |
| 1b | Total area of severely disadvantaged land (S) and parcels under 15 ha of severely disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line (MS), excluding ineligible land (this sheet) |
| 1c | Total area of parcels of 15 ha or more of disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line (MD), excluding ineligible land (this sheet) |
| 1d | Total area of parcels of 15 ha or more of severely disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line (MS), excluding ineligible land (this sheet) |

1a, 1b, 1c, 1d and for Uplands ELS: Total area for this sheet when added to any continuation sheets should equal the figures in Table A at Section 3. 
3. Total ELS points for this sheet should be added to the total on any continuation sheets and entered into Table B at Section 3. 
1a Total value of Uplands ELS Moorland commons and shared grazing requirements.

**To record soil erosion and run-off risk**

Step A: Where necessary, remove any ineligible fields by deleting the parcel number and field area. Additional fields must not be added manually.

Step B: Where necessary, re-calculate the total area of all land eligible for ELS, excluding parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line. Record this figure in Box 2, and in Table A (Part 1 for applications which include SDA land) at Section 3 of your application form.

Step C: Where necessary, re-calculate the area of all parcels of 15 ha or more that are above the Moorland Line. Record this figure in Box 2 and in Table A (Part 1 for applications which include SDA land) at Section 3 of your application form.

To record compulsory requirements (Uplands ELS only)

**Step E:** For applications that include SDA land, compulsory requirements UX2 and UX3 will be shown to the right of the ‘Soil erosion’ column. If you are applying for Uplands OELS, record the area of each parcel to the nearest 0.01 ha (100 m²) in its corresponding row, as follows:

- UX2 column: all SDA parcels below the Moorland Line
- UX3 column: all SDA parcels above the Moorland Line.

If necessary, please continue on additional sheets and indicate in the box how many have been attached.
To record your option choices

**Step F:** Write the code of one of your chosen options at the top of one of the ‘ELS options’ columns, working from left to right.

**Step G:** Work out the amount of this option for each field parcel that you have decided to put it in, remembering to deduct any areas ineligible for the options, such as ponds.

**Step H:** Record these amounts in the corresponding row of the ‘ELS options’ column. For each entry, calculate the area in hectares to the nearest 0.01 ha (100 m²) or the number of trees (for options EC1, EC2 and EC23). See Example 1.

**Step I:** Calculate the total amount of your chosen option for all field parcels. Enter this figure at the bottom of the column, in the row marked ‘Total amount (ha/no).’ See Example 2.

**Step J:** Record the points per ha or number available for the option in the row marked ‘ELS points per unit’, eg for option EE2, you would enter 400.

**Step K:** Calculate the number of points the option has contributed towards your total points target. Record this value to the nearest whole point in the row marked ‘ELS points’.

**Step L:** Repeat Steps F to K for your remaining ELS and Uplands ELS non-rotational option choices.

**Step M:** Once you have recorded all of your non-rotational options within fields, you must calculate your total ‘ELS points’ for the options you have chosen and record this figure at the base of the ’Total points’ column in Box 3. Copy this figure to Table B of Section 3 of your application form.

**Example 1**
This shows the entry for a 4 m buffer strip of 2,324 m in length. This measurement has been converted to hectares, to the nearest 0.01 ha. An example calculation is provided below:
A 4 m wide buffer strip of 2,324 m in length would occupy \(4 \times 2,324 = 9,296\) m².
A hectare is 10,000 m² so the area occupied in hectares is 0.9296 ha \((9,296/10,000)\).
This would be recorded at Annex 2 as 0.93 ha (to the nearest 0.01 ha).

**Example 2**
To calculate your ELS points for each option, multiply the total amount by the ELS points per unit.
In this case the option is ED4, Management of scrub on archaeological sites, so the calculation is: 3.18 ha \(\times\) 120 points/ha = 382 points (to the nearest whole point).

**Uplands ELS commons applications only**
- Enter details of the Uplands ELS Moorland commons and shared grazing requirement UX1 as described in Steps F to H above.
- Enter the cost per hectare for this requirement (E5) in the row marked ‘£ per unit Uplands ELS Moorland commons and shared grazing requirements’.
- Multiply the total hectares of UX1 by the £5 per unit figure and enter the total in the ‘£s Uplands ELS Moorland commons and shared grazing requirements’ box.
- Record this value in Box 3a of the ‘Total Points/£s’ column.
Entry Level Stewardship Farm Environment Record

**Assigned colour**
- Hedgerows
- Stone walls and stone faced banks
- Earth banks
- Archaeological and Historic features (including features identified on your Environmental information map)
- Traditional farm buildings
- Breodershum buildings, pre-dating 1949
- In-field trees (over 30cm in diameter at chest height) (value = total number of trees in parcel)
- *Boulders and rocky outcrops
- Ponds and lakes
- Wet ditches (ditches which regularly contain standing or running water)
- Rivers and streams
- Other wetlands (marsh, fen, saltmarsh, open water, reed beds)
- Traditional wetlands
- Woodlands (groups of 4 or more trees, including coppices, shelter belts and groups of trees)
- Upland rough ground (land which has not been ploughed and has not received artificial fertiliser in the last 20 years)
- Field boundaries which soil erosion or run-off may occur (see guidance in Scheme Handbook)
- *Areas of scrub
- *Areas of heath
- 1234 RLR field number
- Holding parcels (duff covered parcels are to be marked up on this map. Any grey parcels are covered on other maps)

**Applicants colour**

*Features specific to uplands agreements*

---

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Entry Level Stewardship Options Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Assigned colour</th>
<th>Applicants colour match</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EB/EB</td>
<td>Location of other All scheme options (e.g. CSS, ESA, OFS or ICS)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB/VB</td>
<td>Hedge management and restoration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB/UB</td>
<td>Stone faced hedge bank management and restoration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB</td>
<td>Ditch management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB/UB</td>
<td>Stone wall protection, maintenance and restoration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC/VB</td>
<td>Woodland/forest management of woodland edges/hedge/ buffer strips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| EC     | Options for protection of in-field trees and tree tagging
          "Human refers to trees named on schedule of trees of special or hedgerow" |
| UC     | Woodland livestock exclusion option |
| EB/WD   | Maintenance of traditional farm buildings |
| EB/BD   | Options for historic and landscape features |
| EB      | Options for buffer strips |
| EF      | Options for arable land |
| EG      | Options to encourage a range of crop type |
| EA/RA   | Watercourse fencing |
| EA/RA   | Options to protect soil and water |
| ET      | Options for grassland |
| EL/ML   | Options for upland grassland and moorland |
| ET      | Constrained options for arable land |
| 1234    | RLU field number |

You must write the specific codes for the options that you have selected, and any required options, in black on the map, e.g. EB1, EB3, EB6, UB12, UX2 Options with a '1' prefix have certain restrictions, refer to handbook.

Section 2

Entry Level Stewardship - Third Edition February 2010
Entry Level Stewardship Options Map
Section 3
Detail of compulsory requirements, options and points allocations

3.1 Introduction to the ELS compulsory requirements and options

To join ELS you must make a commitment to carry out certain environmental management options, on your eligible land, which you can choose from a wide-ranging menu. Each option is worth a certain number of points per unit of: area (e.g. buffer strip options); length (e.g. hedge management options) or number (e.g. in-field tree options). If you agree to deliver enough ELS points on your ELS eligible land to meet (or exceed) your points target you will be guaranteed entry into the scheme. Table 4 below is a list of all the ELS compulsory requirements and management options with their corresponding points allocations. Details about each requirement and option can be found in Section 3.2, after the summary table.

Each requirement and option has a unique code. All the ELS codes start with an E; the second letter denotes the land management type that the option belongs to, e.g. options for arable are given the letters EF.

There are several new options for you to choose from. They are highlighted in Table 4. Many of the existing options have been amended following a review of the scheme in 2007/8.

Table 4 Summary table of ELS compulsory requirements, options and points available

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Units</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Page</th>
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<td>55</td>
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<td>B Options for boundary features</td>
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<td>EB1</td>
<td>Hedgerow management on both sides of a hedge</td>
<td>100 m</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>EB2</td>
<td>Hedgerow management on one side of a hedge</td>
<td>100 m</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>EB3</td>
<td>Enhanced hedgerow management</td>
<td>100 m</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EB4</td>
<td>Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides</td>
<td>100 m</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>EB5</td>
<td>Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side</td>
<td>100 m</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>EB6</td>
<td>Ditch management</td>
<td>100 m</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>EB7</td>
<td>Half ditch management</td>
<td>100 m</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EB1 Hedgerow management)</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC3</td>
<td>Maintenance of woodland fences</td>
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<td>EC4</td>
<td>Management of woodland edges</td>
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<td>EC23</td>
<td>Establishment of hedgerow trees by tagging</td>
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Entry Level Stewardship - Third Edition February 2010
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<td>NEW in 2010</td>
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<td>EC25</td>
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**D Options for historic and landscape features**

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<tr>
<td>ED1</td>
<td>Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings</td>
<td>m²</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Take out of cultivation archaeological features currently on cultivated land</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>460</td>
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<td>ED3</td>
<td>Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on archaeological features (minimum till)</td>
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<td>ED4</td>
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**E Options for buffer strips**

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<td>EE2</td>
<td>4 m buffer strips on cultivated land</td>
<td>ha</td>
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<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>EE3</td>
<td>6 m buffer strips on cultivated land</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE4</td>
<td>2 m buffer strips on intensive grassland</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE5</td>
<td>4 m buffer strips on intensive grassland</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE6</td>
<td>6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>EE7</td>
<td>Buffering in-field ponds in improved permanent grassland</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>77</td>
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<td>EE8</td>
<td>Buffering in-field ponds in arable land</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>77</td>
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<tr>
<td>EE9</td>
<td>6 m buffer strips on cultivated land next to a watercourse</td>
<td>NEW in 2010</td>
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<td>6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland next to a watercourse</td>
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**F Options for arable land**

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<td>Management of field corners</td>
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<td>Wild bird seed mixture</td>
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<td>EF4</td>
<td>Nectar flower mixture</td>
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<td>450</td>
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<td>EF6</td>
<td>Overwintered stubble</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>EF7</td>
<td>Beetle banks</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>580</td>
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<td>Skylark plots</td>
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<td>Unfertilised cereal headlands</td>
<td>ha</td>
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<td>EF10</td>
<td>Unharvested cereal headlands</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>330</td>
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<td>EF11</td>
<td>Uncropped cultivated margins for rare plants</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>EF13</td>
<td>Uncropped cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds on arable land</td>
<td>NEW in 2010</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>360</td>
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<td>EF15</td>
<td>Reduced herbicide cereal crops followed by overwintered stubble</td>
<td>NEW in 2010</td>
<td>ha</td>
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<td>EF22</td>
<td>Extended overwintered stubble</td>
<td>NEW in 2010</td>
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**G Options to encourage a range of crop types**

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<td>Undersown spring cereals</td>
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<td>EG2</td>
<td>Wild bird seed mixture in grassland areas – has been replaced by EF2 Wild bird seed mixture</td>
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<tr>
<td>EG3</td>
<td>Nectar flower mixture in grassland areas – has been replaced by EF4 Nectar flower mixture</td>
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<tr>
<td>EG4</td>
<td>Cereals for whole-crop silage followed by overwintered stubble</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>88</td>
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</table>
### Code | Options                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Units | Points | Page |
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<td><strong>Options to protect soil and water</strong></td>
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<td>Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion</td>
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<td>Take field corners out of management</td>
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<td>EK2</td>
<td>Permanent grassland with low inputs</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>85</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>EK3</td>
<td>Permanent grassland with very low inputs</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EK4</td>
<td>Management of rush pastures</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>Option for mixed stocking on grassland</td>
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<td>EK5</td>
<td>Mixed stocking</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>Take field corners out of management in SDAs</td>
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<td>Management of rush pastures in SDAs</td>
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<td>EL5</td>
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<td>Unenclosed moorland rough grazing</td>
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</tbody>
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### 3.2 Detailed management prescriptions for ELS compulsory requirements and options

#### Compulsory requirements

**EA1 Farm Environment Record**

3 points per ha

As part of your application, you must identify and map the features listed and described on the FER Map key that are present on your land. Follow the instructions in Section 2.3.2 Step 2, to do so. The completed map(s) must be submitted with your application form. As long as the markings you make are clear and understandable, we will be able to accept your map(s).

You must retain all features marked on your FER map for the duration of your agreement.

#### B Options for boundary features

**Boundary management options**

Field boundaries are important elements of the countryside as landscape and historic features; for wildlife habitat; and for stock management and shelter. Hedges across long, steep slopes may reduce soil erosion as they intercept and slow surface run-off water before it builds into damaging flow, particularly where there is a margin or buffer strip alongside.

**Which hedges are eligible for these options?**

Hedgerow management options may be applied to any boundary line of shrubs (with or without trees), provided that at one time the trees and shrubs were more or less continuous. In addition, eligible hedgerows must be:
- under your management control;
- in management by regular trimming or on a traditional hedge-laying or coppicing cycle; and
- predominantly composed of native shrubs (at least 80 per cent).

Where the hedgerow includes gaps or gates, these may be included in the length measurement, providing they comprise less than 20 per cent of the total length of the particular hedge. Gaps above this 20 per cent threshold should be deducted from the length included. A gap is a complete break in the canopy. Where a tree canopy overlaps the hedgerow canopy, this is not counted as a gap (see Figure 3 below).

![Figure 3 - Eligible hedgerows.](image)

You may use these options on newly planted, laid or coppiced hedgerows or hedgerows that are below the minimum heights required at the start of the agreement. However, the hedges must meet the required height by the end of the agreement. To achieve the best range of hedgerow habitats on your farm, you should aim to have a mixture of hedges of different heights and widths, all with thick bushy bases. Although maximum trimming frequencies are stated (once every 2 years, or once in every 3 years), there is no requirement to trim at all during the agreement term. Instead, hedgerows can be left to grow unchecked then managed in a long-term coppicing or laying rotation.

Road and trackside hedgerows that require annual or more frequent trimming for public safety are not eligible for options EB1 (two-sided management) or EB3 (enhanced hedgerow management). However, the non-road side of the hedge may be entered into option EB2 (one-sided management).

Where a hedge is directly adjacent to a woodland edge, only EB2 (one-sided management) can be included.

Where a ditch runs alongside the hedge and you wish to include both, use options EB8, EB9 and EB10, rather than the separate hedge and ditch options EB1, EB2, EB3 and EB6.

Hedges managed under an ELS option are eligible for Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) capital item payments, when you are making an HLS application.

You cannot use more than one hedgerow management option on the same length of hedgerow. However, where there is woody growth on top of an earth bank or stone-faced bank which meets the necessary criteria, you may also apply for one of the hedgerow options EB1, EB2 or EB3. The specified height of the hedgerow is measured from the top of the bank.

For more information on hedgerow cutting, refer to the Natural England pamphlet NE36, entitled Hedge Cutting: answers to 18 common questions. A copy of this can be obtained from the National England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk
Combining ELS hedgerow management with cross compliance requirements

Cross compliance conditions include a requirement to maintain ‘protection zones’ by not cultivating or applying fertilisers, manures or pesticides to land within 2 m of the centre of a hedgerow or watercourse. This requirement also applies to all land within 1 m of the top of the bank of a watercourse.

Hedge and ditch options have been designed to be compatible with this cross compliance requirement. The ‘protection zone’ requirement for cross compliance is incorporated within the option rules.

**EB1 Hedgerow management on both sides of a hedge**
22 points per 100 m

**EB2 Hedgerow management on one side of a hedge**
11 points per 100 m

For these options, you must comply with the following:

- Maintain hedgerows to a height and width customary to the local landscape, but not less than 1.5 m in height (except when laid or coppiced as part of a regular management cycle).
- Do not cultivate or apply fertilisers, manures or pesticides to land within 2 m of the centre of the hedge.
- Maintain hedgebanks in a style that is customary to the area. Where a bank is present, measure the height of the hedgerow from the top of the bank.
- Cut each hedgerow no more than once every 2 calendar years. Do not cut all hedgerows managed under this option in the same year.
- Do not cut hedgerows during the bird breeding season (1 March to 31 August).
- Where already present, you may leave saplings to grow into hedgerow trees at intervals, for example four trees randomly spaced over 200 m, where this fits in with the local landscape character.
- Take care to minimise poaching by livestock and any channelling of surface run-off along the side of the hedgerow.
- Hedge laying and coppicing are permitted in a style customary to the local landscape, but should be completed before 1 March. However, in exceptional circumstances, work may continue up to 1 April, provided you conduct a survey to ensure that there are no nesting birds present.
EB3 Enhanced hedgerow management

This option is only available where you have control of the management of both sides of the hedge.

In addition to the conditions for EB1 and EB2 (see above), you must also comply with the following:

- Maintain hedgerows to a height and width customary to the local landscape, but no less than 2 m in height (except when laid or coppiced as part of a regular management cycle).
- Cut each hedgerow no more than once every 3 calendar years, cutting no more than a third of your hedgerows each year.

EB4 Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides
EB5 Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side

Where there is hedge growth on top of the bank, you may also apply for options EB1, EB2 or EB3 where they meet the necessary criteria.

For these options, you must comply with the following:

- Protect stone-faced banks from deterioration and repair gaps where these occur during the course of the agreement.
- Prevent damage to stone-faced gateways and to banks by machinery or by stock climbing. Where stock have damaged such features, prevent further damage by making the features stock-proof.
- Do not remove any in situ stone from banks.
- All repair and maintenance work must be carried out in the traditional materials used in the original hedgebank construction, following the style characteristic to the local landscape.
- Do not cast up ditch dredging or spoil over stone-faced banks.

**EB6 Ditch management**

24 points per 100 m

This option is intended for ditches forming field boundaries in their own right and aims to establish both a varied bank-side and aquatic vegetation, and an undisturbed wildlife habitat adjacent to the ditch. Eligible ditches must regularly contain standing or flowing water. They must contain vegetation typical of wet ditches, for example common reed, yellow flag, reed canary grass, water mint, fools water-cress and marsh-marigold. You must be responsible for the management of both sides of the ditch. Ditches managed by third parties, such as internal drainage boards, are not eligible. Streams that are unmanaged (or occasionally managed) natural features are not eligible. Moorland grips are not eligible. Where the ditch runs alongside a hedge and you intend to apply ELS options to both, you must use option EB8, EB9 or EB10 (see below).

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- You must not cultivate or apply fertilisers or pesticides to land within 2 m of the centre of the ditch. This rule also applies to all land within 1 m of the top of the ditch bank.
- You may only cut the vegetation on your ditch banks in the period between 15 September and 28 February. In each such period, you may only cut the vegetation on up to half your length of ditch bank.
- Where you are cutting vegetation growing on ditch banks, cut it in rotation so that the vegetation is not cut more than once every 2 years.
- Where necessary to prevent flooding, up to 50 per cent of the vegetation in the bottom of the ditch may be cut every year between 15 September and 28 February.
- You must clean ditches no more than once during your agreement. You must do so only in the period between 15 September and 31 January, and in any such period you must clean only up to half your length of ditches.
- Only use mechanical means (including hand tools) to clean your ditches or trim vegetation on the ditch bank.
- Any dredgings or spoil must be spread evenly across the adjacent field, at least 2 m from the centre of the ditch and 1 m from the top of the bank (to comply with cross compliance rules) and the bank-side vegetation re-established by natural regeneration. Wherever practicable, avoid disposing of dredgings or spoil on areas managed under Environmental Stewardship. If it is spread on land managed under an Environmental Stewardship option, you must make sure the management requirements for the option are still met.
- Do not move or re-profile or increase the width or depth of the ditch.

Leaving one ditch bank uncut provides essential cover for species such as water voles.
EB7 Half ditch management

This option is available for ditches as described above for option EB6 where you only have control over the management of one side of the ditch.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- You may only cut the vegetation on your ditch banks in the period between 15 September and 28 February.
- In each such period, you may only cut the vegetation on no more than half the length of ditch bank.
- You must not cultivate or apply fertilisers or pesticides to land within 2 m of the centre of the ditch. This rule also applies to all land within 1 m of the top of your ditch bank.
- Only use mechanical means (including hand tools) to clean your ditches or trim the vegetation on the ditch bank.
- Any dredgings or spoil must be spread evenly across the adjacent field, at least 2 m from the centre of the ditch and 1 m from the top of the bank (to comply with cross compliance rules) and the bankside vegetation re-established by natural regeneration. Wherever practicable, avoid disposing of dredgings or spoil on areas managed under Environmental Stewardship. If it is spread on land managed under an Environmental Stewardship option, you must make sure the management requirements for the option are still met.

Combined hedge and ditch management options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option Description</th>
<th>Points per 100 m</th>
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<td>EB9 (incorporating EB2 hedgerow management)</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>EB10 (incorporating EB3 Enhanced hedgerow management)</td>
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</table>

These options are available for hedgerows with a ditch that meets the eligibility criteria of EB 6 or 7 immediately alongside. You must have control over the management of adjacent land on both sides of the hedge and ditch. The aim is to establish a diverse hedgerow, bankside and aquatic vegetation.

You must apply for these options (EB8, EB9 and EB10) where you have a hedge alongside a ditch and you wish to manage both under the scheme (i.e., you cannot combine individual hedge or ditch options).
For these options, you must follow the conditions for:
- EB1, EB2 or EB3, depending on whether you are managing one side of your hedge or both sides, and EB6.

In addition, you must comply with the following:
- On the non-hedgerow side of the ditch, you must not cultivate or apply fertilisers or pesticides to the land within 2 m of the centre of the ditch. This rule also applies to all land within 1 m of the top of the ditch bank.
- If you are managing both sides of the hedgerow, you must leave uncultivated land extending 2 m from the centre of the hedgerow on the non-ditch side of the hedgerow. You must not apply fertilisers, manures or pesticides to this land.
- Take care to minimise hedge trimmings entering the ditch. Ensure that all hedge trimmings that would otherwise restrict flow are removed.

**EB11 Stone wall protection and maintenance**

15 points per 100 m

Stone walls are important features in many parts of the country.

You must have control over the management of both sides of the wall. Stone walls of all types are important for stock management and as landscape and historic features. They are also potentially important habitats for lichens, mosses and ferns, invertebrates, reptiles, birds and small mammals.

This option can only apply to complete walls or complete sections of walls (ie walls still at their original height and with their coping stones in place). Stone walls must be built of natural materials and must be of traditional dry-stone wall construction. Mortar may be used when it is the traditional method of stone walling.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- Protect stone walls from deterioration. Repair gaps where these occur during the course of your agreement.
- Carry out all repair and maintenance work in the traditional materials used in the original wall construction, following the style characteristic of the local landscape and using appropriately shaped and sized local natural stone. Any existing features such as sheep creeps and stone gate posts must be retained.
- Do not remove any in situ stone from walls.
NEW OPTIONS in 2010

EB12 Earth bank management on both sides
14 points per 100 m

EB13 Earth bank management on one side
7 points per 100 m

Earthbanks provide a valuable wildlife habitat as well as being important historic and landscape features.

These options aim to maintain and protect earth and turf-faced banks. These banks are important landscape and historic features, often containing valuable below-ground archaeological deposits. They also provide potentially important habitats for invertebrates, reptiles, birds and small mammals.

These options only apply to complete sections of earth and turf-faced banks that are at least 1 m in height. You must have control over the management of both sides of the bank.

Where there is hedge growth on top of the bank, you may also apply for options EB1, EB2 or EB3 where they meet the necessary criteria.

For these options, you must comply with the following:

- Protect earth banks from deterioration. Repair gaps where these occur during the course of the agreement.
- Do not repair gaps using earth from an existing boundary or any other archaeological feature.
- Prevent damage to gateways and banks by machinery or stock. Where stock have damaged such features, prevent further damage by making the features stock-proof.
- All repair and maintenance work must be carried out in the traditional style characteristic of the local area and used in the original earth bank construction.
C Options for trees and woodland

EC1 Protection of in-field trees on arable land
EC2 Protection of in-field trees on grassland

16 points per tree
11 points per tree

Trees are of historic and landscape significance in both arable and grassland situations. They also provide habitat for many invertebrates and birds. To be eligible for these options, trees must have a trunk diameter of over 30 cm at breast height and the trunk must be entirely within the field and not part of a field boundary. A tree in a remnant boundary is eligible, provided that it is not attached to a current boundary feature.

Trees that form a group or line of more than four trees whose canopies overlap are not eligible for these options, but one of the 6m buffer strips or field corner options can be used to protect them. If the canopies do not overlap, each individual tree can earn the specified number of points. Dead trees are eligible for these options with the requirement that a ‘10 m radius from the base of the tree’ must be used as a minimum where the prescription refers to the ‘tree canopy’. Trees that die or fall during the course of the agreement must remain in position and the prescriptions must continue to be followed.

Figure 6 – Illustration of the protected area around an in-field tree.

Fallen dead wood is an important habitat for invertebrates.

For these options, you must comply with the following:

- Do not carry out any cultivations, supplementary feeding of stock, storage of materials or machinery, or weed control (apart from spot treatment) under the canopy of the tree and the area extending 2 m beyond the edge of the canopy.
- Leave fallen timber in situ within the protected area.
Do not spread lime, fertilisers or manures beneath the tree canopy and the area extending 2 m beyond the edge of the canopy.

**EC3 Maintenance of woodland fences**  
4 points per 100 m

The aim of this option is to protect woodland flora and to encourage natural regeneration. Woodlands are features of historic interest and make significant contributions to the local landscape character. The option should only be placed adjacent to predominantly native woodlands, in particular ancient woodlands, and where animals are likely to graze.

Only woodlands on your land are eligible for this option. The option may not be used for woodlands that border, but do not form part of, the farm.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Maintain fences in a stock-proof condition to ensure exclusion of livestock without damaging woodland boundary banks.
- Exclude stock from the woodland.

**EC4 Management of woodland edges**  
380 points per ha

Livestock exclusion allows ground flora and young trees to thrive.

Woodland fringe habitat.
The development of scrub along the edges of woodland provides important habitats for a range of wildlife, including invertebrates, birds and small mammals. This option is designed to encourage the woodland edge to grow out into the field and requires 6 m to be left uncultivated from the edge of the wood. A scrub and grass mosaic should be allowed to develop. The option should only be placed adjacent to predominantly native woodlands, particularly ancient woodlands. It may be used to enhance woodlands on your land, as well as those that border the farm but do not form part of the farm.

This option must be located on agricultural land adjacent to woodland, to allow development of the woodland edge. Therefore, where woodland covers an entire land parcel, this option should be located in the adjoining field.

The option is also eligible adjacent to woodlands where a ditch runs between the woodland and the field. However, it may not be practical to use this option if the ditch requires ongoing management or maintenance. This option may be located immediately adjacent to woodland receiving Forestry Commission funding, but there must be no overlap.

Buffer strip options may be located adjacent to these woodland-edge areas.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Do not cultivate within 6 m of the woodland edge. Allow the woodland edge to grow out for up to 6 m.
- Cover of scrub growth must not exceed 50 per cent of the area.
- Cutting is only permitted to maintain the scrub and grass mosaic and for the control of the weeds listed below.
- Trim no more than a third of the shrubby growth in any one calendar year. Do not cut during the bird breeding season (1 March to 31 August).
- Do not supplementary feed or locate water troughs and mineral licks in such a way as to cause poaching on the woodland edge.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- Do not apply fertilisers or manures.

**NEW Options for hedgerow trees**
Hedgerow trees are distinctive historic and landscape features in many areas. They are also particularly important for wildlife, providing several habitats in one location for a broad range of wildlife, in particular birds and invertebrates.

Many hedgerow trees have been lost over the latter half of the 20th century partly because of the intensification of agriculture alongside outbreaks of diseases such as Dutch elm disease. Currently we have an ageing hedgerow tree population and need to take action to establish new trees and conserve young trees already growing in hedgerows. However, the establishment of new hedgerow trees may not be suitable in areas that provide habitat for breeding waders, for example lapwing, which prefer wide open landscapes.

For detailed guidance on the creation of hedgerow trees and their management, please refer to the Natural England publication NE69, entitled Hedgerow trees: answers to 18 common questions. A copy of this can be obtained from the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk

**NEW OPTION in 2010**

**EC23 Establishment of hedgerow trees by tagging**

1 point per tree

To be eligible for this option:

- Hedgerow trees must already be a feature on the holding or in the immediate landscape.
- A maximum number of two trees per 100 m of hedge can be established under this option. Each tree established will earn the specified number of points.
- Hedges that are subject to this option must also be managed under one of the ELS hedgerow management options: EB1, EB2, EB3, EB8, EB9 or EB10.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Within the first 12 months of your agreement, select a sapling with a single straight stem, ideally when the hedge has been left uncut for at least a year. Select only locally native tree species that are already successful in the hedge or immediate landscape, with the exception of elm due to the risk of Dutch elm disease.
- Alternatively, if you cannot identify any suitable saplings, plant a sapling into an existing gap in the hedgerow. The sapling must be at least 2 m tall. Follow the species guidance detailed above.
- Saplings should be far enough apart (at least 20 m) to allow them to develop full crowns without competing with one another. Keep trees at an irregular spacing.
- Do not select or plant saplings beneath or within 20 m of overhead power lines, other overhead or underground services.
- Tag each new hedgerow tree using a brightly coloured durable material. If a tree is difficult to reach, put a tagged stick near it – in the ground or hedge. Alternatively, consider putting a permanent clearly visible stake in the hedge next to the tree.
- Make a record of the tagged trees and show the person cutting the hedge where the trees are to ensure they are not cut or damaged for the length of the agreement.
- Revisit the trees annually to check tags are in place, replacing the tags as necessary.
- At the end of the agreement, there must be a living undamaged tree for each tree established under this option.
NEW Options for hedgerow tree buffer strips
These options are only available adjacent to hedgerows entered into an ELS hedgerow management option (EB1, EB2, EB3, EB8, EB9 or EB10), which also have on average at least one eligible tree per 100 m. For example, a hedgerow of 400 m would need to have at least four eligible trees along its length. Eligible trees are those that are native species, standing within 1 m of a hedgerow and over 30 cm diameter at breast height. These buffer strips must not overlap with the cross compliance requirement not to cultivate land within 2 m of the centre of a hedgerow or watercourse (and within 1 m or the top of the bank of a watercourse).

Both sides of a hedgerow with eligible trees must be protected, where possible, using either the Hedgerow tree buffer strip on arable land or the Hedgerow tree buffer strip on grassland option. Hedgerows alongside roads or ownership boundaries, where it is not possible to protect both sides, are also eligible for these options.

NEW OPTION in 2010
EC24 Hedgerow tree buffer strips on cultivated land

Fallen timber must be retained but can be stacked to allow management of the margin.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Establish or maintain a 6 m wide grassy strip during the first 12 months of your agreement, either by sowing or, ideally, by natural regeneration. Remove any compaction in the topsoil if you need to prepare a seedbed, except on archaeological features. Regular cutting in the first 12–24 months may be needed to control annual weeds and encourage grasses to tiller. Avoid cutting when the soil is moist to prevent further compaction.

- After the first 12–24 months of your agreement, cut the 3 m next to the crop edge annually after mid-July. Only cut the other 3 m to control woody growth, and no more than once every 2 years (where next to woodland, once every 10 years).

- If you wish, you may establish all or part of the margin by sowing a mix of fine-leaved grasses and flowers, such as knapweed, bird’s-foot-trefoil, self-heal, oxeye daisy and yarrow. If you decide to do this, it is recommended that you cut each year in August or September and, if excess vegetation threatens to suppress the flowers, cut again the following March or April. This will maintain the flowers in this sward, or others resulting from natural regeneration. You may remove cuttings, which will further benefit flowers.
Do not use buffer strips for regular vehicular access, turning or storage. There should be no tracks, compacted areas or poaching.

Do not apply any fertilisers or manures.

Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broadleaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).

Do not remove tree limbs, including the lower limbs, other than for health and safety reasons where adjacent to a public highway or right of way.

Leave fallen timber beneath the canopy. Stack if necessary to allow management of the buffer strip.

**NEW OPTION in 2010**

**EC25 Hedgerow tree buffer strips on grassland**

400 points per ha

This option is only available on permanent grassland.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- On fields that will be mown, leave an uncut 6 m buffer strip around the edge. Graze this buffer strip along with the aftermath, following the final cut.

- Do not allow livestock to poach or overgraze the buffer strip.

- Do not use buffer strips for regular vehicular access, turning or storage. There should be no tracks, compacted areas or poaching.

- Do not apply any fertilisers or manures.

- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broadleaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).

- After the first 12 months of the agreement, cut buffer strips only to control woody growth, and no more than once every 2 years.

- Do not remove tree limbs, including the lower limbs, other than for health and safety reasons where adjacent to a public highway or right of way.

- Leave fallen timber beneath the canopy. Stack if necessary to allow management of the buffer strip.

- Do not allow stock to damage the trunks of any hedgerow trees adjacent to the buffer strip.

**D Options for historic and landscape features**

Archaeological features, traditional buildings and designed landscapes, such as parkland, give the countryside its local character and interest, as well as providing a record of human activity over centuries. Changes in agriculture have damaged or destroyed many of these features or resulted in their dereliction. Beneficial management can protect these important sites and help to retain and enhance the distinctive and varied character of the local landscape and wider countryside for generations to come.

Before considering these options, please look carefully at your Environmental Information Map, supplied as part of your application pack. This may show some of the historic features on your farm. If you are aware of additional features, you must also mark these on your Farm Environment Record (FER) map. You can obtain information about historic features on your land from the Historic Environment Record at www.heritagegateway.org.uk (see Appendix 2 for the full web address).

Further information and guidance is available in a leaflet entitled **Farming the Historic Landscape:**

**Entry Level Stewardship,** available from www.helm.org.uk or Natural England (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

**Protection of archaeological features**

Archaeological features – from individual sites, such as barrows, settlement sites or hill forts, to more extensive landscape features, such as ridge and furrow and ancient field systems – are often our only record of past human activity. They cannot be replaced and once destroyed, they are gone forever.
Cultivation can be particularly destructive. Taking these features out of cultivation is an essential step in conserving them for present and future generations to see and understand.

If you have historic features (including archaeological features and traditional farm buildings) on your farm, it is a requirement of joining ELS that you mark them on your FER and retain and protect them. This includes meeting the relevant scheme conditions detailed at Sections 1.6.4 and 1.6.5 of this handbook.

If you wish to carry out works (other than those specified in the measures below) that affect Scheduled Monuments, you must consult English Heritage.

**ED1 Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings:**

2 points per m² of ground floor area

A traditional farm building (TFB) is a building or part of a building constructed before 1940 for a use associated with agriculture, and built using traditional methods and materials such as timber, brick, stone, tile and slate. Their construction, layout and function provide information about the rural economy and past farming practices. While many TFBs are not suited to modern agriculture, they are often valued features in the landscape and make a major contribution to local character. The annual active maintenance of weatherproof TFBs prevents the onset of serious structural problems that might otherwise need expensive restoration in the future.

‘Maintenance’ refers to the routine work that is necessary to protect the fabric of a building and to keep it weatherproof. It does not include any work to put right significant defects or decay, or anything required to bring a building in poor repair back to good condition. This sort of restoration work may be funded under HLS. Some maintenance works will be required annually. Others, such as clearing of gutters and vegetation, may need to be undertaken several times per year.

Typical maintenance work includes:

- undertaking a regular inspection of the building to check its condition and identify any problems that need attention;
- ensuring that all services are working properly, such as making sure that gutters are free of debris;
- undertaking minor repairs to the external fabric of the building, such as replacing slipped or broken roofing slates and tiles to prevent rainwater penetration, renewing cast iron gutters and drainpipes, painting woodwork and metalwork, replacing broken glass, pointing walls, clearing vegetation; and
- inspecting the building regularly to identify areas needing maintenance work, such as checking downpipes and gutters for leaves in the autumn, noting slipped slates, and checking the condition of paintwork and other areas requiring rectification.
Eligible buildings include TFBs that:
- are in a sound and weatherproof condition;
- were built for a purpose associated with agriculture, such as housing machinery or animals, or storing or processing crops and food; and
- are still used for an agricultural purpose, whether or not it was the original one (for example, a barn built to house animals which is now being used for storage of feedstuffs or equipment).

TFBs that meet the above conditions but which are currently unused or empty are also eligible. It is not a requirement for buildings to be on land registered on the Rural Land Register (see Section 1.3.2), but you must record them on the FER.

Ineligible buildings include:
- farmhouses, residential or domestic buildings;
- buildings already converted to a non-agricultural use, ie to a residential or non-agricultural business use;
- TFBs already in receipt of funding from another scheme, such as the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) or Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE);
- TFBs that you intend to convert to a non-agricultural use during the life of your agreement; and
- TFBs that will not be in your ownership or control for the life of your agreement.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- Continue to protect and maintain in weatherproof condition the specified TFB(s) (including fixtures and fittings and adjacent associated features, such as mounting blocks or stack/stook bases).
- Carry out maintenance works and minor repairs on a 'like for like' basis, using traditional materials and methods, to retain the character of the building in its local setting.
- Where a non-traditional material has previously been used to repair or re-clad the building (such as corrugated iron sheeting to cover roofs), this may be retained and should be maintained appropriately.
- Obtain current photographs of all elevations of the building as evidence of its condition when you joined the scheme. This should include photographs of any areas where non-traditional materials have previously been used to repair or re-clad the building.
- Keep a record of work done, and carry out and record a brief visual inspection at least once a year.
- Retain the building in your ownership or control for the life of your agreement.
- Ensure that the building is not converted to a non-agricultural use during the life of your agreement.

**ED2 Take out of cultivation archaeological features currently on cultivated land**

460 points per ha

Taking some of the land out of cultivation would protect the remains of these archaeological features.
This option is available on cultivated land and on temporary grass ley that are re-sown at least once every 5 years. Land that is being managed under this option in an existing ELS agreement may stay in this option in a renewed agreement, provided that there has been continuity of management and that there has been no cultivation.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Take archaeological features out of cultivation.
- Choose a boundary that encompasses the feature and provides a sensible and practical field division where necessary. This may be on the whole or part of the field where the archaeological feature is located, depending on what is practical on your farm.
- The area can be sown or left to regenerate and you must then carry out the following management:
  - Do not plough or cultivate. Re-seeding is only allowed by slot-seeding into the sward (without destruction of the existing sward).
  - Manage the area as permanent grassland, by grazing or mowing.
  - Maintain a continuous grass sward and do not allow bare patches of soil to develop (for example, by considering carefully the regular routing and rotation of stock movements, and gathering points such as water troughs).
  - Do not supplementary feed, or site water troughs, on or next to the archaeological feature.
  - Prevent scrub development.
  - Minimise the use of heavy vehicles on the feature, particularly in wet weather, to prevent damage caused by wheel rutting and compaction.
  - Do not tip or dump any material on the feature.
  - Avoid obvious earthworks, if you are harrowing or rolling.

**ED3 Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on archaeological features (minimum till)**

60 points per ha

Where removal of archaeological features from cultivation is not practicable, reducing cultivation depth is a ‘next-best’ option. Shallow cultivation reduces the risk of damage to archaeological features on farmland. This option may be applied to the whole, or part, of the field where the archaeological feature is located, depending on what is practical on your farm. The reduction in cultivation depth must be achieved by using non-inversion (minimum tillage) machinery – not standard inversion ploughing equipment.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Avoid deep soil disturbance by using shallow, non-inversion cultivations to a maximum depth of 10 cm (4 inches) or by using no-till practices.
- Do not sub-soil or mole-plough.

This Roman mosaic was discovered a few inches under cultivated land.
Do not use machinery under conditions likely to cause rutting or compaction.
Do not grow maize, root and tuber crops (excluding non-harvestable root crops such as grazed fodder beet and forage turnips), short rotation coppice or miscanthus.
If sowing a spring crop, maintain the previous overwintered stubble until 14 February.
Do not use the area as farm access.

An example of a site that would benefit from scrub clearance.

ED4 Management of scrub on archaeological features  
120 points per ha

Trees and shrubs can be very damaging to archaeological features, particularly buried deposits, as a result of disturbance by root penetration, by wind throw or by attracting burrowing animals or sheltering stock. This option helps to prevent expansion of scrub.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Where scrub is present on an archaeological feature, prevent its further encroachment by grazing and/or mowing.
- To avoid disturbance to nesting birds, do not remove scrub between 1 March and 31 August.
- Prevent the spread of weeds, shrubs, saplings or scrub, to avoid damage by roots.
- Avoid using heavy machinery and ensure that works do not disturb the ground.
- If you are carrying out scrub clearance, do not grub out stumps and roots, but cut (or grind down) stumps level with the land surface. Prevent vegetation regrowth.
- Remove cuttings or brash from the feature.
- Do not tip, dump or burn any material on the feature.
- Do not plough or re-seed.
ED5 Management of archaeological features on grassland

Maintaining land as permanent pasture preserves archaeology.

Well-managed permanent grassland is the best agricultural management option for archaeological features and pastoral landscapes, such as ridge and furrow, to conserve them for present and future generations. This option may be claimed on the whole field even where the archaeological feature covers only a part of the field. This option is not available on land parcels larger than 15 ha above the Moorland Line.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- Maintain a continuous grass sward and do not allow bare patches of soil to develop (for example, by considering carefully the regular routing and rotation of stock movements and gathering points such as water troughs).
- Do not supplementary feed on, or next to, the archaeological feature.
- Control weed growth and prevent scrub development.
- Minimise the use of heavy vehicles on the feature, particularly in wet weather, to prevent damage caused by wheel rutting and compaction.
- Do not tip or dump any material on the feature.
- Do not harrow or roll earthworks (including ridge and furrow).
- Do not locate water troughs, mineral licks etc, in such a way as to cause poaching on, or next to, the archaeological feature.
- Do not plough or re-seed.

E Options for buffer strips

Buffer strips, managed as low intensity grassland, can be used for a wide variety of purposes such as creating new habitats and protecting existing ones, protecting archaeological features and capturing surface water run-off. Although normally sited around the edges of fields, they can also be used within fields, for example to protect a group of in-field trees.

You can use whichever width of buffer strip best suits your field shape, farm machinery and purpose. However, the strip must always be at least the minimum width specified for the particular option. They may exceed the width but any additional area will not be included in the payment area. Generally speaking, wider buffer strips will provide greater protection and improved wildlife habitat.
The options in this Section are designed to be used adjacent to existing features on the margins of fields. There are other options available that can serve similar purposes within fields or are designed to protect particular features:

- EC4 Management of woodland edges
- EC24 Hedgerow tree buffer strips on cultivated land
- EC25 Hedgerow tree buffer strips on grassland
- ED2 Take out of cultivation archaeological features currently on cultivated land
- EJ5 In-field grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off
- EJ9 12 m buffer strips for watercourses on cultivated land.

See also options for arable land in Section EF for options for cultivated field margins

**Where to locate buffer strips**

**To protect watercourses:** When placed next to a watercourse a buffer strip can help to intercept potential pollutants such as sediment and nutrients transported in surface water run-off. However, take care to minimise any channelling of water along the edge of the buffer strip. On long, steep slopes, buffer strips placed across the slope can be combined with in-field options such as EJ5 (in-field grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off) to intercept and slow run-off before it builds to damaging flow.

**To benefit wildlife:** Buffer strips offer particular benefit to wildlife, if placed adjacent to watercourses, hedgerows (particularly those hedges containing mature hedgerow trees), stone walls, remnant boundary tree lines, groups of in-field trees and woodland edge strips. They may also be used to create habitat and to form links between areas of wildlife habitat. On intensive grassland, buffer strips managed as uncut margins in meadows are likely to provide the greatest benefits for wildlife as the longer vegetation that develops provides habitat for insects and small mammals.

**To protect archaeological features:** Buffer strips can be used to protect above-ground archaeology and other historic features, such as historic buildings, and metal parkland fencing. Below-ground archaeological features can be protected using the option ED2 Take out of cultivation archaeological features currently on cultivated land. Consider the impact on the local landscape character when deciding on the width, extent and location of buffer strips.

**Other considerations**

Buffer strip options in ELS must not overlap with:

- the cross compliance requirement not to cultivate land within 2 m of the centre of a hedgerow or watercourse (and within 1 m of the top of the bank of a watercourse);
- any other buffer strips or uncultivated strips required under other ELS options, such as ELS options for field boundaries, trees and woodland;
- public rights of way (eg footpaths or bridleways) along field edges; or
- a 6 m strip adjacent to any watercourse on land covered by the Uplands ELS compulsory requirement UX2. (This is because UX2 prohibits the application of fertilisers and herbicides adjacent to watercourses.)

You must start your ELS buffer strip options where your other uncultivated land ends (ie 2 m from the centre of a hedge or ditch, and at least 1 m from the top of a ditch bank).

If you are locating your ELS buffer strip next to a hedge that extends further than 2 m from the centreline of the hedge, it is acceptable for part of your ELS buffer strip to be covered by the hedge, provided the land would otherwise be eligible as a buffer strip. You may establish 2 m or 4 m ELS buffer strips alongside 2 m Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) grass margins, but you must not establish any ELS buffer strip options alongside 6 m CSS grass margins.
Buffer strips that have already been established are eligible if their management is not being paid for under another scheme. However, a buffer strip must be located on land that could, in practice, be cultivated (so for example very steeply banked strips alongside boundaries are not eligible). Buffer strips established under a previous ELS agreement can continue to be managed within ELS under a renewed agreement.

For land that is part of an arable/grass ley rotation, you must manage land in buffer strip options EE1–EE3 according to the prescriptions of options EE4–EE6 during the years when the buffer strips are adjacent to a temporary grass ley.

**How to record buffer strip measurements**

On your application form, you must enter the amount of each buffer strip option as an area measurement in ha for each field. This will give you a figure, which you will need in order to complete your SPS return. It will also help you to work out the remaining field area available for other uses, for example cropping or other ELS options.

**How to calculate the area of buffer strip options**

You may find it helpful to use the following worksheet to record how you have calculated the area of each buffer strip option in each of your fields. This can also be used for options EC4 Management of woodland edges; EC24 and EC25 Hedgerow tree buffer strips on cultivated land or grassland and EJ9 12 m buffer strips for watercourses on cultivated land.

For each buffer strip, measure the length of the option in metres, and convert this to ha (to the nearest 0.01 ha (100 m²).

**Table 5 How to calculate the area of buffer strip options**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<td>Option code</td>
<td>Option description</td>
<td>Width (m)</td>
<td>Length (m)</td>
<td>Area in m² (width x length)</td>
<td>Area in ha (divide area in m² by 10,000)</td>
<td>Area in ha to the nearest 0.01 ha</td>
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<td>EE3</td>
<td>6 m buffer strips on cultivated land</td>
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<td>238</td>
<td>(6 x 238) 1428</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EE1 2 m buffer strips on cultivated land**

**EE2 4 m buffer strips on cultivated land**

For these options, you must comply with the following:

- Establish or maintain a grassy strip during the first 12 months of your agreement, either by sowing or, ideally, by natural regeneration. Remove any compaction in the topsoil if you need to prepare a seedbed, except on archaeological features. Regular cutting in the first 12–24 months may be needed to control annual weeds and encourage grasses to tiller. Avoid cutting when the soil is moist, to prevent further compaction.
- Do not apply any fertilisers or manures.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broadleaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
■ After the first 12–24 months of your agreement, cut buffer strips only to control woody growth, and no more than once in every 2 years.

■ Do not use buffer strips for regular vehicular access, turning or storage. There should be no tracks, compacted areas or poaching.

**EE6 6 m buffer strips on cultivated land**

**NEW OPTION in 2010**

**EE9 6 m buffer strips on cultivated land next to a watercourse**

For these options, you must follow the management for options EE1/EE2 and in addition comply with the following:

■ After the first 12–24 months of your agreement, cut the 3 m next to the crop edge annually after mid-July. Only cut the other 3 m to control woody growth, and no more than once every 2 years (where next to woodland, once every 10 years).

■ If you wish, you may establish all or part of the margin by sowing a mix of fine-leaved grasses and flowers, such as knapweed, bird’s-foot-trefoil, self-heal, oxeye daisy and yarrow. If you decide to do this, it is recommended that you cut each year in August or September and, if excess vegetation threatens to suppress the flowers, cut again the following March or April. This will maintain the flowers in this sward, or others resulting from natural regeneration. You may remove cuttings, which will further benefit flowers.

**EE4 2 m buffer strips on intensive grassland**

300 points per ha

**EE5 4 m buffer strips on intensive grassland**

400 points per ha

**EE6 6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland**

400 points per ha

**NEW OPTION in 2010**

**EE10 6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland next to a watercourse**

400 points per ha

Only the new option EE10 should be used on grassland next to watercourses.

These options are only available on improved grassland receiving more than 100 kg/ha of nitrogen per year in fertilisers or manures.

For these options, you must comply with the following:

■ On fields that will be mown, leave an uncut 2 m/4 m/6 m buffer strip around the edge. Graze this buffer strip along with the aftermath, following the final cut.

■ Do not allow livestock to poach or overgraze the buffer strip.
Do not apply any fertilisers or manures.

- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (i.e., creeping and spear thistles, curled and broadleaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (e.g., Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).

- It is not a requirement to fence these buffer strips.

- After the first 12 months of your agreement, cut buffer strips only to control woody growth, and no more than once every 2 years.

- Do not use buffer strips for regular vehicular access, turning or storage. There should be no tracks, compacted areas or poaching.

**EE7 Buffering in-field ponds in improved permanent grassland**

**EE8 Buffering in-field ponds in arable land**

400 points per ha

To maintain their value to wildlife, the water quality of ponds needs to be protected. In areas of improved grassland management and on arable land, the creation of unfertilised grass buffers around in-field ponds will help to protect them from nutrient leaching and run-off and will provide additional habitat for pond wildlife. Buffers will be less effective where field drains discharge directly into the pond. The buffer areas may be designed to link two nearby ponds or to link ponds to copses or other boundary features.

These options are only available on grassland that is currently receiving over 50 kg N per ha (EE7), or on arable land (EE8).

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Figure 7 – Buffering in-field ponds.

For these options, you must comply with the following:

- Buffer areas should be no more than 0.5 ha, although areas can be linked where there are several ponds in a field.

- Buffer areas must extend at least 10 m between the pond edge and the intensively managed part of the field within which it lies.
On arable or rotational land, establish buffer areas during the first 12 months of your agreement, either by sowing or, ideally, by natural regeneration. Remove any compaction in the topsoil if you need to prepare a seedbed, except on archaeological features. Regular cutting in the first 12–24 months may be needed to control annual weeds and encourage grasses to tiller. Avoid cutting when the soil is moist to prevent further compaction.

After establishment, cut no more than once every 5 years to allow the development of tussocky grass and low scrub. Do not cut between 1 March and 31 August. Do not allow scrub to develop on archaeological features.

You may allow some scrub to develop, but this must be around less than half of the pond margin.

Do not apply any fertilisers or manures.

Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).

Where the field is grazed, limit livestock access so that less than half of the pond edge is poached.

Do not use buffer areas for regular vehicular access, turning or storage. There should be no tracks, compacted areas or poaching.

**F Options for arable land**

These options are only available for arable land (see Glossary for definition).

**EF1 Management of field corners**

The provision of a grassy area will greatly increase the wildlife interest of an arable field. These areas are often awkward to reach with machinery and are less productive. However, the provision of a natural grassy corner, containing some grassland flowering plants and scrub, will benefit wildlife, including invertebrates, birds, reptiles and amphibians (if located near a water feature). This option must not be located on archaeological features.

Although this option is designed for field corners, if you have small areas within the field that would be beneficial to take out of production, you may do so. Strategic placement of this option may help to reduce the movement of sediment, nutrients and pesticides by wind and water erosion within fields and...
from field to field. This option could also help to buffer sensitive habitats at risk from soil erosion and from the direct impact of agricultural activities.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Establish or maintain a field corner during the first 12 months of your agreement, either by sowing or, ideally, by natural regeneration. Remove any compaction in the topsoil if you need to prepare a seedbed, except on archaeological features. Regular cutting in the first 12–24 months may be needed to control annual weeds and encourage grasses to tiller. Avoid cutting when the soil is moist to prevent further compaction.
- Patch size must be no more than 2 ha and there must be a maximum of 1 paid patch per 20 ha of arable land to ensure that patches are well distributed across the land.
- After establishment, cut no more than once every 5 years to allow the development of tussocky grass and low scrub. Do not cut between 1 March and 31 August. Do not apply any fertilisers or manures.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- After controlling weeds you may surface seed patches with a tussocky grass mix.
- Do not use field corners for regular vehicular access, turning or storage. There should be no tracks, compacted areas or poaching.

**EF2 Wild bird seed mixture**

450 points per ha

Wild bird seed mixture placed against woodland.

This option has replaced **EG2 Wild bird seed mixture in grassland areas and is available on arable land or temporary grassland (sown to grass for less than 5 years).**

This option will provide important food resources for farmland birds, especially in winter and early spring, on arable and mixed farms. The aim is to maximise the production of small seeds suitable as bird food in either annual or annual/biennial mixtures, while also providing a source of invertebrates for birds.
This option is a ‘rotational option’. This means that it can move around the farm within the normal rotation, but the same total hecatrage must be maintained each year. Relocating these blocks or strips will help to avoid the build-up of weeds or soil-borne disease.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Sow a balanced combination of at least three small-seed bearing crops chosen from barley, triticale, kale, quinoa, linseed, millet, mustard, fodder radish and sunflower. No single species should make up more than 70 per cent by weight of the mix and the combination must cover a range of crop groups to minimise any pest and disease impacts. Large-seeded crops (such as maize) and game covers (such as giant sorghum or sweet clover) are not allowed.
- Sow in blocks and/or strips at least 6 m wide at the edges of fields. Both should be between 0.4 ha and 2 ha in size, and there should be no more than 3 ha in total per 100 ha of land. This will ensure that the strips or blocks are well distributed across your farm and that food is always available for seed-eating birds.
- In the first year, sow at the optimum time for the chosen species mixture, which may be autumn or spring, ensuring that any areas of soil compaction are removed prior to establishment, except on archaeological features. Avoid sowing too early in the spring, when seedbeds may be dry, cold and of poor quality.
- To help with weed and pest management, the seed can be sown in separate drill widths or blocks within the option area.
- On sandy soils, strips must be sown along contours.
- Retain the crop mixture until at least 1 March before re-establishment in spring, which could be annually or every other year (biennial crops), to maintain seed production.
- Fertilisers, manures (but not within 10 m of watercourses) and seed treatments may be used to aid establishment, minimise impact to non-target invertebrates and ensure sufficient seed production to deliver the option aim.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed). Non-residual, non-selective herbicides may be used prior to sowing, to help re-establishment.
- Only apply environmentally sympathetic insecticides – and then only during establishment – where there is a strong risk of crop failure due to severe pest attack (identified through monitoring and use of thresholds). Advice must be taken from a BASIS professional before any insecticides are used.
- Do not use the area for access, turning or storage.
- Do not graze.

**EF4 Nectar flower mixture**

This option has replaced EG3 Nectar flower mixture in grassland areas and is available on arable land or temporary grassland (sown to grass for less than 5 years).

Sowing an area of flowering plants into the farmed landscape will boost the availability of essential food sources for a range of nectar-feeding insects, including butterflies and bumblebees.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Remove any compaction in the topsoil if you need to prepare a seedbed, except on archaeological features.
- Sow a mixture of at least four nectar-rich plants (eg red clover, alsike clover, bird’s-foot-trefoil, sainfoin, musk mallow, common knapweed), with no single species making up more than 50 per cent of the mix by weight.
■ Sow in blocks and/or strips at least 6 m wide at the edges of fields, in early spring or late summer.
■ Individual areas must not exceed 1 ha in size and there should be no more than 3 ha per 100 ha of land. This is to ensure that they are well distributed across your farm, so that there is always food available for the nectar-feeding insects.
■ Re-establish the mix as necessary, to maintain a sustained nectar supply.
■ Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed). Non-residual, non-selective herbicides may be applied prior to sowing, to help re-establishment.
■ Do not apply any other pesticides, fertilisers, manures or lime.
■ To stimulate valuable late flowering to meet the peak demand from bees, cut half the area to 20 cm between mid-June and the end of the first week of July. Do not cut if ground nesting birds are present.
■ Cut the whole area to 10 cm between 15 September and 31 October, removing or shredding cuttings to avoid patches of dead material developing.
■ Do not graze in the spring or summer. Late autumn/early winter grazing of areas is allowed and will benefit legumes, but take care to avoid poaching damage and compaction, particularly when conditions are wet.
■ Do not use the area for access, turning or storage.

**EF6 Overwintered stubble**

Overwintered stubble provides an important winter food source for seed-eating birds, which feed on spilt grain and the seeds of broad-leaved weeds. They are also a habitat for brown hare, and the spring-grown crops that follow can provide breeding sites for ground-nesting birds, such as lapwing and skylark. This option manages stubble following the harvest of combinable crops, such as oilseed rape, linseed, cereals or field beans (but not maize), until 14 February in the following year. It should not be located where there is a high risk of soil erosion or run-off (that is, land identified in your FER as at risk of soil erosion and where rills are regularly seen in wet weather).

This is a ‘rotational option’. This means that it can move around the farm within the normal rotation, but the same total hectarage must be maintained each year.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
■ Bale (or chop and spread) straw after harvest.
■ Where the stubble is predominantly clean after harvest, a light surface cultivation can be made before the end of September or within the first month following harvest if later, to encourage weed germination and loosen any surface compaction or capping. If the stubble is already weedy, do not cultivate.
■ In sloping fields the tramlines, headlands and other areas of severe compaction should always be sub-soiled following harvest (except where there are archaeological features or when conditions are wet), to reduce the risk of run-off and erosion.
■ Do not apply any pesticides, fertilisers, manures (including manure heaps) or lime to the stubble.
■ Do not top or graze.
■ Do not apply pre-harvest desiccants or post-harvest herbicides.
■ From 15 February, the stubble can be returned to the farm rotation.
EF7 Beetle banks

Figure 8 – Beetle bank.

Beetle banks are tussocky grass ridges, generally about 2 m wide, which run from one side of a field to the other, while still allowing the field to be farmed. They provide habitat for ground-nesting birds, small mammals and insects (including those that feed on crop pests).

When carefully placed across the slope, such banks can help reduce run-off and erosion. However, you must ensure that they do not channel water instead and make existing problems worse. Do not locate beetle banks where their creation would cause damage to an archaeological feature.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Create or maintain an earth ridge between 2 m and 4 m wide and about 0.4 m high. This can be created by careful two-directional ploughing. Alternatively, bed-forming equipment can be used, if available (except on archaeological features).
- You may leave working gaps at each end of not more than 25 m, to allow machinery access.
- Sow with a mixture of perennial grasses, including some tussock-forming varieties, such as cocksfoot or timothy.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- You may need to cut the grass several times during the first summer to help establishment. Thereafter, only cut as necessary to prevent the encroachment of woody and suckering species. To avoid causing soil compaction, do not cut when wet.
- Do not apply any other pesticides, fertilisers or manures.
EF8 Skylark plots

5 points per plot

Figure 9 – Creating low open vegetation provides access to foraging and nesting habitats.

The number of breeding skylarks has halved since the mid-1970s, due largely to the switch from spring to autumn sowing of cereals and the intensification of grassland management. Arable fields support more breeding skylarks than any other habitat. Large, open fields are preferred, where the birds nest on the ground in vegetation less than 50 cm high, so winter cereals soon become unsuitable for breeding. Up to three nesting attempts are made in a long breeding season that extends from April to August.

This option will provide suitable habitat for skylarks in winter cereal crops throughout the breeding season.

This is a ‘rotational option’. This means that the plots can move around the farm within the normal arable rotation, but the same total number of plots must be maintained each year.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Select a field that is more than 5 ha in area, has an open aspect and will be drilled with winter cereals. A good guide is the presence of skylarks singing over the field in previous years.
- Avoid fields bounded by tree lines or adjacent to woods, unless the field is greater than 10 ha.
- Create the plots either by turning off the drill during sowing to leave an unsown plot, or by sowing the crop as normal and spraying out the plots by 31 December with an appropriate herbicide.
- The plots should be at least 3 m wide and have a minimum area of 16 m² (eg 3 m x 6 m or 4 m x 4 m).
- Locate the plots away from tramlines (a middle spot between two sets of tramlines is best) and field boundaries/margins (at least 50 m into the field), to minimise nest predation.
- Space skylark plots across the field at a minimum density of two plots per ha.
- After drilling, there is no requirement to manage plots differently to the remainder of the field (they can be oversprayed and can be fertilised).
- You are not required to keep the plots weed-free.
- There must be no mechanical weeding of plots.
EF9 Unfertilised cereal headlands

This option provides an important food supply for birds, and habitat for arable plants and insects, within any arable field during the cropping year. It will deliver most benefit when sited next to a buffer strip, stubble or area planted for wild bird seed or nectar flower mixtures.

Unfertilised cereal headlands can be difficult to manage where grass weeds are a problem, particularly where herbicide resistance is present. If an unexpected weed infestation occurs and becomes unmanageable, select a less weedy location in following years.

This is a ‘rotational option’. This means that the headlands can move around the farm within the normal arable rotation, but the same total hectarage must be maintained each year. The headlands can also remain in the same place in the field. This will be especially beneficial where scarce arable plants are present.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Do not apply fertilisers or manures to the headland between harvest of the previous crop and resuming normal management.
- Sow and manage a 6 m–24 m wide cereal headland along the edge of an arable crop.
- Do not apply insecticides between 15 March and the following harvest.
- Only the following herbicides can be applied to control problem grass and broad-leaved weeds:
  - for broad-leaved weeds, only use amidosulfuron, and only between 1 February and 31 March; and
  - for grass weeds, use the following active ingredients only – tri-allate, fenoxaprop-P-ethyl, diclofop-methyl + fenoxaprop-P-ethyl, trifluralin, clodinafop-propargyl or pinoxaden.
- Where weed growth threatens harvest, you may use a pre-harvest desiccant, unless you plan to use this area as overwintered stubble (see Options EF22 or EF6).

EF10 Unharvested cereal headlands

This option provides a year-round food supply for birds, and habitat for arable plants and insects, within any arable field over 2 cropping years. It will deliver most benefit when sited next to a buffer strip, stubble or area managed for wild bird seed or nectar flower mixtures.

Unharvested cereal headlands can be difficult to manage where grass weeds are a problem, particularly where herbicide resistance is present. If an unexpected weed infestation occurs and becomes unmanageable, select a less weedy location in following years.

This is a ‘rotational option’. This means that the headlands can move around the farm within the normal arable rotation, but the same total hectarage must be maintained each year. The headlands can also remain in the same place in the field. This will be especially beneficial where scarce arable plants are present.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Do not apply fertilisers or manures to the headland between harvest of the previous crop and resuming normal management.
- You can sow the headland in either autumn or spring (do not leave as bare ground over the winter) and leave it unharvested until the following spring (1 March), before resuming normal management.

This open and herb rich headland will provide feeding habitat through the summer and winter.
- Sow and manage a 3 m–6 m wide cereal headland along the edge of any arable crop, ensuring that any areas of soil compaction are removed prior to establishment, except on archaeological features.
- Sow a cereal or cereal mixture at a reduced seed rate, to encourage a more open headland structure. On more difficult or weedy sites, conventional seed rates can be used.
- Do not apply insecticides between 15 March and the following harvest.
- Only the following herbicides can be applied to control problem grass and broad-leaved weeds:
  - for broad-leaved weeds, only use amidosulfuron, and only between 1 February and 31 March; and
  - for grass weeds, use the following active ingredients only – tri-allate, fenoxaprop-P-ethyl, diclofop-methyl + fenoxaprop-P-ethyl, tralkoxydim, clodinafop-propargyl or pinoxaden.

**EF11 Uncropped cultivated margins for rare plants**

These margins will provide beneficial management for rare arable plants, insects and foraging sites for seed-eating birds. It is better to avoid locating these margins where you have a grass weed problem. Where run-off is a problem, a grass buffer should be considered. The option will provide greatest benefits on sandy, shallow, chalky or stony soils.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- Cultivate an arable field margin annually in either spring or autumn to a depth of about 15 cm (6 inches).
- Varying the depth and time of cultivation may help prevent the build-up of undesirable weeds, but should always be managed according to the requirements of the target species.
- Margins should be 3 m–6 m wide. They can be relocated within the same field to avoid the build-up of pernicious weeds.
- Do not apply any fertilisers or manures.
- Where a severe pernicious weed burden has developed, targeted broad-spectrum herbicides can be used, once annual species have set seed (typically in September). Before then, only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam or Japanese knotweed).
NEW OPTION in 2010
EF13 Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds on arable land 360 points per ha

This option provides breeding sites for ground-nesting farmland birds such as lapwing. In addition, it can provide foraging habitats for other declining birds such as grey partridge, turtle dove, skylark, yellow wagtail, linnet, yellowhammer and corn bunting. Brown hare may also benefit from this option in predominantly arable areas. It will deliver most benefit when sited next to a buffer strip, stubble or area planted with wild bird seed or nectar flower mixtures. Although lapwings nest on cultivated land, they feed their chicks on extensively managed grassland so placing this option next to a suitable grass field should improve their breeding success. This option should be used in large arable fields, ideally in areas where these species have been known to nest. Fields should be chosen carefully, avoiding those with pernicious weeds and those that are prone to waterlogging. This option must not be located on parcels at risk of soil erosion or run-off (as identified on your FER) or where there are archaeological features.

This option can be used in a sequence with the overwintered stubble (EF6) to provide a continuity of habitat for species such as skylark and corn bunting.

This is a ‘rotational option’. This means that it can move around the farm within the normal arable rotation or stay in a fixed location but the same total hectarage must be maintained each year.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- The cultivated area must be located on level, or slightly sloping ground; in fields larger than 5 ha with an open aspect and at least 100 m away from woods, in-field and hedgerow trees, overhead power-lines and public rights of way in order to minimise nest disturbance and predation. Do not place in fields bounded by tree lines or adjacent to woods, unless the field is larger than 10 ha.
- The cultivated area must be at least 1 ha and no more than 2.5 ha in size and at least 100 m wide. It must be located so as not to generate erosion and provide run-off pathways for sediment.
- Create rough cultivated areas using tines or discs between 1 February and 20 March, to make sure they are in place for the first breeding attempts of the farmland birds. Avoid cultivating in wet conditions.
- If the regeneration is dense and exceeds 10 cm high in early spring, and no nesting birds are present, spray or re-cultivate to restore suitable nesting habitat.
- The cultivated areas must be retained until 31 July.
- Undesirable weed species such as blackgrass, sterile brome and wild oats must be controlled prior to creating the rough fallow, by spraying off these areas with a non-selective herbicide.
- The area must not be used for regular vehicular access, turning or storage. There should be no tracks, compacted areas or poaching.
- Do not apply any fertilisers or manures.

NEW OPTION in 2010
EF15 Reduced herbicide cereal crops followed by overwintered stubble 195 points per ha

This option provides a valuable food source for farmland birds, especially during the winter. The restricted herbicide programme will allow arable plants to flourish and set seed in the crop. Overwintering the stubble will provide winter food for farmland birds.

This option should not be located on sites at risk of soil erosion and run-off (as identified on your FER). Where possible, it should be located in areas where farmland birds, such as corn bunting, cirl bunting, grey partridge, reed bunting, tree sparrow, turtle dove, yellowhammer or yellow wagtail are known to be present.

This is a ‘rotational option’. This means that it can move around the farm within the normal arable rotation, but the same total hectarage must be maintained each year.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- Sow a cereal (but not maize) crop in the autumn or spring.
■ Do not apply insecticides between 15 March and the following harvest.
■ Only the following herbicides can be applied to control problem grass and broad-leaved weeds:
  ■ for broad-leaved weeds, only use amidosulfuron, and only between 1 February and 31 March; and
  ■ for grass weeds, use the following active ingredients only – tri-allate, fenoxaprop-P-ethyl, diclofop-methyl + fenoxaprop-P-ethyl, tralkoxydim, clodinafop-propargyl or pinoxaden.
■ Not all herbicides are suitable for all cereal crops or for undersown crops. Always read the product label.
■ There are no restrictions on the use of fungicides or growth regulators.
■ Do not apply pre-harvest desiccants or post-harvest herbicides.
■ Bale (or chop and spread) straw after harvest.
■ Where the stubble is predominantly clean after harvest, a light surface cultivation can be made before the end of September (or within the first month following harvest if later) to encourage weed germination and loosen any surface compaction or capping. If the stubble is already weedy, do not cultivate.
■ In sloping fields, the tramlines, headlands and other areas of severe compaction should always be sub-soiled following harvest (except on archaeological features or when conditions are wet), to reduce the risk of run-off and erosion.
■ Do not apply any pesticides, fertilisers, manures (including manure heaps) or lime to the stubble.
■ Do not top or graze the stubble.
■ From 15 February, the stubble can be returned to the farm rotation.

**NEW OPTION in 2010**

**EF22 Extended overwintered stubble**

This option covers the whole cropping year using overwintered stubble followed by natural regeneration to provide vital winter food sources for seed-eating birds and spring and summer foraging and nesting habitat for other farmland birds.

This option is targeted at whole or part fields that are left uncropped to naturally produce rough fallow conditions. This should provide suitable nesting conditions for skylark and other ground-nesting birds throughout the breeding season. The winter stubble is also a beneficial habitat for brown hare.

This option must follow a combinable crop, such as oilseed rape, linseed, cereals or field beans (but not maize). Care must be taken to avoid fields with a known weed or flooding problem. It should not be located where there is a high risk of soil erosion or run-off (that is, land identified in your FER as at risk of soil erosion and where rills are regularly seen in wet weather).

This option is a ‘rotational option’, which means it can be move around the farm within the normal arable rotation, but the same total hectarage must be maintained each year. It can be left in a fixed location for up to 2 years.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

■ This option must be in arable fields of 2 ha or over. It can be part or whole-field, but if part-field, the area must be at least 2 ha in size.
■ Do not apply pre-harvest desiccants or post-harvest herbicides.
■ Bale (or chop and spread) straw after harvest.
■ Where the stubble is predominately clean after harvest, a light surface cultivation can be made before the end of September (or within the first month of harvest if later), to encourage weed germination and loosen any surface compaction or capping. If the stubble is already weedy, do not cultivate.
■ In sloping fields the tramlines, headlands and other areas of severe compaction should always be sub-soiled following harvest (except where there are archaeological features or when conditions are wet) to reduce the risk of run-off and erosion.
Do not apply any pesticides, fertilisers, manures (including manure heaps), waste materials (including sewage sludge) or lime to the stubble, except to control blackgrass (see below for details).

Beneficial seed and nectar producing plants such as mustard, fodder radish or oilseed rape can be broadcast or sown on small areas (no more than 0.5 ha per 10 ha stubble) in either autumn or spring, to enhance the feeding and foraging value.

Do not top or graze.

The stubble and any subsequent natural regeneration must be left undisturbed until 31 July of the following year.

Undesirable weed species such as blackgrass, sterile brome and wild oats can be controlled by spraying the affected areas from 15 May.

Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive alien species (eg Himalayan balsam or Japanese knotweed).

From 1 August, you may apply herbicides to destroy the green cover.

From 15 August, the option area is returned to normal farm management.

Do not use the area for regular vehicular access, turning or storage.

G Options to encourage a range of crop types

The decline of mixed farming is one of the causes of the falling number of farmland birds in England.

EG1 Undersown spring cereals

The addition of a grass/legume mix as an understorey to the cereal crop will reduce the need for agrochemical inputs, increase the diversity of habitat provided in the field and benefit farm wildlife.

This is a ‘rotational option’. This means that it can move around the farm within the normal arable rotation, but the same total hectarage must be maintained each year.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Undersow a spring cereal crop (but not maize) with a grass ley, including at least 10 per cent legume by weight but no more than 30 per cent.
- Establish the cereal crop between 14 February and 20 April.
- Keep the undersown plant growth until the cereal crop is harvested. This must not be before 1 July or before the cereal crop is fully ripe.
- Do not destroy the grass ley before 15 July of the following year.

EG2 Wild bird seed mixture in grassland areas
EG3 Nectar flower mixtures in grassland areas

These two options have been replaced by their arable equivalents (EF2 Wild bird seed mixture and EF4 Nectar flower mixture) which are available on arable land or temporary grass (sown for less than 5 years).

EG4 Cereals for whole-crop silage followed by overwintered stubble

The benefit of this option is the provision of a seed source in the winter stubble and from the unripe grain. This is a ‘rotational option’. This means that it can move around the farm within the normal arable rotation, but the same total hectarage must be maintained each year.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- No more than 5 ha of this option may be included in your application.
- Sow a cereal (but not maize) crop in the autumn or spring.
- Do not apply insecticides between 15 March and the following harvest.
Only the following herbicides can be applied to control problem grass and broad-leaved weeds:
- for broad-leaved weeds, only use amidosulfuron, and only between 1 February and 31 March; and
- for grass weeds, use the following active ingredients only: tri-allate, fenoxaprop-P-ethyl, diclofop-methyl + fenoxaprop-P-ethyl, tralkoxydim, clodinafop-propargyl or pinoxaden. Not all herbicides
  are suitable for all cereal crops or for undersown crops. Always read the product label.

There are no restrictions on the use of fungicides or growth regulators.

Harvest as whole-crop silage.

Where the stubble is predominantly clean after harvest, a light surface cultivation can be made
before the end of September (or within the first month following harvest if later) to encourage weed
germination and loosen any surface compaction or capping. If the stubble is already weedy, do not
cultivate.

In sloping fields, the tramlines, headlands and other areas of severe compaction should always be
sub-soiled following harvest (except where there are archaeological features or when conditions are
wet) to reduce the risk of run-off and erosion.

Do not apply any pesticides, fertilisers, manures (including manure heaps) or lime to the stubble.

Do not top or graze the stubble.

Do not apply post-harvest herbicides.

From 15 February, the stubble can be returned to the farm rotation.

**J Options to protect soil and water**

Soil and water are vital resources. The way land is managed can have a huge impact on both our soils
and water resources. Damage to soils through poor land management can cause problems on the farm,
such as loss of productivity through removal of topsoil and blocked drains and ditches. There are also
more far-reaching effects, such as impacts on water quality and aquatic life and on how flooding is
managed, or prevented.
The options available under this Section will allow you to take management action to minimise run-off and erosion. Options in other Sections, particularly for buffer strips, arable land, grassland and some upland options, can also help manage water flows across farmland and help reduce the incidence of run-off and erosion. Figure 10 provides an illustration of how these options can combine to minimise the risks of soil erosion and run-off.

**EJ2 Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion**

This option must not be located on fields at risk of soil erosion or run-off (as identified on your FER). It is only available on other land where you are growing maize.

This is a ‘rotational option’. It can move around the farm with the normal rotation, but the same total hectarage must be maintained.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Harvest by 1 October and plough or cultivate to leave a rough surface, ideally within 2 weeks of harvest, to reduce subsequent soil erosion; or harvest by 1 October and establish an autumn-sown crop; or undersow the maize with a grass- or clover-based mixture and after harvest (ideally within 2 weeks), remove any areas of soil compaction.
Do not sub-soil areas on sites of archaeological interest.

You must not apply more than the recommended amount of slurry or manure for either the maize or the following crop to be grown on this land (see guidance in Appendix 4 for a recognised fertiliser recommendation system). Any such slurry or manure must be applied at appropriate times, to minimise the risk of run-off.

NEW OPTION in 2010

Ej5 In-field grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off 350 points per ha

This option aims to reduce the movement of sediment, nutrients and pesticides by wind and water erosion, both within fields and from field-to-field, through the careful location of permanent grass areas. It is available on arable land. It can also contribute to flood management by reducing surface run-off.

This option can be used to achieve a number of different objectives depending on the type of pollution and the pollutant pathway. For example:

- grassing areas vulnerable to erosion, such as light soils on steep slopes, can reduce the amount of erosion of soil, organic material, nutrients and pesticides; and
- grassing natural drainage pathways (eg valley bottoms) will help to reduce the channelling of run-off water that can produce rills and gullies.

Fields susceptible to erosion can have both in-field grassed areas to minimise the development of erosion and buffer strips at the field margins to capture any erosion or surface run-off. This option is suitable for land that has been identified in your FER as being at risk of causing soil erosion or run-off. It applies to part-fields only, up to a maximum permissible area of 30 per cent of the field.

While this option may help protect specific down-slope field boundaries, the extent and location of the option should take into account potential impacts on field boundary patterns, especially in open landscapes.

These areas are more efficient at trapping sediment when they do not receive flow channelled from rills or gullies. Therefore, it is important to manage adjacent land to maximise water infiltration. They are not effective in reducing phosphate losses from underdrained clay soils.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Establish or maintain a dense grassy area during the first 12 months of your agreement, either by sowing or, ideally, by natural regeneration. Remove any compaction in the topsoil if you need to prepare a seedbed, except on archaeological features. Regular cutting in the first 12–24 months may be needed to control annual weeds and encourage grasses to tiller. Avoid cutting when the soil is moist to prevent further compaction.

- The width of the area must not be less than 10 m along its entire length.

- After the first 12–24 months, cut the entire area annually after mid-July.

- Do not apply any fertilisers or manures.

- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistle, curled and broadleaved docks or common ragwort), or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).

- Do not use the grass area for regular vehicular access, turning or storage. There should be no tracks, compacted areas or poaching.

- Do not graze the grass area. Grazing livestock, pigs and poultry should be excluded from the area.
**NEW OPTION in 2009**

Ej9 12 m buffer strips for watercourses on cultivated land  

400 points per ha

This option aims to moderate the delivery to watercourses of potential pollutants, such as sediment, nutrients (principally phosphate) and pesticides, arising from water erosion/run-off.

This option is available on arable or rotational land adjacent to ditches, rivers or streams where it can intercept and remove sediment, organic material, nutrients and chemicals carried in run-off water. These buffer strips must not overlap with the cross compliance requirement not to cultivate land within 2 m of the centre of a hedgerow or watercourse (and within 1 m of the top of the bank of a watercourse).

The width of the option can range between 12 m and 24 m to allow some flexibility alongside meandering watercourses. The payment for this option is based on the area of the buffer, but if it exceeds 12 m in width at any point, the additional area cannot be included in the payment area. You will need to measure the payment area with care to ensure you claim the correct number of points. You may find mapping software such as MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) helpful.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Establish or maintain a grassy strip during the first 12 months of your agreement, either by sowing or, ideally, by natural regeneration. Remove any compaction in the topsoil if you need to prepare a seedbed, except on archaeological features. Regular cutting in the first 12–24 months may be needed to control annual weeds and encourage grasses to tiller. Avoid cutting when the soil is moist to prevent further compaction.
- The width of the strip may vary between 12 m and 24 m along its length but must not be less than 12 m wide at any point.
- Do not apply any fertilisers or manures.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- After the first 12–24 months, cut the 6 m next to the crop edge annually after mid-July. Only cut the remainder to control woody growth, and no more than once every 2 years.
- Do not use buffer strips for regular vehicular access, turning or storage. There should be no tracks, compacted areas or poaching.
- Do not graze the buffer strip. Grazing livestock, pigs and poultry should be excluded from the buffer strip.
NEW OPTION in 2009
EJ10 Enhanced management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion and run-off

This option aims to reduce the risk of soil erosion and run-off on fields where maize is grown preceding a spring-sown crop. It aims to deliver more than EJ12 Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion by requiring both early harvest and the establishment of a cover crop. The cover crop will provide winter protection from soil erosion and run-off on fields that would otherwise be left bare.

This option must not be located on fields at risk of soil erosion or run-off (as identified on your FER). It is only available on other land where you are growing maize. This option is suitable where it precedes a spring-sown crop.

This is a ‘rotational option’. It can move around the farm with the normal rotation, but the same total hectarage must be maintained.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Harvest the maize crop by 1 October and remove any areas of soil compaction (ideally within 2 weeks of harvest). Do not sub-soil on features of archaeological interest.
- Establish an autumn-sown cover crop. Drill or broadcast a quick growing cover crop, such as rye, barley, or mustard, at an effective seed rate so as to provide good erosion protection.
- You must not apply more than the recommended amount of slurry or manure for either the maize or the following crop to be grown on this land (see guidance in Appendix 4). Any such slurry or manure must be applied at appropriate times to minimise the risk of run-off.
- The cover crop must remain for a minimum of 6 weeks before establishment of the following spring-sown crop.

NEW OPTION in 2009
EJ11 Maintenance of watercourse fencing

4 points per 100 m

Maintenance of this bankside fence allows taller streamside vegetation to develop.

The aim of this option is to support the maintenance of existing watercourse fencing where fields are grazed. Watercourse fencing may help to reduce faecal contamination, stream bank damage and have a significant impact upon water quality. It can also help to protect the bankside vegetation and encourage natural regeneration.
It can be used where watercourses (as defined in the Glossary) form one or more boundaries of the field, or are present within the field, and livestock are grazed for at least 3 months of the year. The existing fencing must be sufficient to exclude stock. This option can be used alongside buffer strips or margins next to a watercourse.

This is not a payment for new fencing and cannot be placed on new fencing funded under Environmental Stewardship. However, it could be placed on new fencing funded by other means.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Maintain fences in a stock-proof condition to ensure exclusion of livestock from the ditch, river or stream bank and/or buffer strip or margin.

**NEW OPTION in 2010**

**EJ13 Winter cover crops**

This option aims to significantly reduce nitrate leaching on land where soil would normally be left bare during winter. In addition, in certain situations, cover crops may provide protection against soil erosion and loss of other pollutants carried in surface run-off water.

Any land that is vulnerable to nitrate leaching, particularly light sandy soils, is eligible for this option. Heavy soils are not eligible.

To be effective, cover crops have to be established early in order to take up sufficient soil nitrate before winter drainage leaches it below the depth of the developing plant roots. The cover crops should be destroyed in late January or February before they are too well developed. Delaying destruction of the cover crop has the potential to increase nitrate leaching the following winter.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Establish a cover crop by 15 September.
- Drill or broadcast a quick-growing cover crop. The cover crop can be a mixture of seeds. Suitable species to include are rye, vetch, phacelia, barley and mustard. The choice of cover crop will be dependent upon herbicide choice and rates of application in the previous crop.
- Sow at a seed rate that will provide a dense cover and protect from soil erosion.
- Do not apply any fertilisers or manures.
- Destroy the cover crop by cultivation in late January or early February, immediately before establishing the following spring crop, to minimise any nitrate losses. When weather conditions delay establishment of a spring crop, the cover crop can be left until mid-March.

**K Options for grassland outside the Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs)**

These options are designed to manage grassland in a way that benefits wildlife and landscape, protects archaeological features and reduces impacts on natural resources.

Grassland should be managed in a way that promotes good soil structure and infiltration of rainwater to reduce run-off. Good general management includes managing livestock densities to avoid soil compaction, or reducing or avoiding grazing when the soil is wet. You may also consider reducing existing compaction, for example by sub-soiling or spiking, provided there are no buried earthworks or archaeological remains.

For the purposes of these options, ‘grassland’ is defined as land that is used to grow grasses or other herbaceous forage naturally or through cultivation, and land that has not been subject to cultivation for at least 5 years.

Patches of scrub can add to the structure and wildlife value of grasslands but they should not be allowed to extend across more than 10 per cent of the field or beyond its existing cover where this is greater than 10 per cent. Scrub should not be allowed to develop on archaeological features.

Inter-tidal habitats are not eligible for these options.
EK1 Take field corners out of management

This option is only available outside SDAs and below the Moorland Line.

The provision of unmanaged areas will increase the biodiversity of the farm. This option must not be located on archaeological features. Although this option is designed for field corners, if you have small areas within the field, which it would be beneficial to take out of production, you may do so. Field corners do not need to be fenced off, provided the prescriptions are met.

This option is only available on improved grassland that is receiving over 50 kg/ha nitrogen per year as organic or inorganic fertilisers.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- Patch size must be no more than 0.5 ha. You may have no more than one patch for every 10 ha of land eligible for this option and, as far as possible, patches must be distributed evenly across your farm.
- Do not apply any fertilisers, manures or lime.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- After establishment, cut no more than once every 5 years to allow the development of tussocky grass and low scrub. Do not cut during the bird breeding season (1 March to 31 August).
- Do not graze.

EK2 Permanent grassland with low inputs

This option is only available outside SDAs and below the Moorland Line.

Permanent grassland managed with low inputs of fertiliser and sprays will sustain a greater variety of plants and wildlife. The development of a varied sward structure is of particular value to insects. Permanent grassland is an important feature of riparian and pastoral landscapes and can help protect buried archaeological features. This option may deliver benefits to resource protection where placed on fields that are at risk of soil erosion or run-off. This option can be used on a whole- or part-field basis.

For this option you must comply with the following:
- Maintain as grass. Do not plough, cultivate or re-seed.
- Manage by grazing and/or cutting, but do not cut between 1 April and 31 May. You must remove any cuttings.
- Maintain a sward with a range of heights during the growing season so that at least 20 per cent of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20 per cent is more than 7 cm, to allow plants to flower and to provide a more varied habitat. You do not need to maintain this height variation when the field is closed or shut up for a cut of hay or silage.
- Do not top at any time, except in patches to control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed); bracken or areas dominated by rushes.
- Where scrub is present prevent further encroachment by grazing, mowing or topping.
- Do not harrow or roll between 1 April and 31 May.
- Supplementary feeding is allowed, but move feeders as often as required to avoid poaching. Do not feed on or next to archaeological features, steep slopes, footpaths or watercourses.
Do not apply more than 50 kg/ha nitrogen per year as inorganic fertiliser. Where animal manures are applied, either alone or in addition to inorganic fertilisers, the total rate of nitrogen must not exceed 100 kg/ha nitrogen per year. Only apply during the growing season, provided no birds are nesting in the field and ground conditions are dry enough to prevent soil compaction. If your current manure and fertiliser application rates are less than this, you must not increase applications. You may find it useful to refer to the table in Appendix 4 showing average total nitrogen supplied by various manures.

You may continue adding lime, where this is your regular practice.

Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed); or bracken.

**EK3 Permanent grassland with very low inputs**

This option is only available outside SDAs and below the Moorland Line.

Grassland managed with no fertiliser has a higher value for wildlife. Much species-rich grassland has been lost to agricultural intensification, so it is important to maintain and, where possible, increase this resource. This option may also deliver benefits to resource protection where placed on fields that are at risk of soil erosion or run-off. It can be used on a whole or part-field basis. If your field has more than a third of its area covered by rushes, it must be entered into option EK4 (Management of rush pastures) rather than this option.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Maintain as grass. Do not plough, cultivate or re-seed.
- Manage by grazing and/or cutting, to remove the year’s grass growth, but do not cut between 1 April and 30 June. You must remove any cuttings.
- Maintain a sward with a range of heights during the growing season so that at least 20 per cent of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20 per cent is more than 7 cm, to allow plants to flower and to provide a more varied habitat. You do not need to maintain this height variation when the field is closed or shut up for a cut of hay or silage.
- Do not top at any time, except in patches to control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed); bracken or areas dominated by rushes.
- Where scrub is present prevent further encroachment by grazing, mowing or topping.
- Do not harrow or roll between 1 April and 30 June.
- Do not supplementary feed.
- You may apply up to 12.5 tonnes/ha (5 tonnes/acre) of farm yard manure (FYM) a year, but only where the grassland is regularly cut. Only apply FYM during the growing season, provided no birds are nesting in the field and ground conditions are dry enough to prevent soil compaction. No other type of fertilisers or manures may be applied. If your current manure and fertiliser regime is less than this, you must not increase applications. You may find it useful to refer to the table in Appendix 4 showing average total N supplied by various manures.
- You may continue adding lime where this is your regular practice.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed); or bracken.

Permanent pasture with very low inputs of fertiliser and herbicide provides better wildlife habitats.
EK4 Management of rush pastures

Damp pasture is a valuable habitat for nesting birds.

This option is only available outside SDAs and below the Moorland Line.

This option is available for fields where at least a third of the field area is covered by rushes. Damp pasture on farmland is a very important potential habitat for lapwing, curlew, redshank, snipe and reed bunting. Different types of waders like different vegetation heights, so a variety in the sward structure is most beneficial. Rush pastures may also contain a wide range of plant and invertebrate species.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Maintain as grass. Do not plough, cultivate or re-seed.
- Cut rush-dominated areas each calendar year, but not between 15 March and 31 July. Cut no more than a third of the area of rushes in each field (or a third of the fields if they are small) in rotation. It may be impractical to cut rushes in the wettest flushes, and therefore these can be left. Cattle trampling may help to control these areas.
- Once cut, if aftermath grazing does not control rushes, a second cut should be carried out within 8 weeks, but not between 1 April and 31 July.
- Where possible, graze the aftermath with cattle.
- Do not harrow or roll between 1 April and 30 June.
- Do not supplementary feed.
- You may apply up to 12.5 tonnes/ha (5 tonnes/acre) of FYM a year, but only where the grassland is regularly cut. Only apply FYM during the growing season, provided no birds are nesting in the field and ground conditions are dry enough to prevent soil compaction. No other type of fertiliser or manures may be applied. If your current manure and fertiliser regime is less than this, you must not increase applications. You may find it useful to refer to the table in Appendix 4 showing average total N supplied by various manures.
- You may continue adding lime where this is your regular practice.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed); or bracken.
K Option for mixed stocking on grassland

EK5 Mixed stocking  9 points per ha

Mixed stocking encourages a diversity of sward structure and species.

This option is available on eligible parcels both outside and inside SDAs.

Mixed stocking encourages a diversity of sward structure and plant and invertebrate species, which in turn can be beneficial to a variety of ecological and historic features. It also contributes to the distinctive colour and patterning of local landscapes through mixed grazing systems. This option is only available on land that is grazed by both cattle and sheep, either in the same year or in alternate years, as part of a clean grazing system. This option may be co-located with up to two other options from the list of permitted combinations at Appendix 3.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Maintain as grass. Do not plough, cultivate or re-seed.
- A minimum of 30 per cent of the Livestock Units (LUs) must be grazing cattle.
- A minimum of 15 per cent of the LUs must be grazing sheep.
- Supplementary feeding is allowed, but move feeders as often as required to avoid poaching. Do not feed on or next to archaeological features, steep slopes, footpaths or watercourses.
- Keep a record of all livestock grazing the land covered by this option.

You may not wish to graze both types of livestock in the same year. For this reason, the percentage of cattle and sheep LUs grazing the land is calculated over a 2-year period. This allows you either to graze both types of livestock on the land parcel in the same year or to graze each type in alternate years.

If you choose to graze them on the land in alternate years, at least 60 per cent of the livestock units on the land parcel must be cattle in one year and at least 30 per cent must be sheep in the other. The remaining 40/70 per cent of the livestock units can be made up of the same, or other types of livestock, such as horses or domesticated deer. For details of livestock unit conversion factors, please refer to Appendix 5.
L Options for grassland and moorland inside the Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs)

These options are designed to manage grassland and moorland in a way that benefits wildlife and landscape, protects archaeological features and reduces impacts on natural resources. Other options for the uplands are available through Uplands ELS (see Section 1).

Grassland should be managed in a way that promotes good soil structure and infiltration of rainwater to reduce run-off. Good general management includes managing livestock densities to avoid soil compaction, or reducing or avoiding grazing when the soil is wet. You may also consider reducing existing compaction, for example, by sub-soiling or spiking, except on archaeological features.

Patches of scrub can add to the structure and wildlife value of grasslands but they should not be allowed to extend across more than 10 per cent of the field or beyond its existing cover where this is greater than 10 per cent. Scrub should not be allowed to develop on archaeological features.

For the purposes of these options, grassland is defined as land that is used to grow grasses or other herbaceous forage naturally or through cultivation and which has not been subject to cultivation for at least 5 years. Inter-tidal habitats are not eligible for these options.

All other options may also be used in an SDA (where the option eligibility and management rules can be met) except those for lowland grassland (EK1 to EK4).

The availability of the grassland options within each area is summarised in the table below:

**Table 6 Availability of Upland and Lowland grassland options**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Land outside SDAs</th>
<th>Land in an SDA</th>
<th>Above the Moorland Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below the Moorland Line</td>
<td>Parcels of less than 15 ha</td>
<td>Parcels of 15 ha or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EK1-4</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EK5</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL1-3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL4</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL5</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EL1 Take field corners out of management in SDAs**

This option is only available on land inside the SDAs and below the Moorland Line.

Although this option is designed for corners of grass fields, it may also be applied to small areas within the field, which it would be beneficial to take out of production. The provision of unmanaged areas will increase the biodiversity of the farm. Field corners do not need to be fenced off, provided the prescriptions are met. This option must not be located on archaeological features (see options ED4 and ED5 for options for historic features).

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Patch size must be no more than 0.5 ha. You may have no more than one patch for every 10 ha of land eligible for this option and, as far as possible, they must be distributed evenly across your farm.
- Do not apply lime, fertilisers or manures.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) or bracken.
After establishment, cut no more than once every 5 years to allow the development of tussocky grass and low scrub. Avoid cutting between 1 March and 31 August, if nesting birds are thought to be present.

Do not graze.

EL2 Permanent grassland with low inputs in SDAs

Low input permanent pasture can have a wide range of benefits for biodiversity, archaeology, and resource protection.

This option is only available on land inside the SDAs and below the Moorland Line.

Permanent grassland managed with low inputs of fertiliser and sprays will sustain a greater variety of plants and wildlife. The development of a varied sward structure is of particular value to insects. Permanent grassland is an important feature of pastoral landscapes and can help to protect buried archaeological features. This option may deliver benefits to resource protection where placed on fields that are at risk of soil erosion or run-off. This option can be used on a whole or part-field basis.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Maintain as grass. Do not plough, cultivate or re-seed.
- Manage by grazing and/or cutting, but do not cut between 1 April and 31 May.
- Maintain a sward with a range of heights during the growing season so that at least 20 per cent of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20 per cent is more than 7 cm, to allow plants to flower and to provide a more varied habitat. You do not need to maintain this height variation when the field is closed or shut up for a cut of hay or silage.
- Do not top at any time, except in patches to control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed); bracken or areas dominated by rushes.
- Where scrub is present prevent further encroachment by grazing, mowing or topping.
- Do not harrow or roll between 1 April and 31 May.
- Supplementary feeding is allowed, but move feeders as often as required to avoid poaching. Do not feed on or next to archaeological features, steep slopes, footpaths or watercourses.
- Do not apply more than 50 kg/ha nitrogen per year as inorganic fertiliser. Where animal manures are applied, either alone or in addition to inorganic fertiliser, the total rate of nitrogen must not exceed 100 kg/ha nitrogen per year. Only apply during the growing season, provided no birds are nesting in the field, and ground conditions are dry enough to prevent soil compaction. If your current manure and fertiliser regime is less than this, you must not increase applications. You may find it useful to refer to the table in Appendix 4 showing average total nitrogen supplied by various manures.

- You may continue adding lime where this is your regular practice.

- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed); or bracken.

### EL3 Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs

This option is only available on land inside the SDAs and below the Moorland Line.

Permanent grassland managed with no fertiliser has a higher value for wildlife. Much species-rich grassland has been lost to agricultural intensification and it is important to maintain and, where possible, increase this resource. This option may also deliver benefits to resource protection where placed on fields that are at risk of soil erosion or run-off. This option can be used on a whole- or part-field basis. If your field has more than a third of its area covered by rushes, it must be entered into option EL4 Management of rush pastures in an SDA, rather than this option.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Maintain as grass. Do not plough, cultivate or re-seed.

- Manage by grazing and/or cutting, to remove each year’s grass growth, but do not cut between 1 April and 30 June. You must remove any cuttings.

- Maintain a sward with a range of heights during the growing season so that at least 20 per cent of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20 per cent is more than 7 cm, to allow plants to flower and to provide a more varied habitat. You do not need to maintain this height variation when the field is closed or shut up for a cut of hay or silage.

- Do not top at any time, except in patches to control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed); bracken or areas dominated by rushes.

Permanent pasture with very low inputs of fertiliser and herbicide provides better wildlife habitats.
■ Where scrub is present prevent further encroachment by grazing, mowing or topping.
■ Do not harrow or roll between 1 April and 30 June.
■ Do not supplementary feed.
■ You may apply up to 12.5 tonnes/ha (5 tonnes/acre) of FYM a year, but only where the grassland is regularly cut. Only apply FYM during the growing season, provided no birds are nesting in the field, and ground conditions are dry enough to prevent soil compaction. No other type of fertilisers or manures may be applied. If your current manure and fertiliser regime is less than this, you must not increase applications. You may find it useful to refer to the table in Appendix 4 showing average total N supplied by various manures.
■ You may continue adding lime where this is your regular practice.
■ Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed); or bracken.

**EL4 Management of rush pastures in SDAs**

![Damp pasture](image)

Damp pasture is a valuable habitat for breeding birds.

This option is available inside the SDAs and below the Moorland Line and above it on parcels less than 15 ha.

Fields where at least a third of the field area is covered by rushes are eligible for this option. Damp pasture on farmland is a very important potential habitat for lapwing, curlew, redshank and snipe. Different types of waders prefer different vegetation heights, so a variety in the sward structure is most beneficial. Rush pastures may also contain a wide range of plant and invertebrate species.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
■ Maintain as grass. Do not plough, cultivate or re-seed.
■ Cut rush-dominated areas each year, but not between 1 April and 31 July. Cut no more than a third of the area of rushes in each field, or a third of the fields if they are small (ie less than 3 ha), in rotation. It may be impractical to cut rushes in the wettest flushes; therefore these can be left. Cattle trampling may help to control these areas.
Once cut, if aftermath grazing does not control rushes, a second cut should be carried out within 8 weeks, but not between 1 April and 31 July.

Where possible, graze the aftermath with cattle.

Do not harrow or roll between 1 April and 30 June.

Supplementary feeding is allowed, but move feeders as often as required to avoid poaching. Do not feed on or next to archaeological features, steep slopes, footpaths or watercourses.

You may apply up to 12.5 tonnes/ha (5 tonnes/acre) of FYM a year, but only where the grassland is regularly cut. Only apply FYM during the growing season, provided no birds are nesting in the field and ground conditions are dry enough to prevent soil compaction. No other type of fertiliser or manure may be applied. If your current manure and fertiliser regime is less than this, you must not increase applications. You may find it useful to refer to the table in Appendix 4 showing average total N supplied by various manures.

You may continue adding lime where this is your regular practice.

Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed); or bracken.

**EL5 Enclosed rough grazing**

35 points per ha

This option is only available inside the SDAs on parcels of less than 15 ha above the Moorland Line.

Commonly known as ‘allotments’, ‘intakes’ or ‘newtakes’, these are areas of enclosed rough land of less than 15 ha used exclusively for grazing, of which the majority has not been drained, re-seeded or regularly cultivated. They have received only minimal applications of fertilisers, lime, slag or pesticides. They will contain predominantly semi-natural vegetation, usually moorland grasses and rushes, and sometimes rocky and very wet areas. They may also contain small areas of agriculturally improved land.

For this option you must comply with the following:

- Do not plough, cultivate or reseed.
- Protect permanently waterlogged wetlands, including peat bogs and other mires, and hillside flushes. Do not install any new land drainage or modify any existing land drainage, or remove any peat or sediment.
- Leave rocks, scree and mineral spoil in place.
- Do not increase your existing stocking level.
- Do not supplementary feed.
- Do not apply any fertilisers, manures, lime or slag.
- Take action to contain bracken and common gorse so that they do not spread to new areas of land, where this is within your control.
  Wherever possible, control of bracken should be by mechanical means. Otherwise, to chemically control bracken, only asulam may be used, and care must be taken not to apply it to other ferns. For common gorse, control should be by cutting or burning in manageable blocks. If the land is in a water catchment area or scheduled monument, you must seek consent from the appropriate authority.
- Rhododendron and other invasive non-native species must be cut and the stumps treated immediately with herbicide to prevent spread to new areas of land, where this is within your control. At least one follow-up treatment will be required in subsequent years to control re-growth.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks, or common ragwort).
EL6 Unenclosed moorland rough grazing

5 points per ha

Moorland rough grazing.

This option is only available inside the SDAs on land parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Do not plough, cultivate or reseed.
- Protect permanently waterlogged wetlands, including peat bogs and other mires, and hillside flushes. Do not install any new land drainage or modify any existing land drainage, or remove any peat or sediment from drainage channels.
- Leave rocks, scree and mineral spoil in place.
- Where you have the legal right to carry out burning, and intend to do so, you must follow the Heather and Grass Burning Code. You may obtain a copy of The Heather and Grass Burning Code (Defra, 2007) from your Natural England regional office or download it at www.naturalengland.org.uk.
- Do not supplementary feed using silage or other forage wrapped in plastic. Do not use ring feeders or troughs. Move feeding areas as often as required to avoid poaching. Do not feed on or next to archaeological features, steep slopes, footpaths or watercourses.
- Do not apply any fertilisers, manures, lime or slag.
- Take action to contain bracken and common gorse so that they do not spread to new areas of land, where this is within your control. Wherever possible, control of bracken should be by mechanical means. Otherwise, to chemically control bracken, only asulam may be used, and care must be taken not to apply it to other ferns. For common gorse, control should be by cutting or burning in manageable blocks. If the land is in a water catchment area or scheduled monument, you must seek consent from the appropriate authority.
- Rhododendron and other invasive non-native species must be cut and the stumps treated immediately with herbicide to prevent spread to new areas of land, where this is within your control. At least one follow-up treatment will be required in subsequent years to control re-growth.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (i.e. creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort).
U1.1.1 How does the Uplands ELS strand work?
Uplands ELS is a new strand of ELS offering a higher level of payment in return for an increased level of environmental management of land within the Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs).

You can apply for Uplands ELS providing you meet the eligibility requirements set out in Sections 1.1–1.3 and U1.3. Your eligible land must also include at least one parcel within an SDA.

To take advantage of these higher payments, you need to apply for an Uplands ELS agreement instead of an ELS agreement. This is done on the same application form as ELS, but you will need to reach a higher points target. The points required under Uplands ELS are set out in Section U1.1.4 below.

In Uplands ELS there are compulsory requirements that you must comply with on your SDA land. These Compulsory Requirements will earn you points towards your points target. To earn the rest of your points to meet your target you can use any combination of ELS and Uplands ELS options, provided you can meet the option eligibility conditions. See the farm illustration at Figure 11 for an example. Uplands ELS options and compulsory requirements are described later in this Section.

See Section 2 for full instructions on how to complete your application. Remember to indicate that you wish to apply for Uplands ELS at the relevant points on the application form.

U1.1.4 What will I be required to do?
In applying for – and being accepted into – Uplands ELS, you will be agreeing to:

- Identify, map and retain your FER features, including the FER features specific to Uplands ELS – areas of bracken, scrub and boulders and rocky outcrops.
- Choose sufficient options to reach your points target from the range of options described in this handbook. You can choose a mixture of ELS and Uplands ELS options to meet your points target providing individual option eligibility requirements are met. Please see the farm illustration for an example of how points can be earned across a farm

In Uplands ELS you will have a single points target for all of your land. Your points target will be based on the points shown in the table below. For a worked example of the points target, please see the farm illustration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA) Land</th>
<th>Points per Hectare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parcels below the Moorland Line</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcels above the Moorland Line less than 15 ha</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcels above the Moorland Line 15 ha or more</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Non SDA Land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parcels below the Moorland Line</th>
<th>Points per Hectare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcels above the Moorland Line less than 15 ha</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcels above the Moorland Line 15 ha or more</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Observe the compulsory requirements on your SDA land (see UX2 – UX3 below). UX2 and UX3 will earn points towards your points target.**
- **Deliver the options that you selected in accordance with the prescriptions set out in Sections 3 and U3.**
- **Adhere to all the scheme terms and conditions contained in this handbook.**

**Figure 11 Farm illustration**

An upland farm with some moorland and also some land outside the SDA.

**A: Calculation of points target for the farm:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land categories</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Points/ha</th>
<th>Total points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SDA land</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Moorland (Upland Grassland &amp; Arable)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>X 62</td>
<td>6,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moorland land parcels of less than 15 ha</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>X 62</td>
<td>1,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moorland land parcels 15 ha or more</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>X 23</td>
<td>4,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>342</td>
<td></td>
<td>13,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non SDA land</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land below the Moorland Line</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>X 30</td>
<td>1,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moorland parcels of less than 15 ha</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>X 30</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moorland parcels 15 ha or more</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>X 8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for the whole farm</strong></td>
<td>390</td>
<td></td>
<td>14,844</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B: Calculation of points earned to meet the points target for the farm:**

- Points earned from meeting compulsory requirements on SDA land and completion of the Farm Environmental Record (FER).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land categories</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Points/ha</th>
<th>Total points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moorland (SDA)</td>
<td>UX3</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>X 15</td>
<td>3,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upland Grassland &amp; Arable (SDA)</td>
<td>UX2</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>X 11</td>
<td>1,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of FER for the whole farm</td>
<td>EA1</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>X 3</td>
<td>1,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5,852</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Points earned from the delivery of options on SDA and non-SDA land.

*There is no requirement to use ELS and Uplands ELS options in proportion to the area of SDA /non-SDA land. Any combination of ELS and Upland ELS options is permitted, provided that the individual option eligibility requirements are met.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELS/Uplands ELS option</th>
<th>Option title</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Points available</th>
<th>Number of units</th>
<th>Total points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELS</td>
<td>Hedgerow management (both sides)</td>
<td>EB1</td>
<td>22 per 100 m</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELS</td>
<td>Stone wall protection and maintenance</td>
<td>EB11</td>
<td>15 per 100 m</td>
<td>1500 m</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELS/Uplands ELS option</td>
<td>Option title</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Points available</td>
<td>Number of units</td>
<td>Total points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uplands ELS</td>
<td>Stone wall protection and maintenance on/above moorland Line</td>
<td>UB11</td>
<td>32 per 100 m</td>
<td>400 m</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uplands ELS</td>
<td>Stone wall restoration</td>
<td>UB17</td>
<td>30 per m/yr</td>
<td>30 m</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uplands ELS</td>
<td>Post and wire fencing along water courses</td>
<td>UJ3</td>
<td>50 per 100 m</td>
<td>400 m</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELS</td>
<td>Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings</td>
<td>ED1</td>
<td>2 per m²</td>
<td>300 m²</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELS</td>
<td>Unenclosed moorland rough grazing</td>
<td>EL6</td>
<td>5 per ha</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELS</td>
<td>Management of archaeological features on grassland</td>
<td>ED5</td>
<td>16 per ha</td>
<td>20 ha</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uplands ELS</td>
<td>Winter livestock removal</td>
<td>UJ12</td>
<td>35 per ha</td>
<td>10 ha</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uplands ELS</td>
<td>Woodland livestock exclusion</td>
<td>UC22</td>
<td>75 per ha</td>
<td>4 ha</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uplands ELS</td>
<td>Cattle grazing on upland grassland and moorland</td>
<td>UL18</td>
<td>30 per ha</td>
<td>60 ha</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uplands ELS</td>
<td>Haymaking</td>
<td>UL20</td>
<td>60 per ha</td>
<td>11 ha</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uplands ELS</td>
<td>No cutting strip within meadows</td>
<td>UL21</td>
<td>250 per ha</td>
<td>1.5 ha</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uplands ELS</td>
<td>Management of upland grassland for birds</td>
<td>UL23</td>
<td>37 per ha</td>
<td>24 ha</td>
<td>888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELS</td>
<td>Permanent grassland with low inputs in SDAs</td>
<td>EL2</td>
<td>35 per ha</td>
<td>36 ha</td>
<td>1,260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C Summary

- Points earned by compulsory requirements: 5,852
- Points earned by options: 9,160
- Total points earned: 15,012
- Points target: 14,844

U3.1.5 What payments will I receive?
If you choose an Uplands ELS agreement, your payments will be:

- **£62 per ha** for SDA land below the Moorland Line and for SDA land parcels above the Moorland Line smaller than 15 ha; and
- **£23 per ha** for SDA land parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line.

In addition, Uplands ELS agreements on common land involving two or more active graziers will attract a supplementary payment of **£5/ha** (see compulsory requirement UX1 below).

Payment rates on land outside the SDA will remain as set out in Section 1.1.5.
U1.1.7 Can I apply for capital works?
Uplands ELS includes options for boundary restoration. Each boundary restoration option is allocated a number of points, which can count towards your points target.

U1.2.6 Is common land and shared grazing eligible?
Please refer to Section 1.2.6 of this handbook.

In addition, in Uplands ELS, the UX1 requirements must be located on all common land and shared grazing above the Moorland Line where there are two or more active graziers. An additional payment of £5 per hectare is available for complying with the UX1 requirements.

U1.3.4 Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS), Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs), Hill Farm Allowance (HFA) and the Uplands Transitional Payment (UTP)

HFA and UTP
Land on which you are claiming HFA is eligible to count towards your Uplands ELS points target, and you may put Uplands ELS and ELS options on HFA land.

If you are in receipt of UTP, you are not eligible for Uplands ELS on any of your land. However, you can apply for ELS, and may put ELS options on land covered by the UTP.

CSS and ESA
If all of your land is in a CSS or ESA agreement, you are not eligible for Uplands ELS.

If you have a part-farm CSS or ESA agreement but are not claiming the Uplands Transitional Payment, you can apply for Uplands ELS on the remainder of your farm. Follow the instructions below to determine which fields could be included in your Uplands ELS application:

- If you have a CSS or ESA option covering either the whole or part of a field, you cannot include those fields in your Uplands ELS application.

- Land in CSS/ESA rotational options can be included in your Uplands ELS application but you must ensure that each year there is no overlap of CSS/ESA and Uplands ELS options on the ground. Whilst the CSS/ESA rotational options may overlap with the Uplands ELS compulsory requirement UX2, there must be no overlap between the CSS/ESA rotational option and the actual management requirements of UX2. In particular there must be no overlap between the rotational option and the 6 m protection zone alongside watercourses required under UX2.

- Land in receipt of CSS/ESA open, linear and educational access payments only, should also be included in your Uplands ELS application and points target. You must ensure, however, that any Uplands ELS options sited on the land do not obstruct or otherwise conflict with the objectives of the access.

- CSS boundaries – Uplands ELS boundary management options can be located on boundaries that are included within CSS options (whether that is a CSS whole-field option or a capital grant). However, the Uplands ELS boundary restoration options cannot be located on boundaries included within CSS options.

- ESA boundaries – Uplands ELS boundary options must not be located within the area covered by the ESA agreement.

Early transfer from CSS or ESA agreements
There are limited opportunities for early transfer from CSS or ESA agreements into Uplands ELS – mainly when ELS is to be combined with HLS. If you are considering early transfer, you should discuss this with your CSS/ESA adviser within Natural England before submitting an application. They will decide on the most appropriate course of action, taking into account the environmental benefits that can be achieved through each scheme and value for money.

If you do not know who your CSS/ESA adviser is, please contact the Natural England office – see Appendix 1 for contact details.
U Section 2
How to apply

U2.2.1 How should I choose which options to put in my application?
You can use any combination of Uplands ELS and ELS options to meet your points target, provided the individual option eligibility requirements are met. Where your farm is part within the SDA and part outside, points can be earned anywhere on your agreement land.

You will earn points towards your points target from the compulsory requirements, the options that you choose, and for completing your FER.

Natural England runs ELS training and advice events to explain the option management requirements and to provide opportunities for applicants to see the options on the ground. Details of these events can be obtained from the ‘Farmers and Land Managers’ section of Natural England’s website at www.naturalengland.org.uk. Alternatively, contact Natural England by telephone for details (contact details are in Appendix 1).

U2.2.2 Can I have more than one option on the same area of land?
Under Uplands ELS, there are a number of instances where you can have up to three land management options overlapping on the same area of land at the same time.

The table in Appendix 3 shows combinations of options that may be located in the same place at the same time. Only combinations of options shown in this table are permitted.

Other combinations of part-field options may be placed in the same land parcel, as long as they do not overlap on the ground.

U Section 3
Detail of compulsory requirement, options and points allocations

The Uplands ELS options listed in this Section are only available within the SDA as part of an Uplands ELS application. You may also use ELS options, listed in Section 3 of this handbook, within the SDA where the relevant eligibility conditions are met.

You must have either UX2 or UX3 on each land parcel within the SDA. You must also include UX1 where appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Requirements/Options</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UX1</td>
<td>Moorland commons and shared grazing requirements</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>UX2</td>
<td>Upland grassland and arable requirements</td>
<td>ha</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UX3</td>
<td>Moorland requirements</td>
<td>ha</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options for boundaries and features in the uplands</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UB4</td>
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<td>UB5</td>
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<tr>
<td>UB11</td>
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<td>UB12</td>
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<td>UB14</td>
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<tr>
<td>UB15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB16</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
UX Compulsory requirements for SDA land in Uplands ELS

The management requirements (UX1–UX3) are compulsory. Depending on the category of land, either UX2 or UX3 must be located on each SDA land parcel. UX1 must be located on all moorland parcels where there are two or more active graziers.

UX1 Moorland commons and shared grazing requirements £5 per ha supplementary payment

This requirement must be located on all SDA parcels of common and shared grazing land above the Moorland Line where there are two or more active graziers. The supplementary payment contributes towards the costs of facilitating communal agreements and collaborative management of grazing livestock.

You must comply with the following:

- All sheep must comprise hefted self-maintained flocks. Exceptionally, where self-maintained herds/flocks are not retained, the livestock need only be acclimatised to the conditions of the moor eg where the area of common is relatively small and there is no sheep tick. Wethers are permitted provided that they are sourced from an area of similar physical conditions and disease challenge.

Hefting (otherwise known as ‘learing’ or ‘heafing’) consists of retaining a self-maintained herd/flock that is acclimatised to the conditions of the grazing. The herd/flock replacements are homebred, selected from within the resident herd/flock so that the animals are familiar with the physical conditions and have some resistance to prevailing diseases.

- Establish and maintain a commoners’ association/group supported by an internal agreement. This Uplands ELS agreement must indicate the type of stock and system of management for the purpose of the agreement.

- Maintain an ongoing record of active graziers and the numbers and type of stock for the period of the agreement and produce these records on inspection or when requested by Natural England.
**UX2 Upland grassland and arable requirements**

This requirement must be located on all SDA parcels below the Moorland Line. Please note that ELS buffer strip options EE1-10 and E19 cannot be located next to watercourses on land in UX2.

You must comply with the following:

- Do not supplementary feed within 6 m of the top of a bank of a watercourse (as defined in the Glossary). This requirement must not overlap with the cross compliance requirement (within 1 m of the top of the bank of a watercourse).
- Do not apply any fertiliser, or boom spray herbicides, within 6 m of the top of a bank of a watercourse. Selective control of weeds is permitted using weed wipers and/or spot treatment. This requirement must not overlap with the cross compliance requirement (within 1 m of the top of the bank of a watercourse) and, within Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZ), any NVZ requirements. The spreading of organic manures within 10 m of surface water is already restricted within the NVZ Action Programme and the Code of Good Agricultural Practice.
- Retain any traditional features such as stiles, sheep creeps and stone gateposts when any maintenance or restoration of dry-stone walls is undertaken, following the style characteristic of the local landscape and using appropriately shaped and sized local natural stone. Stone should not be taken from archaeological/historical features such as lime kilns, historic industrial sites, walls, hedgerbanks, ruins or buildings. Where it is impractical to retain stone gateposts, wooden posts should be installed.
- Any maintenance, restoration and repair of hedgerbanks must be carried out in the traditional materials used in the original construction, including appropriately shaped and sized local natural stone, following the style characteristic to the local landscape.
- Any management of hedgerows must be carried out in the style traditional to the local landscape.
- Do not supplementary feed in native woodland except when shelter is required during periods of extreme weather, where access to forage is severely restricted and the welfare of livestock might otherwise be compromised. Extreme weather is defined as more than 2 consecutive days of snow cover or continuous hard frost, prolonged drought or prolonged heavy rainfall. Native woodland, for the purpose of this requirement, is defined as a group of trees with overlapping canopies covering at least 0.1 ha (1,000 m²), at least half of which are native species.
- Retain existing areas of native scrub (except on archaeological features) by:
  - no supplementary feeding within or adjoining these areas;
  - no application of fertilisers or manures within these areas; and
  - no application of herbicides and pesticides except for the spot treatment of weeds as indicated under cross compliance (CAEC 11).

Scrub is defined, for the purpose of this requirement, as areas greater than 100 m² dominated by native shrubs and tree saplings, usually less than 5 m tall, occasionally with a few scattered trees. It includes juniper, willow, birch, elder, hazel, spindle, thorn and other native woody shrubs but excludes common gorse, broom and invasive non-native species including rhododendron and snowberry.

The encroachment of scrub can be controlled beyond the existing areas by cutting and/or by spot treatment using approved herbicides in accordance with manufacturers’ instructions.

Where scrub covers archaeological features, the ELS option ED4 Management of scrub on archaeological features can be used.

- Do not remove any boulders and rock outcrops. Boulders are often remnants of historic features and should be left undisturbed. Rock outcrops, including disused quarries, may also be historic features and often support valued plants and wildlife.
- Prevent the spread of bracken on land that allows the use of a conventional tractor with mower. You should regularly review the extent of bracken. It can be controlled by cutting and/or the application of an approved herbicide in accordance with manufacturers’ instructions. In some circumstances, bracken areas do provide valuable wildlife habitats. However, the spread of bracken can reduce biodiversity, damage archaeological features and change the character of the landscape.
■ Collect all plastic waste associated with farming activities from the banks of watercourses, including that which has arrived on the farm from elsewhere (eg from another farm in a storm).

**UX3 Moorland requirements** 15 points per ha

This requirement must be located on all SDA parcels above the Moorland Line.

■ Avoid overgrazing and undergrazing and, in any case, maintain a minimum stocking rate of 0.05 livestock units (LU) per hectare for a period of 4 months between 1 June and 30 September. Grazing livestock can include cattle, sheep and ponies but all stock must be acclimatised to the conditions of the moor. Sheep must consist of hardy native breeds and/or their crosses.

The minimum level of grazing as specified above equates with 0.5 ewe/ha plus lambs at foot based on livestock unit conversion factors as shown at Appendix 5. The list of recognised hardy native breeds of sheep is shown at Appendix 6.

The minimum level of grazing must be maintained throughout the period 1 June to 30 September except when stock are removed for routine husbandry operations such as lambing, calving, dipping and clipping.

Where the moorland consists of a number of parcels, not necessarily grazed at the same time, calculate the number of livestock units based on the number of animals that will graze all of the parcels.

The Environmental Information Map for your farm will indicate any areas of deep peat (defined as 50 cm or more) or blanket bog and areas that lie above 600 m. A level of stocking at or above 0.05 LU per hectare on this ground could be damaging. Therefore, moorland grazing units that are dominated (more than 75 per cent by area) by blanket bog and/or mountain grazing above 600 m are likely to benefit from more refined grazing management and are a high priority for Higher Level Stewardship – please contact your Natural England Adviser in these circumstances.

■ Maintain wetlands including peat bogs, other mires and hillside flushes. Where you have the legal right to control land drainage, do not install any new land drainage or modify any existing drainage that would increase run-off. The maintenance of existing working field drains is permitted, except on areas of deep peat (> 0.5 m), provided that its capacity is not increased beyond the initial installation.

Where there are areas of deep peat, do not maintain existing grips/drains except along tracks or boundaries. Allow drain blocking (that might, for example, be undertaken by the landowner). If, as a result, increasingly wet ground conditions develop, additional shepherding may be required to prevent animal welfare concerns.

■ Manage any supplementary feeding sensitively to avoid damaging habitats such as blanket bog, heather, bilberry and other heath, species-rich grassland and mires. Move all feeding sites regularly to minimise damage to vegetation and soils. Do not supplementary feed using silage but the feeding of haylage (as defined in the Glossary) is permitted, provided that the plastic is removed from the feeding sites. Do not feed on or next to archaeological features, steep slopes, footpaths or watercourses.

The practice of supplementary feeding may be restricted under the terms of a statutory designation eg SSSI. It may also be restricted on common land by the landowner or by custom as declared by a Commons Association/group.

■ Where you have the legal right to carry out burning, and intend to do so, you must follow the Defra Heather and Grass Burning Code. You may obtain a copy of The Heather and Grass Burning Code (Defra, 2007) from your Natural England regional office or download it at http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/countryside/uplands/hg-burn2007.pdf

■ Do not apply fertilisers or manures.

■ Do not plough, cultivate, re-seed or harrow. Controlling bracken by harrowing is permitted, although this operation may be restricted by the landowner on common land. Bracken harrowing may be carried out every year as long as it is done after 30 June. Where it is necessary to harrow prior to 30 June, you may only do so every other year.
Retain and protect native woodland. Do not supplementary feed in native woodland except during periods of extreme weather, where access to forage is severely restricted and the welfare of livestock might otherwise be compromised. Extreme weather is defined as more than 2 consecutive days of snow cover or continuous hard frost, prolonged drought or prolonged heavy rainfall. Native woodland, for the purpose of this requirement, is defined as a group of trees with overlapping canopies covering at least 0.1 ha (1,000 m²), at least half of which are native species.

**UB Options for boundary features**

**UB4 Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line**  
24 points per 100 m

**UB5 Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line**  
12 points per 100 m

Where there is hedge growth on top of the bank, you may also apply for one of the options EB1, EB2, EB3 or UB14 where they meet the necessary criteria.

For these options, you must comply with the following:

- Protect stone-faced banks from deterioration and repair gaps where these occur during the course of the agreement.
- Prevent damage to stone-faced gateways and to banks by machinery or by stock climbing. Where stock have damaged such features, prevent further damage by making the features stock-proof.
- Do not remove any in situ stone from banks.
- All repair and maintenance work must be carried out in the traditional materials used in the original hedgebank construction, following the style characteristic to the local landscape.
- Do not cast up ditch dredging or spoil over stone-faced banks.

**UB11 Stone wall protection and maintenance on or above the Moorland Line**  
32 points per 100 m

You must have control over the management of both sides of the wall. Stone walls of all types are important for stock management and as landscape and historic features. They are also potentially important habitats for lichens, mosses and ferns, invertebrates, reptiles, birds and small mammals.

This option can only apply to complete walls or complete sections of walls (ie walls still at their original height and with their coping stones in place). Stone walls must be built of natural materials and must be of traditional dry-stone wall construction. Mortar may be used when it is the traditional method of stone walling.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Protect stone walls from deterioration by regularly repairing gaps where these occur during the course of your agreement.
- Carry out all repair and maintenance work in the traditional materials used in the original wall construction, following the style characteristic of the local landscape and
using appropriately shaped and sized local natural stone. Any existing features such as sheep creeps and stone gate posts must be retained.

Do not remove any in situ stone from walls.

**UB12 Earth bank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line**
18 points per 100 m

**UB3 Earth bank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line**
9 points per 100 m

This option aims to maintain and protect earth and turf-faced banks. These banks are important landscape and historic features, often containing valuable below-ground archaeological deposits. They also provide potentially important habitats for invertebrates, reptiles, birds and small mammals.

This option can only apply to complete banks or complete sections of earth and turf-faced banks that are at least 1 m in height.

Where there is a hedge on top of the bank that meets the necessary criteria, you may also apply for one of the hedgerow options EB1, EB2, EB3 or UB14. The specified height of the hedge is measured from the top of the bank.

For these options, you must comply with the following:

- Protect earth banks from deterioration. Repair gaps where these occur during the course of the agreement.
- Do not repair gaps using earth from an existing boundary or any other archaeological feature.
- Prevent damage to gateways and banks by machinery or by stock. Where stock have damaged such features, prevent further damage by making the features stock-proof.
- All repair and maintenance work must be carried out in the traditional style characteristic of the local area and used in the original earth bank construction.

**UB14 Hedgerow restoration**
10 points per m

This option is only available on land within the SDA.

The aim of this option is to bring the hedgerows on the farm into management to encourage the development of tall, thick, continuous hedges, which link to other hedges and habitats, such as ponds or woodlands, to benefit wildlife and help maintain their historic landscape character.

When removing trees, or managing overgrown hedges, you must ensure that you have obtained any necessary felling licence and/or permission for work on trees that are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). See Section 1.3.8.

There are two methods of restoration available under this option:

- **Hedge laying.** This involves the complete rejuvenation of the hedge by partially cutting through the woody stems close to ground level and laying them over to create a dense barrier, from which re-growth should shoot. There are significant local variations in hedge-laying styles, for example, the Midland, Yorkshire and Devon styles.
- **Hedge gapping up.** Gapping up involves establishing new plants into gaps in an existing hedge. It can also be combined with laying to ensure the development of a continuous hedge.

**Which hedges are eligible?**

You must have management control over both sides of the hedge. In addition, the hedge must be:

- a boundary line of shrubs, with or without trees, over 20 m long and less than 5 m wide.
You can enter up to 40 m on your application form. This represents the annual commitment. Hence, if you enter 40 m on your application form, you will be required to complete 200 m over the full 5 years of your agreement (or 400 m if you have a 10-year Uplands ELS/HLS agreement).

You can complete the work ahead of schedule but you must have completed at least as much as the annual commitment for each agreement year completed. Points earned will be based on the annual commitment, not the actual amount of work completed in any single year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For example, where the annual commitment is 40 m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End of agreement year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum total length restored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum total length restored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points earned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hedges, or lengths of hedges, in this option can also be entered into the hedge management options (EB1, EB2, EB3, EB8, EB9 and EB10).

**Hedges that are a priority for restoration**
- Short, overtrimmed and gappy hedges.
- Hedges connected to woods or adjacent to ponds, or other watercourses, to link habitats.
- Hedges adjacent to other management options eg buffer strips, field corners and nectar mixes, as this will add value to the habitat.
- Hedges alongside public rights of way or in conspicuous parts of the farm where landscape and access improvements can be best appreciated.
- Hedges of particular historic interest eg parish boundaries.

**Hedges to leave**
- Thick, tall hedges that already provide valuable habitat for wildlife and are an important feature in the landscape.
Which hedges are suitable for laying?
Hedges, or sections of hedge, comprising shrubs at least 3 m in height with frequent stems up to 25 cm in diameter. There must be sufficient suitable stems to make a laid hedge of living pleachers (the laid stems).

Which hedges are suitable for gapping up?
To be eligible for gapping up at least one-quarter of the hedge must still consist of shrubs and/or trees.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- Obtain current, dated, photographs of the hedge to be restored as evidence of its condition when you joined the scheme, retain these photographs and submit a copy with your application.
- At the end of the agreement at least 90 per cent of the restored hedge must be continuous with no gap (other than gateways) more than 1 m wide. If sections, more than 1 m wide, of laid hedge die after restoration then these gaps should be planted with new hedge plants, following the gapping up prescriptions.
- Following restoration, prevent damage by livestock and other animals such as rabbits.
- Any fences must be sited at least 1.2 m from the centre of the hedge.
- Retain all historic boundary features eg stone gate posts.
- Retain any existing hedgerow trees where they are a characteristic feature of the local landscape. They must not be damaged by fencing wire or used as fence posts.
- Only apply herbicide to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).

In addition, for hedge laying, you must comply with the following:
- Before work starts, all old fencing must be removed and disposed of appropriately. Also, cut and pull out bramble and other scrambling plants where these will hinder laying the cut stems.
- Lay when the hedge is dormant, between 1 November and 1 March, in the style customary to the local landscape. However, in exceptional circumstances, work may continue up to 1 April provided you conduct a survey to ensure that there are no nesting birds present.
- Twiggy material may be placed over the cut stems to provide some protection to the re-growth from grazing animals. Wood may be stacked to provide valuable dead wood habitat for wildlife.
- Cut material may be chipped and used as a mulch to control weeds.
- Site any fires to minimise environmental damage. Material should either be burnt immediately or left until the end of the bird breeding season (ie September) as piles of brash are attractive nesting sites for birds. Bonfire sites must not be sited on low-intensity grassland, other wildlife-rich areas or areas of historic or archaeological interest.

In addition, for gapping-up you must comply with the following:
- Thoroughly clear gaps of existing vegetation
- Plant dormant 2-year-old bare rooted stock (45 cm–60 cm) between 1 November and 1 March, avoiding periods when the ground is frozen or waterlogged. Plant a minimum of six plants per metre in a double staggered row with at least 30 cm between rows.
- Plant in line with the existing hedgerow. Plant species to match those in the existing hedge. Single species planting can be used eg to restore hawthorn enclosure hedges. Plants should be of British native origin.
- Any newly planted hedge plants that die must be replaced in the following planting season.
- You may control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive alien species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by use of a mulch.
**UB15 Stone-faced hedgebank restoration**

This option is only available on land within the SDA.

This option supports the restoration of these banks to maintain them as features in the landscape, and to benefit wildlife. It is available for existing stone-faced banks that remain substantially intact but are losing stones and have some unstable sections. You must have management control over both sides of the hedgebank.

You can enter up to 40 m on your application form. This represents the annual commitment. Hence, if you enter 40 m on your application form, you will be required to complete 200 m over the full 5 years of your agreement (or 400 m if you have a 10-year Uplands ELS/HLS agreement).

You can complete the work ahead of schedule, but you must have completed at least as much as the annual commitment for each agreement year completed. Points earned will be based on the annual commitment, not the actual amount of work completed in any single year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For example, where the annual commitment is 40 m</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End of agreement year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum total length restored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum total length restored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points earned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Banks in this option may not be entered in options EB4, UB4, EB5 and UB5.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Obtain current, dated, photographs of the bank to be restored as evidence of its condition when you joined the scheme, retain these photographs and submit a copy with your application.
- At the end of the agreement, the restored bank must be complete and in good condition.
- Carry out all restoration work in the traditional materials used in the original bank construction, following the style characteristic of the local landscape and using appropriately shaped and sized local natural stone.
- Before work starts, all old fencing must be removed and disposed of appropriately.
- Avoid undermining the original historic bank. Foundation stones must not be disturbed unless it is necessary to create a firm base. Often the lower courses of field boundaries are of considerable age and archaeological importance.
- Avoid restoring stone-faced banks in adverse weather conditions, such as drought or very wet weather, as this will result in instability. Using machinery in wet weather may damage land adjacent to the bank.
- Strip loose stone back by hand until there are firm stones to build on.
- On completion of each course, backfill with earth and small stones. Tamp down well to form a solid core before continuing with the next course.
- The top should be finished off with a row of large flat stones, vertical stones or a layer of turf, depending on local traditions.
- Where the original stone is no longer available or is not in good enough condition to be re-used, replacement stone must be sourced locally and must be of the type used in the local area. Stone must not be taken from other hedgebanks, walls or buildings.
- Hauling stone should be done when ground conditions are firm enough to prevent soil damage.
- Old features, such as creep holes or built granite troughs, should be restored and retained.
- Do not carry out restoration work on a bank with a hedge between 1 March and 31 August (the main bird breeding season).
■ Where a hedge already exists, do not bury a newly laid hedge in deep earth as this will prevent effective regrowth.
■ Where the bank is crossed by a public right of way, any stiles and gates must be restored to their original form using traditional materials.

UB16 Earth bank restoration 12.5 points per m

This option is only available on land within the SDA.

This option aims to restore banks to maintain them as features in the landscape. It is available for existing earth banks that are substantially intact but have some unstable and/or collapsed sections. You must have management control over both sides of the hedgebank.

You can enter up to 40 m on your application form. This represents the annual commitment. Hence, if you enter 40 m on your application form, you will be required to complete 200 m over the full 5 years of your agreement (or 400 m if you have a 10-year Uplands ELS/HLS agreement).

You can complete the work ahead of schedule, but you must have completed at least as much as the annual commitment for each agreement year completed. Points earned will be based on the annual commitment, not the actual amount of work completed in any single year.

### For example, where the annual commitment is 40 m

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<tbody>
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<td>200</td>
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Banks in this option may not be entered in options EB12, UB12, EB13 and UB13.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
■ Obtain current, dated, photographs of the bank to be restored as evidence of its condition when you joined the scheme, retain these photographs and submit a copy with your application.
■ At the end of the agreement, the restored bank must be complete and in good condition.
■ All repair and maintenance work must be carried out in the traditional materials used in the original earth bank construction, following the style characteristic to the local landscape. The shape and height of the bank must be consistent with other banks that are in good condition in the immediate vicinity.
■ Avoid undermining the original historic bank. Often the lower courses of field boundaries are of considerable age and archaeological importance.
■ Do not carry out restoration work on a bank with a hedge between 1 March and 31 August (the main bird breeding season).
■ Do not use machinery beneath the canopy of hedgerow trees to avoid soil compaction.
■ Before work starts, all old fencing must be removed and disposed of appropriately.
■ Avoid restoring earth banks in adverse weather conditions such as drought or very wet weather as this will result in instability. Using machinery in wet weather may damage land adjacent to the hedgebank.
■ Use original soil to build up the bank where possible. Do not use earth from an existing boundary or any other archaeological feature.
■ Where a hedge already exists, do not bury a newly laid hedge in deep earth as this will prevent effective regrowth.
■ To ensure stability, the finished face of the bank should slope inwards to create a ‘batter’, such that the base of the bank is wider than the top. Settlement must be allowed at each stage to stabilise the bank.
Where the bank is faced with turves, take to the full height of the bank and finish off with loose soil or turf, depending on local traditions and whether or not a hedge is to be planted.

Where the earth bank is crossed by a public right of way, any stiles and gates must be restored to their original form using traditional materials.

**UB17 Stone wall restoration**

30 points per m

This option is only available on land within the SDA.

This option aims to retain and enhance the pattern of enclosure by stone walls where it is a characteristic of the local landscape. It is available for walls that require major rebuilding, where sections of the wall are unstable and may collapse and/or where sections of the wall have slumped. Within field walls, such as sheep folds, are also eligible. You must have management control over both sides of the stone wall.

You can enter up to 40 m on your application form. This represents the annual commitment. Hence, if you enter 40 m on your application form, you will be required to complete 200 m over the full 5 years of your agreement (or 400 m if you have a 10-year Uplands ELS/HLS agreement).

You can complete the work ahead of schedule, but you must have completed at least as much as the annual commitment for each agreement year completed. Points earned will be based on the annual commitment, not the actual amount of work completed in any single year.

![Well-maintained walls are an important feature of the landscape.](image)

### For example, where the annual commitment is 40 m

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Walls in this option may not be entered in options EB11 and UB11.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Obtain current, dated, photographs of the wall to be restored as evidence of its condition when you joined the scheme, retain these photographs and submit a copy with your application.

- At the end of the agreement, there must be a complete wall in good condition.

- Carry out all work in the traditional materials used in the original wall construction, following the style characteristic of the local landscape and using appropriately shaped and sized local natural stone, including coping and through stones where appropriate.

- Dismantle existing structures by hand, back to sound construction with minimal disturbance to wildlife, in particular breeding and hibernating animals.

- Copings, through stones and building stone, must be separated and sorted for re-use.

- Foundation stones must not be disturbed unless it is necessary to create a firm base.

- Existing wall side trees can be maintained. Gaps in the wall to allow for tree growth are permitted and the gap made stock-proof with wooden rails.

- Do not use soil or other debris to infill the wall.

- Where the original stone is no longer available, or is not in good enough condition to be re-used, replacement stone must be sourced locally and must be of the type used in the local area. Stone must not be taken from other walls, hedgebanks or buildings.
Hauling stone should be done when ground conditions are firm enough to prevent soil damage.

- No concrete is to be used. Mortar may be used when it is the traditional method of stone walling.

- Stone features such as sheep creeps should be re-built into the wall where there is evidence that they previously occurred.

- Where the restored wall is crossed by a public right of way, stiles and gates must be restored to their original form using traditional materials.

**UC Options for trees and woodland**

**UC5 Sheep fencing around small woodlands**

50 points per 100 m

Fencing is important for the establishment of new woods as well as maintaining existing ones.

This option is only available on SDA land below the Moorland Line.

This option is for the provision of new fencing to prevent access to woodland by livestock. It must only be placed adjacent to small areas of predominantly native woodlands, in particular ancient woodlands. These are defined as woodland parcels less than 3 ha in size comprising at least 50 per cent native species. You must have management control of the woodland. The whole woodland must be enclosed following completion of this option, preventing all livestock access.

You may enter a maximum of 500 m of this option into an agreement. The fencing must be erected in the first year of the agreement. You may not add this option to your agreement after the first year. This option will contribute to your points target for a maximum of 5 years. The new fencing must result, or contribute to, the effective exclusion of stock. Woodland parcels that are already in woodland grant schemes requiring the exclusion of livestock are not eligible.
If you are a tenant, you may need consent from the landowner for establishing new boundaries and, in the case of common land, the Secretary of State/Defra. You are advised to contact the relevant authority prior to submitting an application. In some circumstances, a covenant restricting the erection of new fencing may be attached to the land.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Avoid features of historic or archaeological importance.
- Before work starts, all old fencing must be removed and disposed of appropriately.
- Erect fencing in straight lines between strainer posts. The fence must be at least 1.05 m high. If extra height is required, this should be obtained by fixing additional strands of wire.
- Strainer posts must be used at each end of the fence and at each corner or turning point. Strainer posts should be at least 125 mm top diameter or 100 mm x 100 mm cross-section if sawn; 2.15 m long if not set in concrete, or 1.85 m if in concrete. The spacing between the strainer posts should not exceed 150 m where mild steel line wire is used, or 300 m for high tensile wire.
- Struts should be at least 80 mm top diameter, or 75 mm x 75 mm if sawn; 1.9 m long if not set in concrete and at least 1.6 m where set in concrete. Struts should be notched into the strainer post at an angle of no more than 45 degrees.
- Intermediate posts should be at least 65 mm top diameter, or 75 mm x 75 mm if sawn; 1.7 m long; and spaced no further than 3.5 m apart.
- All softwood timber must be fully peeled and treated with an appropriate preservative.
- Stock netting used should be 80 cm high and fastened with galvanised staples.
- Two top lines of wire 100 mm apart should be stapled to the upright posts. Do not use barbed wire where new fencing is erected alongside public rights of way. Line wire should comply with BS 4102 and be properly strained and fastened with galvanised staples.

**UC22 Woodland livestock exclusion**

This option is only available on SDA land below the Moorland Line.

This option aims to exclude all livestock from woodland. Preventing livestock access to woodland may allow more trees and shrubs to become established and the woodland flowers to flourish.

You must have management control of the woodland.

Only small areas of predominantly native woodlands are eligible. These are defined as woodland parcels below 3 ha in size occupied by trees and shrubs consisting of at least 50 per cent native species. Woodland parcels that are already in woodland grant schemes requiring the exclusion of livestock are not eligible.

Where new fencing, or the maintenance of existing fencing, is required to exclude livestock, you may also apply for options UC5 and EC3.

If you are a tenant, you may need consent from the landowner for establishing new boundaries. Consent may also be required where the woodland is located on common land or within statutory designations such as SSSI. In some circumstances, a covenant restricting the erection of new fencing may be attached to the land.
For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Make the boundaries of the woodland stockproof during the first year of the agreement, either by restoring or repairing existing boundaries, or by the provision of new fencing (avoiding any historic or archaeological features).
- Exclude all livestock from the woodland for the remaining period of the agreement.

**UD Options for historic and landscape features**

**UD12 Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings in remote locations** 4 points per m² of ground floor area

Remote buildings get a higher maintenance payment under Uplands ELS.

This option is only available on land within the SDA.

A traditional farm building (TFB) is a building or part of a building constructed before 1940 for a use associated with agriculture, and built using traditional methods and materials such as timber, brick, stone, tile and slate. Their construction, layout and function provide information about the rural economy and past farming practices. While many TFBs are not suited to modern agriculture, they are often valued features in the landscape and make a major contribution to local character. The annual active maintenance of weatherproof TFBs prevents the onset of serious structural problems, which may need expensive restoration in the future.

'Maintenance’ refers to the routine work that is necessary to protect the fabric of a building and to keep it weatherproof. It does not include any work to put right significant defects or decay, or anything required to bring a building in poor repair back to good condition. This sort of restoration work may be funded under HLS. Some maintenance works will be required annually. Others, such as clearing of gutters and vegetation, may need to be undertaken several times per year.
Typical maintenance work includes:

- undertaking a regular inspection of the TFB to check its condition and identify any problems that need attention;
- ensuring that all services are working properly, such as making sure that gutters are free of debris;
- undertaking minor repairs to the external fabric of the building, such as replacing slipped or broken roofing slates and tiles to prevent rainwater penetration, renewing cast iron gutters and drainpipes, painting woodwork and metalwork, replacing broken glass, pointing walls and clearing vegetation; and
- inspecting the building regularly to identify areas needing maintenance work, such as checking downpipes and gutters for leaves in the autumn, noting slipped slates and checking the condition of paintwork and other areas requiring rectification.

Eligible buildings include TFBs that:

- are in a sound and weatherproof condition;
- were built for a purpose associated with agriculture, such as housing machinery or animals, or storing or processing crops and food;
- are still used for an agricultural purpose, whether or not it was the original one (for example, a barn built to house animals that is now being used for storage of feedstuffs or equipment); and
- are at least 400 m from the main steading and 200 m from a metalled public road.

Ineligible buildings include:

- farmhouses, residential or domestic buildings;
- buildings already converted to a non-agricultural use, for example, to a residential or non-agricultural business use;
- TFBs already in receipt of funding from another scheme, such as the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) or Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE);
- TFBs that you intend to convert to a non-agricultural use during the life of your agreement; and
- TFBs that will not be in your ownership or control for the life of your agreement.

TFBs that meet the above conditions, but which are currently unused or empty, are also eligible. It is not a requirement for buildings to be on land registered on the Rural Land Register (RLR), but you must record them on the FER (see Section 1.3.2).

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Continue to protect and maintain in weatherproof condition the specified TFB(s) (including fixtures and fittings and adjacent associated features, such as mounting blocks or stack/stook bases).
- Carry out maintenance works and minor repairs on a ‘like-for-like’ basis, using traditional materials and methods, to retain the character of the building in its local setting.
- Where a non-traditional material has previously been used to repair or re-clad the building (such as corrugated iron sheeting to cover roofs), this may be retained and should be maintained appropriately.
- Obtain current, dated, photographs of all elevations of the building as evidence of its condition when you joined the scheme. This should include photographs of any areas where non-traditional materials have previously been used to repair or re-clad the building. Retain these photographs and submit a copy with your application.
- Keep a record of work done, and carry out and record a brief visual inspection at least once a year.
- Retain the building in your ownership or control for the life of your agreement.
- Ensure that the building is not converted to a non-agricultural use during the life of your agreement.
A Roman bank south of Hadrian’s Wall.

**UD13 Maintaining visibility of archaeological features on moorland** 53 points per feature

This option is only available on SDA land above the Moorland Line.

This option aims to retain archaeological features in the uplands as visible features in the landscape: i.e., the features should already be visible at the start of the agreement. Archaeological features in the uplands are often better preserved than their lowland counterparts as they have not suffered the same intense activity. The uplands are therefore important reservoirs of information about our past, how humans have interacted with their environment and how they have adapted to change over the centuries, including past climate change.

This option can only be used on archaeological features shown on your Environmental Information Map or your FER. You can obtain information about archaeological features on your farm from your local Historic Environment Record (HER). For further information on HERs, see http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk.

This option is not a whole parcel option but is intended to encompass an area large enough to include the whole of the archaeologically sensitive area and may include a suitable buffer. The total size of the feature and buffer should be no more than 50 m in radius.

A feature can either be a single item on its own or a number of the same/related items in close proximity to each other (within the 50 m radius). A number of features may be recognised in the same parcel of land. Linear features, such as a historic ditch, can be represented in lengths of 50 m.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Obtain current, dated, photographs of the feature as evidence of its condition when you joined the scheme, retain these photographs and submit a copy with your application.
- Maintain the visibility of the archaeological feature.
- Do not allow poaching or other activities that result in bare ground or ground disturbance on the feature.

Wheel ruts and supplementary feeding are damaging the stone circle.

Changing the grazing management has improved the feature condition.
Do not cause damage to the feature, for instance creating ruts by driving or allowing anyone else to drive over undamaged parts of the archaeological feature with any vehicle, including quad bikes and ATVs (All Terrain Vehicles).

Do not supplementary feed on or next to the feature.

Do not allow any scrub or bracken growth on the feature. If scrub is present, ELS option ED4 Management of scrub on archaeological features will be more appropriate.

Do not cut vegetation between 1 March and 31 August to avoid the nesting season. Remove cuttings and brash from the site. Cutting by hand may be necessary to prevent damage.

**UJ Options to protect soil and water**

**UJ3 Post and wire fencing along watercourses**

This option is only available on SDA land below the Moorland Line.

This option is for the provision of fencing to protect watercourses from grazing livestock. Watercourse fencing will help to reduce faecal contamination and prevent stream bank damage and therefore will have a significant impact upon water quality and will minimise damage to wildlife habitats. It will also create a buffer zone to help reduce sedimentation and pollution of the watercourse from surface run-off of water following heavy rainfall.

It can be used where watercourses form one or more boundaries and livestock are present for at least 3 months of the year and currently have access to the watercourse.

You may enter a maximum of 500 m of this option into an agreement. The fencing must be erected in the first year of the agreement. You may not add this option to your agreement after the first year. This option will contribute to your points target for a maximum of 5 years. The new fencing must result in, or contribute to, the effective exclusion of stock.

If you are a tenant, you may need consent from the landowner and, in the case of common land, the Secretary of State/Defra. You are advised to contact the relevant authority prior to submitting an application. You should ensure any relevant consents are gained before carrying out the work (eg Scheduled Monument consent from English Heritage). In some circumstances, a covenant restricting the erection of new fencing may be attached to the land.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Avoid features of historic or archaeological importance.
- Erect fencing in straight lines between strainer posts. The fencing must be 1–4 m from the top of the watercourse bank. The fence must be at least 1.05 m high. If extra height is required, this should be obtained by fixing additional strands of wire.

Fencing off of watercourses maintains the stability of banks and helps prevent erosion.
Strainer posts should be used at each end of the fence and at each corner or turning point. They should be at least 125 mm top diameter or 100 mm x 100 mm cross-section if sawn; 2.15 m long if not set in concrete or 1.85 m if set in concrete. The spacing between the strainer posts should not exceed 150 m where mild steel line wire is used, or 300 m for high tensile wire.

Struts should be at least 80 mm top diameter, or 75 mm x 75 mm if sawn; 1.9 m long if not set in concrete and at least 1.6 m where set in concrete. Struts should be notched into the strainer post at an angle of no more than 45 degrees.

Intermediate posts should be at least 65 mm top diameter, or 75 mm x 75 mm if sawn; 1.7 m long; and spaced no further than 3.5 m apart.

All softwood timber must be fully peeled and treated with an appropriate preservative.

At least three lines of wire 350 mm apart should be stapled to the upright posts. Do not use barbed wire where new fencing is erected alongside public rights of way. Line wire should comply with BS 402 and be properly strained and fastened with galvanised staples.

**UL12 Winter livestock removal next to streams, rivers and lakes**  
35 points per ha

This option is only available on SDA land below the Moorland Line.

The aim is to enhance water quality by reducing the input of nutrients and sediment to streams, rivers and lakes caused by surface water run-off and the leaching of nutrients from adjacent farmland.

The option can only be used on land parcels that drain directly into a watercourse and are prone to water-logging, compaction or poaching, where it is important to remove livestock during the winter. In particular, it can be used where archaeological features are at risk by soil erosion.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Remove livestock between 1 December and 15 March each year.
- Do not spread fertilisers or manures between 1 December and 15 March each year.
- Do not store manures on these parcels.

**UL Options for upland grassland and moorland**

**UL17 No supplementary feeding on moorland**  
4 points per ha

This option is only available on SDA land above the Moorland Line.

Ceasing supplementary feeding on moorland can maintain and improve the quality of habitat.

Supplementary food is generally required where the grazing does not meet the body condition of stock and the development of foetuses in late pregnancy. This could be due to high levels of stocking and/or higher than normal lambing/calving rates. In some circumstances, routine feeding on the moor can be avoided by reducing levels of grazing and/or removing stock off the moor well before lambing/calving, particularly those animals found to be carrying twins.

If feeding management is changed by using this option, it is recommended that checks are made to the body condition of the stock grazing the moor and action is taken to avoid animal health problems.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- There must be no supplementary feeding of any kind except as follows:
  - During periods of extreme weather where access to forage is severely restricted and the welfare of livestock might otherwise be compromised. Extreme weather is defined as more than two consecutive days of snow cover or continuous hard frost, prolonged drought or prolonged heavy rainfall.
- Feeding of non-molassed mineral blocks where a deficiency problem has occurred.
- Feeders and troughs must not be used at any time.

**UL18 Cattle grazing on upland grassland and moorland**

Cattle grazing can help maintain a good mix of sward heights.

This option is only available on land within the SDA.

Cattle grazing encourages a diversity of sward structure and plant and invertebrate species, which in turn can be beneficial to a variety of ecological and historic features, in particular several important farmland bird species. It also contributes to the distinctive colour and patterning of local landscapes through mixed grazing systems. Cattle grazing on moorland can help to protect the growth of heather by controlling bracken and the development of coarse grassland.

This option is only available on land that is grazed by a significant number of cattle, expressed as a minimum proportion of the total grazing Livestock Units (LUs). The remaining proportion of the grazing LUs can be made up of the same types of livestock or other types of livestock, such as sheep, ponies, goats and domesticated deer.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- A minimum of 30 per cent of the LUs must be grazing cattle.
- Supplementary feeding is allowed, but move feeders as often as required to avoid poaching. Do not feed on or next to archaeological features, steep slopes, footpaths or watercourses.
- Keep a record of all livestock grazing the parcels in this option.
You may not wish to graze cattle on the same land each year. Therefore, the percentage of cattle LUs grazing the land is calculated over a 2-year period. This allows you to graze cattle on the selected parcels of land entered into this option in alternate years. If you choose to graze them on the land in alternate years, at least 60 per cent of the LUs on the land parcel must be in the form of cattle in 1 of the 2 years.

A year-round record must be made of the stock actually grazing the land. LUs are calculated on a field-by-field basis using the livestock unit conversion factors shown in Appendix 5.

**UL20 Haymaking**

This option is only available on SDA land below the Moorland Line.

This option aims to ensure the continuation, or re-introduction, of haymaking on fields which are, or were, cut for hay each year. Hay meadows generally have a greater diversity of wildflowers, and associated wildlife, than fields cut for silage because they receive smaller amounts of manure and inorganic fertiliser and are cut at a later stage of growth, enabling flowers to set seed.

This option can also help to reduce diffuse pollution, as well as reinforcing the landscape character of the area. It will also help ensure haymaking techniques and traditions are not lost to future generations.

To obtain maximum benefits for wildlife, this option should be co-located with EL3 Permanent grassland with very low inputs in an SDA.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Cut and remove hay or haylage once every year.
- Do not cut before 5 July.
- If you make haylage, you must turn the swath at least once and wilt for at least 48 hours.
- Graze the aftermath to achieve an average sward height of no more than 8 cm by the end of the grazing season.
- Where spring grazing of meadows is a traditional practice, exclude livestock for at least 7 weeks before cutting and by 30 May at the latest.

**UL21 No cutting strip within meadows**

250 points per ha of strip

This option is only available on SDA land below the Moorland Line.

This option is designed to improve habitats for small mammals, invertebrates and birds in meadows by leaving uncut areas. These can be strips against boundaries, awkward field corners, or infield areas such as damp hollows as these are key habitats for nesting and foraging wading birds. These uncut areas must be located in fields that are mown each year. They must not overlap with a public right of way but they can overlap with the cross compliance protection zone.
For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Leave a 1 m margin against a wall, hedgebank, earth bank or hedge, or leave a field corner/in field area uncut each year. Patch size must be no more than 0.5 ha.
- Graze these areas along with the aftermath, following the final cut.
- Do not cultivate or re-seed.

**UL22 Management of enclosed rough grazing for birds**

35 points per ha

This mixture of short grass and taller tussocks provides good nesting habitat and shelter for ground nesting birds.

The option is only available on SDA land in parcels of less than 15 ha above the Moorland Line.

This option will benefit breeding birds on smaller moorland enclosures, commonly known as ‘allotments’, ‘intakes’ or ‘newtakes’. It can also help to promote good soil conditions and maintain and strengthen the diverse vegetation mosaics characteristic of upland landscapes.

These are areas of enclosed grazing, of which the majority has not been drained, re-seeded or regularly cultivated. They have received only minimal applications of fertiliser, lime, slag or pesticides and will contain predominantly semi-natural vegetation, usually moorland grasses and rushes, and sometimes rocky and very wet areas. They may also contain small areas of agriculturally improved land.

Wading birds, such as lapwing, snipe, redshank and curlew or other priority species, such as whinchat and grasshopper warbler, must be known to breed on, or in close proximity to, the site. Bird distribution maps can be found at www.natureonthemap.org.uk.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Do not plough, cultivate or re-seed.
- Do not increase your existing stocking level and limit the daily level of stocking between 1 April and 30 June to a maximum of 0.4 livestock units per hectare. This equates with 5 ewes plus lambs at foot or 0.4 beef cow and calf.
- Do not harrow or roll between 1 April and 30 June.
- Protect permanently waterlogged wetlands, including peat bogs and other mires, and hillside flushes. Do not install any new land drainage or modify any existing land drainage, or remove any peat or sediment.
- Leave rocks, scree and mineral spoil in place.
- Do not apply fertiliser, manure, lime or slag.
- Do not supplementary feed using silage, but the feeding of haylage is permitted, provided that the plastic is removed from the feeding sites. Do not feed on or next to archaeological features, steep slopes, footpaths or watercourses. Move all feeding sites regularly to minimise damage to vegetation and soils, and take care to avoid damage by vehicles.
- Take action to contain bracken, rhododendron, common gorse or similar infestation so that they do not spread to new areas of land. Wherever possible, control of bracken should be by mechanical means, but to chemically control bracken, only asulam may be used and care must be taken not to apply it to other ferns. For common gorse, control should be by cutting or burning in manageable blocks. Control should not take place in the bird breeding season from 1 April to 31 August. If the land is in a water catchment area or scheduled monument, you must seek consent from the appropriate authority.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broadleaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed).
- Cut rush-dominated fields each year, but not between 1 April and 31 July. Cut no more than a third of the area of rushes in each field, or a third of the fields if they are small (ie less than 3 ha), in rotation. It may be impractical to cut rushes in the wettest flushes, and therefore these can be left. Cattle trampling may help control these areas.
- Once cut, if aftermath grazing does not control rushes, a second cut should be carried out within 8 weeks, but not between 1 April and 1 August.

**UL23 Management of upland grassland for birds**

This option is only available on SDA land below the Moorland Line.

This option will benefit breeding birds and other wildlife on upland grassland. Permanent grassland managed with no fertiliser has a higher value for wildlife. Different types of birds prefer different vegetation heights, so a variety in the sward structure is most beneficial. This option may also deliver benefits to resource protection where placed on fields that are at risk of soil erosion or run-off.

Wading birds, such as lapwing, snipe, redshank and curlew, or other priority species such as whinchat and grasshopper warbler, must be known to breed on, or in close proximity to, the site. Bird distribution maps can be found at www.natureonthemap.org.uk.

For this option, you must comply with the following:
- Maintain as grass. Do not plough, cultivate or re-seed.
- Manage by grazing only. Limit the daily level of stocking between 1 April and 30 June to a maximum of 0.6 livestock units per hectare. This equates with 7.5 ewes plus lambs at foot or 0.6 beef cow and calf.
- Maintain a sward with a range of heights during the growing season. At least 20 per cent of the sward should be less than 7 cm and at least 20 per cent should be more than 7 cm to allow some plants to flower and to provide a more varied habitat.
- Do not top at any time, except in patches to control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistle, curled and broad-leaved docks or common ragwort); invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed); or bracken.
- Do not harrow or roll between 1 April and 30 June.
Keighley Moor and Allotment.

- Supplementary feeding is permitted. Do not feed on or next to archaeological features, steep slopes, footpaths or watercourses. Move all feeding sites regularly to minimise damage to vegetation and soils.
- Do not apply fertiliser, manure or slag.
- You may continue adding lime, where this is your regular practice, but not between 1 April and 1 August.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broadleaved docks or common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed); or bracken.
- Cut rush-dominated fields each year, but not between 1 April and 31 July. Cut no more than a third of the area of rushes in each field, or a third of the fields if they are small (ie less than 3 ha), in rotation. It may be impractical to cut rushes in the wettest flushes, and therefore these can be left. Cattle trampling may help to control these areas.
- Once cut, if aftermath grazing does not control rushes, a second cut should be carried out within 8 weeks, but not between 1 April and 1 August.
# Appendix 1

## Contact details

### Natural England offices

Natural England offices are open from 8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays. Please have your application or agreement details to hand when contacting us.

Please note that all requests for OELS and combined OELS/HLS application packs should be directed to the Crewe office (North West region).

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<td>0300 060 1123</td>
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</table>
Appendix 1

South West
Cornwall
Devon
Dorset
Gloucestershire
Somerset
Wiltshire
Former county of Avon

Natural England
Incentive Schemes Services
PO Box 277, Bristol BS10 6WW
Tel: 0300 060 1118
Fax: 0300 060 1128
Email: iss.bristol@naturalengland.org.uk

West Midlands
Herefordshire
Shropshire
Staffordshire
Warwickshire
West Midlands
Worcestershire

Natural England
Incentive Schemes Services
PO Box 530, Worcester WR5 2WZ
Tel: 0300 060 1115
Fax: 0300 060 1125
Email: iss.westmidlands@naturalengland.org.uk

Yorkshire and the Humber
East Riding of Yorkshire
North Yorkshire
South Yorkshire
West Yorkshire
North Lincolnshire

Natural England
Incentive Schemes Services
PO Box 213, Leeds LS16 5WN
Tel: 0300 060 1116
Fax: 0300 060 1126
Email: iss.leeds@naturalengland.org.uk

Rural Payment Agency's Customer Service Centre

Customer Service Centre
Rural Payments Agency
PO Box 1058
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE99 4YQ
Tel: 0845 603 7777
Email: csc@rpa.gsi.gov.uk
Appendix 2

Useful web addresses

Natural England application information:

Supplementary forms for Environmental Stewardship (Agent authorisation, Common land and shared grazing, Derogation etc), for example, as referred to in Sections 1.4.6 can be found at:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/forms/default.aspx

For details about ELS Online go to: www.wholefarm.defra.gov.uk.

Mapping software that may be helpful in measuring areas and lengths is available at www.magic.gov.uk

Other Natural England sources of information:

Details of ELS advice events, (see Section 1.1.9), can be obtained from:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/landmanagementadvice/events/default.aspx

A guidance note on Environmental Stewardship for heritage properties designated under the Inheritance Tax Act 1984 (see Section 1.3.11), is available at:

http://naturalengland.etradestores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/NE161

Advice about wildlife management and licensing, (see Section 1.3.14), is available at:


Details of our complaints procedure, (see Section 1.5.5), can be found at:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/contact_us/complaints.aspx

Further information on Public Rights of Way, including the duties of landowners and occupiers of land, (see Section 1.6.3), can be found at:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/rightsofway/default.aspx

Advice on the management of hedgerows and hedgerow trees is available through the Natural England publications catalogue: http://naturalengland.etradestores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/

A wide range of information, including bird distribution maps can be found at www.natureonthemap.org.uk

The Heather and Grass Burning Code can be downloaded from:

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/burning/default.aspx

External sources of information:

A list of NDPBs and other public bodies, referred to in Section 1.2.5, can be found at www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/work/codes/ndpbs.aspx

Information on Felling licences including the booklet Tree Felling – getting permission, referred to in Section 1.3.8, is available at: www.forestry.gov.uk/felling

Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales, referred to in Section 1.6.5, can be found at: www.finds.org.uk/documents/CofP1.pdf

Information about archaeological features on your farm can be obtained from your local Historic Environment Record (HER) at: www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/CHR/

A leaflet entitled 'Farming the Historic Landscape: Entry Level Stewardship' is available at www.helm.org.uk

Full details about cross compliance can be found on the RPA website at www.rpa.gov.uk/crosscompliance

In addition, there is a dedicated cross compliance advice website at www.crosscompliance.org.uk
Appendix 3

Combinations of ELS options, including Uplands ELS options, that can occupy the same land

As a general rule, an ELS or Uplands ELS land management option cannot occupy the same area of land at the same time as another land management option.

However, there are exceptions for certain combinations of options. Each row of Table 7 below shows combinations of options that may be located in the same place at the same time. Only combinations of options shown in this table are permitted.

In ELS, no more than two land management options may occupy the same area of land at the same time. The only exceptions to this rule are:

- In Uplands ELS you may have up to three land management options on the same area.
- The Uplands ELS compulsory requirements (UX1–UX3) do not count towards this limit. Hence, within Uplands ELS you can have up to three options on the same area of land plus the relevant compulsory requirements. But, please note, buffer strip options (EE1 - EE10 and Ej9) cannot be located next to watercourses on land in UX2.
- EK5 Mixed stocking and UL18 Cattle grazing, do not count towards these limits of two options (ELS) or three options (Uplands ELS).

When co-locating options you must follow the prescriptions of all options. In the event that prescriptions of co-located options contradict each other, you must follow the more restrictive of them. For instance, EK5 (Mixed stocking) states: ‘Supplementary feeding is allowed, but move feeders as often as required to avoid poaching’. EL3 (Permanent grassland with very low inputs in the SDA) states: ‘Do not supplementary feed’. Where these are co-located, no supplementary feeding is allowed.

More than two/three options may be placed in the same land parcel, as long as they do not overlap on the ground.

Table 7 Co-location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option code</th>
<th>ELS/Uplands ELS option title</th>
<th>ELS Option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column</th>
<th>Uplands ELS Option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column</th>
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<td>EB1</td>
<td>Hedgerow management on both sides of a hedge</td>
<td>EB4, EB5, EB12, EB13</td>
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<td>EB2</td>
<td>Hedgerow management on one side of a hedge</td>
<td>EB4, EB5, EB12, EB13</td>
<td>UB4, UB5, UB12, UB13, UB14, UB15, UB16</td>
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<td>EB3</td>
<td>Enhanced hedgerow management</td>
<td>EB4, EB5, EB12, EB13</td>
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<td>EB4</td>
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<td>EB1, EB2, EB3, EB6, EB7, EB8, EB9, EB10</td>
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<td>EB5</td>
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<td>Option code</td>
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<td>Stone wall restoration</td>
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<td>Maintaining visibility of archaeological features on moorland</td>
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<td>Management of upland grassland for birds</td>
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<td>UJ12, UL18</td>
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Appendix 4

Guidance for calculating nitrogen content of fertilisers and manures

This Section may help you establish the appropriate application rates of fertilisers or manures applied under the low-input grassland and rush pasture options EK2, EK3, EK4, EL2, EL3, EL4.

Fertilisers
The content of each nutrient in a fertiliser is given as a percentage. Therefore, 100 kg of a 20:10:10 NPK compound fertiliser will contain 20 kg of nitrogen, 10 kg of phosphate and 10 kg of potash.

The amount of fertiliser product to apply per ha is calculated as follows:

Rate of fertiliser product (kg/ha) = nutrient application rate (kg/ha) x 100 per cent nutrient in fertiliser

Examples
- A 20:10:10 fertiliser is to be used to apply 50 kg/ha nitrogen, 25 kg/ha phosphate and 25 kg/ha potash. The required application rate of the fertiliser product is 250 kg/ha.
- A 36.5 per cent nitrogen fertiliser is to be used to apply 50 kg/ha nitrogen. The required application rate of the fertiliser product is 145 kg/ha.

Manures

Table 8 Typical total nitrogen content of livestock manures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manure type</th>
<th>Total nitrogen content</th>
<th>Application rate to supply 100 kg/ha total nitrogen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cattle farmyard manure</td>
<td>6.0 kg/tonne</td>
<td>16 tonnes/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pig farmyard manure</td>
<td>7.0 kg/tonne</td>
<td>14 tonnes/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy cattle slurry (6% dry matter)</td>
<td>3.0 kg/m³</td>
<td>33 m³/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef cattle slurry (6% dry matter)</td>
<td>2.3 kg/m³</td>
<td>43 m³/ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pig slurry (4% dry matter)</td>
<td>4.0 kg/m³</td>
<td>25 m³/ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These typical nitrogen contents are based on analyses of a large number of samples and are useful for general planning purposes. The nitrogen content of manures can be variable and analysis of individual samples will provide more reliable information. Dry matter content will affect the nitrogen content of slurries.


Conversion table for frequently used units of measurement
- 50 kg/ha = 40 units/acre
- 1 kg = 2 units (a ‘unit’ is 1 per cent of 1 hundredweight, or 1.12 lb)
### Table 9  Animal numbers converted into Livestock Units (LU$s$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal numbers are converted into Livestock Units as follows:</th>
<th>LUs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dairy cow</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef cow</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle over 2 years old</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle 6 months to 2 years</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland ewe and lamb</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill ewe and lamb</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ram and teg over 6 months</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewe follower and/or store lamb</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pony</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These values are for medium-sized breeds. Large breeds will have approximately 20 per cent higher LU values and small breeds will be approximately 20 per cent lower, for each category.

Other grazing ruminants, such as deer or camelids, should be allocated an LU value in proportion to their liveweight, ie 60 kg animal approximately = 0.1 LU.
Appendix 6

List of recognised hardy native breeds of sheep

Beulah Speckled Face
Black Welsh Mountain
Brecknock Hill
Boreray
Castlemilk Moorit
Cheviot
Dalesbred
Dartmoor
Derbyshire Gritstone
Exmoor Horn
Hebridean
Herdwick
Hill Radnor
Icelandic
Lonk
Manx Loaghtan
North Country Cheviot
North Ronaldsay
Rough Fell
Scottish Blackface
Shetland
Soay
South Wales Mountain
Swaaledale
Welsh Hill Speckled
Welsh Mountain
Whitefaced Woodland
Appendix 7

Glossary and list of abbreviations

**Glossary**

**Agreement land**
All land entered into a single Entry Level Stewardship agreement.

**Agri-environment schemes**
Schemes under EC Regulation 1698/2005 that offer grants for measures to conserve and enhance the countryside.

**Arable land**
Land that has been in arable production, including temporary grassland and long-term set-aside, during the 5 years prior to the start of your agreement.

**Common land**
Land where management rights are vested in a number of individuals.

** Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CroW) 2000**
Strengthens the legislation on the protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (see below) and introduces new rights of access on foot to open countryside (mountain, moor, heath, downland) and commons.

**Derogation**
Agreed temporary relaxation from the specified prescriptions in an agreement.

**Easement**
A right enjoyed by one landowner over the land of another, for example, a right of way.

**Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations**

**Environmental Information Map**
The map that Natural England will send to you, with your personalised application form, showing designations on your land such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Scheduled Monuments.

**Environmental Stewardship (ES)**

**Farm Environment Record (FER)**
A simple record of the environmental features on your land, required as part of your agreement. As a condition of your agreement, you agree to retain the features identified.

**Field Data Sheet**
Annex 2 of the ELS application form, on which you have entered your ELS non-rotational in-field options.

**Force majeure**
A breach of your agreement caused by unforeseeable circumstances or events beyond your control which, in spite of the exercise of all due care, could not have been avoided except at the cost of excessive sacrifice.

**Grassland**
For the purposes of ELS, grassland is defined as land that is used to grow grasses or other herbaceous forage naturally or through cultivation and which has not been subject to cultivation for at least 5 years.

**Haylage**
Haylage is defined as preserved grass with a dry matter content of at least 60 per cent.
Leaching
The process by which percolating water removes nutrients from the soil.

Less Favoured Area (LFA)
An area where the natural characteristics (geology, altitude, climate etc) make farming difficult. LFAs are subdivided into Severely Disadvantaged Areas and Disadvantaged Areas.

Livestock unit (LU)
A measure of grazing pressure, allowing stocking rate comparison between livestock types. Grazing livestock units are calculated according to conversion factors, which vary according to the type of animal.

Moorland Line
The Moorland Line encloses land within England that has been defined as predominantly semi-natural upland vegetation, or predominantly of rock outcrops and semi-natural vegetation, used primarily for rough grazing. The Moorland Line encloses nearly 800,000 ha (42 per cent) of Less Favoured Area land.

Non-rotational options
Management options that remain in the same place on your land for the duration of your agreement (for example, hedgerow management).

Options Map
The map on which you mark the management options you wish to enter into Entry Level Stewardship.

Overgrazing
Grazing of land which significantly reduces the growth, quality or species composition of vegetation (other than vegetation normally grazed to destruction) on that land.

Poaching
Damage to the sward caused by concentrations of livestock.

Points target
This is the number of points required for an Entry Level Stewardship application to be accepted and is based on the total area of agreement land (for example, outside of the Severely Disadvantaged Areas the points target = $30 \times$ has of agreement land).

Profit à prendre
This gives the holder the right to take natural resources from the land of another.

Rotational options
Options which can be moved around your land during the course of your agreement, for example, skylark plots, wild bird seed mix plots, conservation headlands.

Rural Land Register (RLR)
A database of land parcels and areas within England, managed by the Rural Payments Agency. For land to be eligible for ELS, it must be registered on the Rural Land Register.

Rural Payments Agency (RPA)
An executive agency of Defra, responsible for the Common Agricultural Policy payment functions, formerly delivered by Defra and the Intervention Board.

Scheduled Monument
Nationally important sites and monuments of historic interest that have been given legal protection by being placed on a list or ‘schedule’. English Heritage takes the lead in identifying sites in England that should be placed on the schedule by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.
Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA)
These are areas which are, in the opinion of the appropriate minister, inherently suitable for extensive livestock production but not for the production of crops in a quantity materially greater than that necessary to feed such livestock as are capable of being maintained on such land, and whose agricultural production is, in the opinion of the appropriate minister, severely restricted in its range by, or by a combination of soil, relief, aspect or climate, or situated in the Isles of Scilly. Severely Disadvantaged Areas form part of the Less Favoured Areas.

Single Payment Scheme (SPS)
A decoupled subsidy payment replacing the 10 major Common Agricultural Policy payment schemes, one of the major reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy, which came into effect in 2005.

Undergrazing
Where annual growth is not being fully utilised, or where scrub or coarse vegetation is becoming evident, and this is detrimental to the environmental interests of the site.

Uplands Transitional Payment (UTP)
A payment designed for farms that have Environmentally Sensitive Area or Countryside Stewardship Scheme agreements within the Severely Disadvantaged Areas. It is a Hill Farm Allowance-style payment based on the total area of your farm. The Rural Payments Agency administers the Uplands Transitional Payment.

Vendor number
A vendor is the name and correspondence address of a business that is entitled to receive grants and subsidies and each vendor is allocated a vendor number.

Watercourse
A watercourse is defined as a surface water body, whether a lake, pond, river, stream, canal, leat or ditch, which regularly contains standing or running water.

List of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BASIS</td>
<td>British Agrochemical Standards Inspection Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPH</td>
<td>County Parish Holding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSS</td>
<td>Countryside Stewardship Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defra</td>
<td>Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECS</td>
<td>Energy Crops Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EH</td>
<td>English Heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELS</td>
<td>Entry Level Stewardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERDP</td>
<td>England Rural Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>Environmental Stewardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESA</td>
<td>Environmentally Sensitive Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWGS</td>
<td>English Woodland Grant Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FER</td>
<td>Farm Environment Record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FWPS</td>
<td>Farm Woodland Premium Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FWS</td>
<td>Farm Woodland Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYM</td>
<td>Farm Yard Manure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAEC</td>
<td>Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HER</td>
<td>Historic Environment Record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HFA</td>
<td>Hill Farm Allowance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLS</td>
<td>Higher Level Stewardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Habitat Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IACS</td>
<td>Integrated Administration and Control Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>Incentive Schemes Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAF</td>
<td>Linking Environment and Farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU</td>
<td>Livestock Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDPB</td>
<td>Non-Departmental Public Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVZ</td>
<td>Nitrate Vulnerable Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OELS</td>
<td>Organic Entry Level Stewardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDPE</td>
<td>Rural Development Programme for England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLR</td>
<td>Rural Land Register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPA</td>
<td>Rural Payments Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAC</td>
<td>Special Areas of Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>Severely Disadvantaged Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMRs</td>
<td>Statutory Management Requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPA</td>
<td>Special Protection Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPS</td>
<td>Single Payment Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSSI</td>
<td>Site of Special Scientific Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFB</td>
<td>Traditional Farm Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPO</td>
<td>Tree Preservation Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTP</td>
<td>Uplands Transitional Payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGS</td>
<td>Woodland Grant Scheme</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Natural England’s promise to you

In Natural England, we do our best to provide you with the highest possible standard of service. We promise to treat you fairly, courteously and sensitively and we aim to achieve the following standards:

- We will answer calls promptly, normally within 30 seconds.
- Our staff will give their name on answering your call.
- We will only transfer your call when it is certain that the recipient is the best person to deal with your enquiry.
- We will respond to voicemail messages within 2 working days.
- Our voicemail greetings will include details of when we will be able to pick up messages. If this is longer than two working days they will also include details of an alternative contact.
- Letters and emails will be answered within 10 working days of receipt. Where we are unable to provide a final response, we will provide a progress report instead. This will explain who is dealing with your enquiry, what steps are being taken to obtain the information and when you can expect a full reply.
- Correspondence will include the name and contact details of the person dealing with the matter.
- We will respond to all requests under the Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations within the statutory deadline of 20 working days.

Feedback

We welcome and value your comments, complaints and suggestions about how we provide our service. We would like to hear from you if:

- you feel that you have received a good service from us;
- you would like to suggest ways in which we can improve our service;
- you are unhappy about the way a member of staff helped you or with the level of service you have received; and
- you feel that you have been treated unfairly, insensitively, or have been discriminated against.

In the first instance, please contact the person who has provided you with the service. If you need to confirm contact details or do not have a contact name, please telephone 0845 600 3078, or email enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

For more details visit www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/whatwedo/ourpromise.aspx

Many of the ES options will reduce the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions associated with your farming activities, for instance, by reducing the use of inorganic fertilisers and increasing carbon stores in soils. You can estimate the carbon footprint of your farm by logging on to the Country Land & Business Association’s (CLA) Carbon Accounting for Land Managers (CALM) tool at www.cla.org.uk/calm. Natural England and the CLA have been working together to build in a specific ES element to CALM enabling you to estimate the impact of your ES option choices on your farm's carbon footprint.
Front cover photograph:
Uncropped, cultivated arable margin with corn marigolds and poppies, Norfolk.
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