

Tree Health Pilots

Trees provide a huge value to the economy, society and the environment, delivering valuable economic, social and environmental benefits. This includes supporting and protecting wildlife, timber production, protection from climate change risks and carbon storage.

Scheme description

We will launch a new scheme which expands and improves on the current support available via the Countryside Stewardship Tree Health grants. Specifically, we will broaden the range of tree species, pests and disease it covers, and the land managers eligible for support. As part of the co-design process, we will be running a tree health pilot and will be working with land managers to implement 100 pilot agreements.

Eligibility

Eligibility is still under development. We hope to benefit tree, woodland and forest managers with tree health issues, and expand eligibility beyond the current offer which may include hedgerows, roadside trees and trees in parks and parklands.

Eligible participants will be invited to apply for the pilot based on confirmation by the Forestry Commission of pest and disease issues on their land. If a land manager is eligible for a Countryside Stewardship Tree Health grant, they are unlikely to be eligible for the Tree Health Pilot.

We will provide further details about eligibility when we publish scheme guidance ahead of the pilot launch.

Payments

The pilot will allow us to explore and refine future payment rates and structures. For eligible participants, there will be support for:

- felling and treatment of diseased trees in certain situations to slow the spread of tree pests and disease, protecting the wider treescape
- restocking following felling to ensure no net loss of trees. This will enable landscape recovery and improve the resilience of the future treescape to pests and disease and climate change by supporting appropriate restocking

These payments will be different to the Countryside Stewardship Tree Health grants and will not offer support for the same actions.

Timings and process

The pilot will provide the opportunity to test and refine the new package of support ahead of the full launch, to ensure expected benefits are delivered. Countryside Stewardship will continue to provide the existing woodland tree health improvement and restoration grants as we pilot new elements of the future scheme. The final grants will come into operation in 2024 when the Countryside Stewardship Woodland Capital Tree Health Restoration and Improvement grants will cease.

We will start working with potential applicants for the Tree Health pilots in 2021, coinciding with the Forestry Commission's tree health surveillance programme.