Organic Entry Level Stewardship

Environmental Stewardship Handbook

Fourth Edition – January 2013

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	Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) including Uplands ELS	Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) including Uplands OELS	Higher Level Stewardship (HLS)
Level	The simplest level in Environmental Stewardship (ES)	The organic version of ELS	A more demanding level that asks a farmer to achieve more
Eligibility	Open to all farmers	Open to farmers with organic land, land entering conversion or farms that combine conventional and organic enterprises	Negotiated with farmers in target areas or, outside of those areas, using target themes
Duration	5 years	5 years	10 years, though some options can run for a longer period
Payment	Standard payment of £30 per ha per year (£8 per ha per year on land parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line). Uplands ELS has a standard payment rate of £62 per ha per year, and £23 per ha per year on land parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line.	Standard payment of £60 per ha per year Organic conversion aid payments are £175 per ha (improved land for the first two years) and £600 per ha (top fruit orchards for the first three years). Uplands OELS has a standard payment rate of £92 per ha per year.	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.
What's new in 2013	Section 2 - Environmental objectives highlighting ELS options of greatest environmental value. Section 3 – Option directory for ELS and Uplands ELS. Changes to options: ■ Five new options added to address specific environmental needs. ■ Points value of 10 options adjusted to improve environmental benefit. ■ Detailed option prescriptions of 11 options changed to clarify eligibility and encourage uptake. ■ Titles of five options changed to spell out the environmental purpose of the options. Section 4 – How to apply and Section 5 – Terms and conditions now cover both ELS and Uplands ELS.	Section 2 – Environmental objectives highlighting OELS options of greatest environmental value. Section 3 – Option directory for OELS and Uplands OELS. Changes to options: ■ Five new options added to address specific environmental needs. ■ Points value of 10 options adjusted to improve environmental benefit. ■ Detailed option prescriptions of 11 options changed to clarify eligibility and encourage uptake. ■ Titles of five options changed to spell out the environmental purpose of the options. Section 4 – How to apply and Section 5 – Terms and conditions now cover both OELS and Uplands OELS.	Section 3 – Option directory for HLS New option HF24 – Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds

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 OELS Handbook – A Quick Guide

This quick guide will help you find the answers to questions you may have about the scheme, the application process and the rules.

1 **Section 1 – Introduction to Organic Entry Level Stewardship**
Covers the basics: what you can achieve with OELS; how long agreements last; how the application process works; what and when you will be paid; and an overview of the rules.

2 **Section 2 – Environmental objectives**
Information to help you select the best options for your farm and provide the most benefits for the environment, including for uplands farms.

3 **Section 3 – Option directory for OELS and Uplands OELS**
Contains the detailed management requirements for each OELS (and ELS) option, including options specifically for farms in the uplands, and new options for 2013. **You should make sure you have read and understood all the management requirements that apply to the OELS or ELS options you select** – when you sign your application form, you are confirming that you will comply fully with the management requirements for the duration of your agreement.

4 **Section 4 – How to apply for OELS and Uplands OELS**
Explains what you need to do before you apply, and provides a step-by-step guide to completing your application form, including for farmers applying for Uplands OELS.

5 **Section 5 – Terms and conditions**
The rules that you will need to comply with when you enter into an OELS agreement. **You should read them before you apply**.

6 **Section 6 – Appendices**
Includes a glossary of some of the main terms used in the handbook, our contact details, and a list of other useful sources of information.

Information and advice to help you with your OELS application

Before you apply: You can receive a free advice visit from a Natural England representative to help you make the most of your OELS agreement. This help is available to all farmers and land managers. Call 0300 060 1695 or visit the Farm Events and Visits page on the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk.

Completing your application form: Call **0300 060 0011** if you need help completing your form.

How long will it take? It will take up to three months to process your application from receipt of a valid application. Call **0300 060 0011** if you wish to check the progress of your application.

Scheme aftercare once your agreement is in place: you can receive a free advice visit or join a 'best practice' event to help you manage your OELS options as well as possible. If you need to amend your agreement, or have any other concerns, call **0300 060 0011**.

Which edition of the OELS Handbook should you use?
This handbook will apply to all OELS agreements starting on or after 1 January 2013. 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 it must be retained for reference.

OELS agreements starting before 1 January 2013 will continue to be governed by previous handbook editions, until they are either replaced by a new agreement or reach the end of their term, as follows:

- 1st edition handbooks: Agreements starting August 2005 - September 2008.
- 2nd edition handbooks: Agreements starting October 2008 - January 2010.
- 3rd edition handbooks: Agreements starting February 2010 - December 2012.

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Throughout this handbook, text in black is applicable to both ELS and Uplands ELS.
Text specific to OELS is highlighted green.
Text specific to Uplands ELS is highlighted purple.

Throughout this handbook, all references to 'our', 'us' or 'we' refer to 'Natural England' and all references to 'you' or 'your' refer to 'the agreement holder'.

Section 1
Introduction to Organic Entry Level Stewardship

1.1 Introduction and general overview

1.1.1 What is Organic Entry Level Stewardship?

Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) is an agri-environment scheme that provides funding to farmers and other land managers in England with certified organic land, or land under conversion to organic production, in return for delivering environmental management on their organic land.

OELS is one of three elements of Environmental Stewardship (ES). The other two elements are Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) and Higher Level Stewardship (HLS). Detailed information about ELS and HLS is provided in the separate ELS and HLS Handbooks.

Farmers and land managers can select from a range of environmental management options to create an agreement which fits with their farming practices and meets the environmental priorities for their farm. Our booklet *Look after your land with Environmental Stewardship* is available to download from the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk and provides examples of how farmers are using the scheme to benefit their farms.

There are options suited to all farm types, including a range of specific options aimed at upland farms. The Uplands OELS options offer a higher level of payment in return for environmental management of land within the Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs).

1.1.2 Benefits of OELS and Uplands OELS for farmers and land managers

OELS rewards farmers and land managers for the adoption of environmental land management practices on their land. The scheme makes two payments for each year of the agreement. It can complement your existing farm practices and help you to meet other requirements such as cross compliance.

You can make awkward corners, small fields and wet areas of your farm work better for you by entering them into OELS options. The least productive areas of a farm are often, with the correct management, the best for birds, wildlife and natural resource protection. You can protect the historic features on your farm, and help maintain the landscape character of your area.

OELS agreements can be beneficial to your wider farming practices. OELS can help you to protect vital assets such as soil and water, and provide habitats for beneficial wildlife that can help to control crop pests, through options such as the creation of beetle banks.

1.1.3 ELS and OELS aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of ELS and OELS are to:

- conserve **wildlife** including **farmland birds** (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;
- protect natural resources by improving **water** quality and reducing **soil** erosion and surface run-off;
- respond to climate change by protecting existing soil carbon levels, increasing carbon sequestration and supporting the adaptation of the natural environment to climate change.

1.1.4 Priority options and priority areas

The combination of the options you choose and the areas on your farm where you choose to locate them will have a big influence on what you deliver through your OELS agreement.

Section 2, entitled **Environmental objectives**, contains a selection of themed pages covering farmland birds, wildlife, landscape, the historic environment, resource protection and climate change. These pages explain why your farm is important for each objective and the priority areas that can be used. They also list the best options to maximise the environmental benefits and describe how you can have a positive impact by implementing these options. Not all of

the packages will be appropriate for your farm – the OELS Priority Area maps and your own knowledge of the features and wildlife in your locality will help you identify which objectives and options are most relevant in your area.

More detailed regional maps are available on the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/default.aspx.

1.1.5 What the scheme has delivered to date

The 42,500 current O/ELS agreements (of which nearly 2,400 are OELS agreements), including combined O/ELS-HLS agreements, are delivering almost 200,000 km (about 124,000 miles) of environmentally friendly hedgerow management and more than 7,500 hectares of bird seed mix and protecting more than 191,000 in-field trees. Monitoring shows that this management is achieving real benefits for wildlife.

1.1.6 Further help: free farm visits and events

Natural England can provide a free OELS farm visit from a farming and environmental specialist. Whether you are applying for OELS for the first time, renewing an existing agri-environment agreement, or looking for guidance on how to manage your existing agreement more effectively, the support provided can include:

- a discussion on the options most suited to your farm to benefit farmland birds, wildlife, water, soil, the historic environment and climate change;
- practical suggestions on option location and management, such as tips on establishing wild bird and nectar flower mixes, guidance on buffer strip weed control and how to get a good sward structure;
- information on new and updated options;
- an explanation of the financial benefits and how options can complement your existing farming practices.

Natural England also runs a programme of farm events to deal with the above topics from a local perspective. To arrange a **FREE** farm visit or to book a place on a farm event please contact our events team on **0300 060 1695** or visit the Farm Events and Visits page on the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk/.

1.2 Key information

This section answers some basic questions about the operation of the scheme. The full **Terms and Conditions** are set out in Section 5. You should read these carefully before you apply.

1.2.1 Who can apply?

OELS is open to all farmers and land managers who are freehold owners, tenants or contractual licensees. You must have management control of the land for the entire five years of your agreement. **If not, you will need to make a countersigned application with your landlord, who undertakes to carry on your agreement if your management control of the land ceases** (see Section 5.3 for details). If another farmer claims for another scheme – for example, the Rural Payment Agency's (RPA's) Single Payment Scheme (SPS) – on all or part of your land, you will need to keep a record of how you manage the land between the parties (see Section 5.4.14 for details).

1.2.2 How do you apply?

Applications for OELS can only be made by post. Full details of how to apply are given in Section 4, **How to apply for OELS and Uplands OELS**.

1.2.3 What land is eligible?

Land to be entered into the scheme must be registered on the RPA's Rural Land Register (RLR), and must be part of the farmed environment. The 'farmed environment' includes both your farmed land, all of which must be entered, and other non-farmed land, which you can choose to enter if you wish (see Section 5.4 for details). If you have a mix of organic and conventional land on your holding, you must enter the conventional land into ELS.

1.2.4 What are you agreeing to do?

In signing your application form, you are agreeing to:

- **retain your Farm Environment Record (FER) features** for the duration of the agreement;
- **choose sufficient options** so that together with your compulsory requirements (ie the FER and Uplands OELS options UOX2 and UOX3) you meet your points target for your agreement land;
- **manage the land parcels shown on your OELS or ELS options map(s)**, in accordance with your choice of management options, as set out in the OELS/Uplands OELS or ELS/Uplands ELS option descriptions, for the duration of the agreement;

- (Uplands OELS only) **carry out the Uplands OELS compulsory requirements on your SDA land** as set out in the Uplands OELS compulsory requirements descriptions; and
- **follow the scheme Terms and Conditions contained in this handbook**, including meeting cross compliance rules across all of your land, and complying with the other additional requirements listed (see Section 5 for details).

In addition, for OELS only:

- maintain registration and compliance with an approved Organic Inspection Body for the full term of your agreement; and
- complete the conversion of all parcels attracting conversion aid payments by the fifth anniversary of the start of your agreement.

1.2.5 What environmental management must you undertake and how much will you be paid?

Acceptance into OELS is determined by a simple 'points per hectares' calculation across your eligible land that sets your 'points target'. In order to join the scheme, you need to choose sufficient options to meet, or exceed, your points target. The number of points per hectare you need varies, depending on the type of land you are entering into the scheme, as shown in Table 1. You will then be paid at the rate shown in the table.

You earn points for environmental management options you agree to provide over the course of the agreement – the points value of each of the options is set out in Table 3 at the start of Section 3, **Option directory for OELS and Uplands OELS**.

In Uplands OELS, your single points target covers your SDA land plus any non-SDA land included in your application. In Uplands OELS, 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, you can use any combination of OELS/ELS and Uplands OELS/ELS options, provided you can meet the option eligibility conditions.

Subject to changes in European Union (EU) rules, these payment rates will remain the same for the five years of your agreement, even if the rates are reviewed during that time. New rates will apply only to new agreements.

For all the land you enter into OELS or ELS, you will receive the following rates of payment (£/ha/annum):

Table 1 Rates of payment for OELS/ELS and Uplands OELS/ELS

Land Parcel	ELS		OELS	
	Outside the SDA	Within the SDA (Uplands ELS)	Outside the SDA	Within the SDA (Uplands OELS)
Parcels below the Moorland Line	30	62	60	92
Parcels above the Moorland Line less than 15 ha	30	62	60	92
Parcels above the Moorland Line 15 ha or more	8	23	N/A	N/A

If you have land in both OELS and ELS, you will have separate points targets for each and you will have to choose sufficient options (including the Uplands compulsory requirements where appropriate) to meet each target.

1.2.6 Conversion aid payments

For OELS only, for land undergoing conversion to organic status, additional payments are also available:

- £175 per ha per year for two years, for improved land; and
- £600 per ha per year for three years for top fruit orchards.

The conversion aid payments are additional to the OELS scheme payments. Payments are available for top fruit orchards and improved land that are registered as 'in conversion' with an Organic Inspection Body and in the first year of conversion. Land that has previously received conversion aid or land that has previously converted to full organic production at any time since 10 August 1993 is not eligible. See Section 3 for details.

1.2.7 When will your agreement start and how long will it last?

Agreements last for five years and they can start on the first day of any month. Our target is to provide you with an agreement within three months of receipt of a valid application. Your agreement will start on the first day of the next month after the application is processed, unless you tell us on the application form that you want a later start date. For example, if the RPA's Uplands Transitional Payment (UTP) is claimed on your land, you may wish to start your Uplands OELS agreement on the following 1 January to avoid the need to pay back part of your UTP for the current calendar year. You should note that your choice of start date will affect the timing of your payments, so choose a date carefully with that in mind. Agreement start dates cannot be backdated.

1.2.8 When will you be paid?

You will receive two payments for each year of your agreement, with each payment representing half of your total annual payment for that year. These payments will be made automatically and you will not have to complete a claim form. However, if there are changes to your agreement then you must let us know, for instance, if you have amended your field boundaries.

We are required to operate a fixed annual cycle for payments:

- if your agreement starts up to and including 1 June in any calendar year, you should receive your first payment in that calendar year; or
- if your agreement has a start date of 1 July or later in the year, you will receive your first payment in the following calendar year.
- We will assume that on 15 May each year, you make a deemed claim for payments. If there are any reasons why you are no longer eligible to claim, or changes have occurred to your agreement land which we are unaware of, for instance, if you have amended your field boundaries, you must inform us immediately.

Further details, including a tool to help you work out the timings of your payments, are available at www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/developments.aspx. If you are overpaid in error, you may be asked to refund the overpayment.

1.2.9 Can an agent act on your behalf?

Yes. You can authorise an agent to submit an application and to act on your behalf on all matters relating to the maintenance of your agreement. Your payments can also be made to an agent.

You will need to complete, sign and return the agent authorisation form (NE-auth) with your application. You can obtain one from us or download one from our website at: www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/forms/default.aspx. Please note that any payment you make to an agent to help with your application will not be reimbursed by us.

An agent is anyone who is acting on your behalf, so if anyone other than you is to sign an application or claim or act on your behalf in respect of your OELS agreement, they will need to be authorised by you.

1.2.10 How will your information be stored and used?

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 to ensure it is accurate.

We will respect personal privacy, whilst 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 (see Section 5.2.6 for details).

1.2.11 Can you make changes to your agreement?

Continuity is important during your agreement if we are to achieve the environmental benefits sought. We will therefore only agree to changes that are absolutely necessary. Should the situation arise where you need to change the choice or location of your management options, for example, to include more priority options to increase the environmental benefits delivered then, subject to approval, we can amend your agreement. If you need to make a minor or temporary change to your management prescriptions, you can apply for a derogation. You must not make changes without our prior approval (see Section 5.6 for details).

Military orchid

Section 2
Environmental objectives

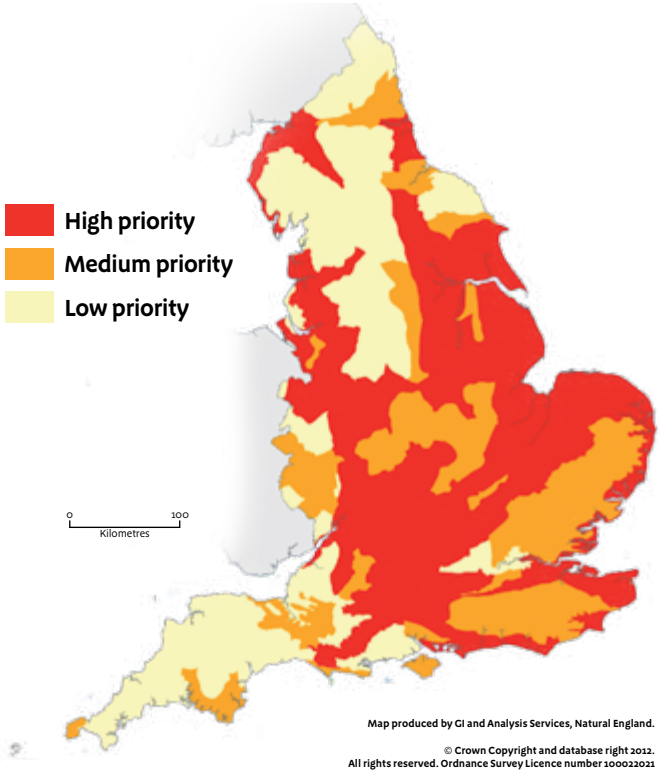
2.1 Managing arable habitats for farmland birds

Why your farm is important

Farmers across England are taking action to help turn round the fortunes of farmland birds by providing critical nesting and foraging habitats on their land. The birds on your farm are a good indicator of the overall health of biodiversity, as they sit high up the food chain. If bird populations are doing well then it indicates that the plants and insects on which they depend for food are thriving too.

Since the mid-1970s, there has been a steep decline in the country's farmland bird populations, with many species declining by over 50 per cent. Studies have shown that these declines have been caused by the loss of breeding and year-round foraging habitats, meaning that our farmland birds have fewer places to nest, raise fewer young and are less able to survive the winter.

OELS can be used to put in place simple management measures that will make a huge difference to farmland birds. Research and past experience of agri-environment schemes shows that farmland bird populations can respond positively and quickly when certain habitats are provided. These measures can work alongside existing farm practices and fit with the needs of your farming business.



Priority areas for farmland birds

This map shows the priority areas within England for farmland birds. It is intended to help you establish whether the Farmland Bird Package (explained on the next page) is suitable for your farm.

If your farm is located in a high-priority or medium-priority area, by incorporating the Farmland Bird Package, you will be taking positive steps to help farmland birds thrive on your farm.

More detailed regional maps are available on the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk/es.

What you can do for farmland birds: the Farmland Bird Package

By adopting the Farmland Bird Package, you will provide the three main things needed by farmland birds to survive and thrive: (1) overwinter seed food, (2) nesting habitat and (3) food for chicks.

The 10 most wanted farmland birds: There are 10 species of birds associated with arable farmland which have declined greatly in recent decades and will benefit the most from these measures. These are:


© Shutterstock
Grey partridge


© Natural England/Julian Dowse
Lapwing


© Natural England/P N Watts
Turtle dove


© Natural England/P N Watts
Skylark


© Natural England/Julian Dowse
Yellow wagtail

To achieve results, **for every 100 ha of arable farmland, you should aim to do at least one of the following things from each of the categories below**. The stubble options may be beneficial for both food and nesting.

In-field nesting habitat: Some birds, eg skylarks and lapwings, require in-field nesting habitat. Lapwings, in particular, will benefit greatly from fallow plots.

Choose either 20 skylark plots in winter cereals, 1 ha fallow plot or 1 ha of extended overwintered stubbles.

Code	Option description	Page
OF8/EF8	Skylark plots	79
OF13	Uncropped cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds	82
EF13	Uncropped cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds on arable land	82
EF22	Extended overwintered stubble	84

Overwinter seed food: Seed food during winter and early spring can be supplied by a wild bird seed mixture or weedy overwintered stubbles or ryegrass seed-set. Stubbles should not receive a pre-harvest desiccant or post-harvest herbicide.

Include either 2 ha of wild bird seed mixture, 5–10 ha of weedy overwintered stubble or ryegrass seed-set or a combination of the two (eg 1 ha of wild bird seed mix and 2.5 ha of stubble).

Note: OF23/EF23 can only be selected when an agreement contains either OF2/EF2 (minimum 2 ha per 100 ha) or EF22 (minimum 5 ha per 100 ha). A minimum of 1 tonne supplementary feed mixture should be used per 1 ha wild bird seed mix or 5 ha stubbles in the agreement.

Code	Option description	Page
OF2/EF2	Wild bird seed mixture	75
OF6/EF6	Overwintered stubble	77
OF23/EF23	Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds	85
OG4/EG4	Cereals for whole-crop silage followed by overwintered stubble	86
OK20/EK20	Ryegrass seed-set as winter/spring food for birds	97

Insect-rich foraging habitats: Most farmland birds feed their young on insects and other invertebrates so require insect-rich foraging habitats for successful breeding. As most are territorial during the breeding season, it is vital to maintain a network of these insect-rich habitats across the farm.

Aim for 1 ha of one or more of the options below.

Code	Option description	Page
OF4/EF4	Nectar flower mixture	76
EF9	Cereal headlands for birds	80
EF10	Unharvested cereal headlands for birds and rare arable plants	81
OF11/EF11	Uncropped cultivated margins for rare plants	81
EF15	Reduced-herbicide cereal crops followed by overwintered stubble	83
OG1/EG1	Undersown spring cereals	86
OK21/EK21	Legume- and herb-rich swards	97

Tree sparrow

Linnet

Yellowhammer

Reed bunting

Corn bunting

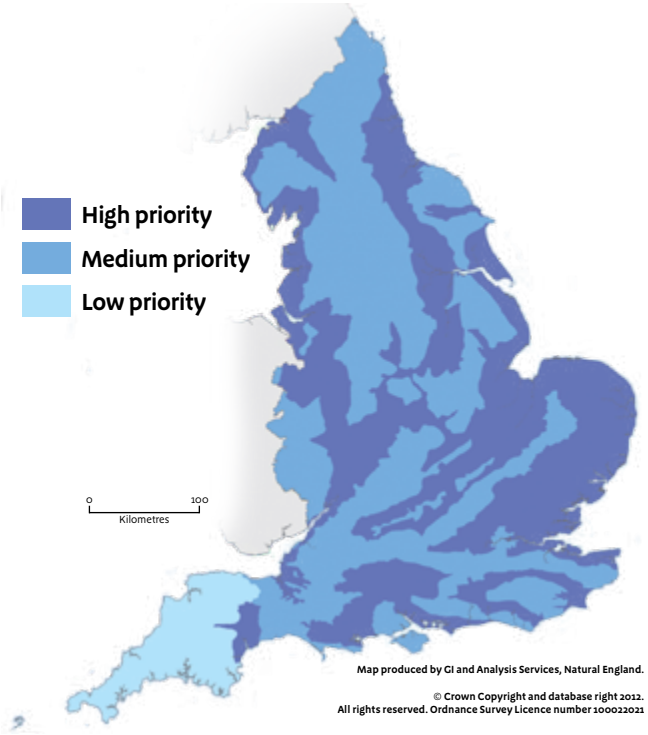
2.2 Managing habitats for water voles, dragonflies, newts and toads

Why your farm is important

Water voles were widespread before World War II, but have declined incredibly rapidly in the last 30 years. Theirs has been one of the most serious declines of any British mammal during the 20th century (declining up to 94 per cent from areas where they had been recorded in the late 1990s). The spread of American mink has contributed to this rapid decline, although habitat loss, fragmentation and drainage schemes have also had an impact.

Dragonflies and other wetland invertebrates rely on ponds, rivers and ditches to complete their life cycles. Shallow ponds and ditches are important for many rare species which thrive on the muddy edges created as the water dries out in summer. Dragonflies and other invertebrates use pond edges, where the water is warm and shallow and there is plenty of vegetation. Water edges should not be completely shaded out by trees and scrub as these hamper the growth of vegetation and cool the water.

Loss of ponds has caused declines in native frog, newt and toad species, and has resulted in once common species becoming scarcer and some species being lost from parts of England.



Priority areas for water voles, dragonflies, newts and toads

This map shows the priority areas for water voles, dragonflies, newts and toads. It is intended to help you establish whether the options below are suitable for your farm. More detailed regional maps are available on the Natural England website at: www.naturalengland.org.uk/es.

If your farm is located in a high-priority or medium-priority area, by including the options into your agreement you, will be helping water voles, dragonflies, newts and toads to thrive on your farm.

What you can do for water voles, dragonflies, newts and toads

By buffering and protecting any water on your farm, you will help protect and provide the habitat for newts, water voles and other small mammals to flourish.

Options which restore and create riparian habitats such as ponds, fens, reedbeds and ditches and buffering water courses, to prevent bankside poaching from livestock will provide food and cover for many species. Dragonflies and other invertebrates will benefit from clean, fluctuating water levels with plenty of vegetation.

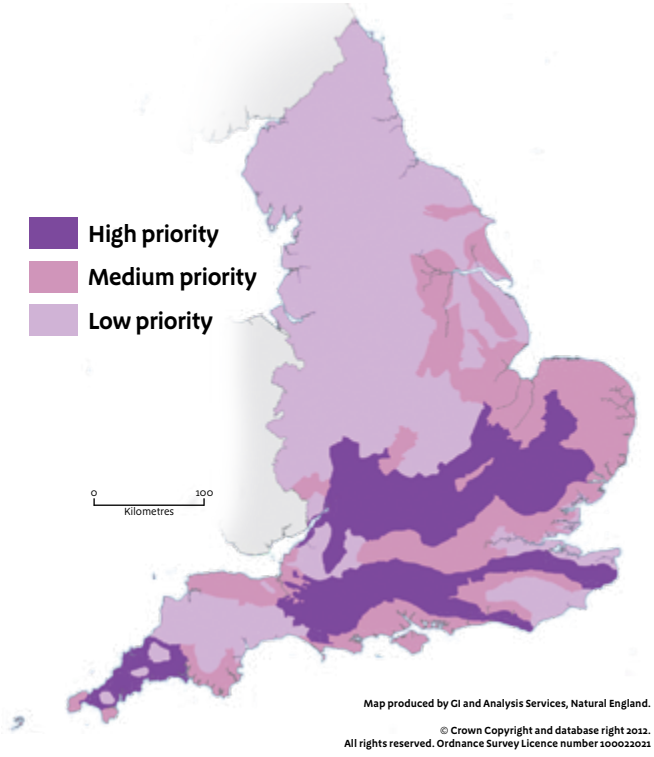
For more information on management of frogs and toads see the leaflet *Selecting Environmental Stewardship Options to Benefit Reptiles* produced by Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (www.arc-trust.org).

Code	Option description	Page
OB6/EB6	Ditch management	49
OB7/EB7	Half ditch management	50
OB10/EB10	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EB3/OB3)	51
OE7	Buffering in-field ponds in organic grassland	71
EE7	Buffering in-field ponds in improved permanent grassland	71
OE8	Buffering in-field ponds in rotational land	71
EE8	Buffering in-field ponds in arable land	71
OJ9	12 m buffer strips for watercourses on rotational land	90
EJ9	12 m buffer strips for watercourses on cultivated land	90
OJ11/EJ11	Maintenance of watercourse fencing	91

2.3 Managing habitats for arable plants

Why your farm is important

The wild plants associated with arable habitats include many species that used to be widespread across large swathes of lowland England, eg corn buttercup, corn marigold and prickly poppy, have severely declined since the mid-20th century. Improved seed-cleaning, increased use of broad-spectrum herbicides and the switch from autumn- to spring-sown cereal crops are amongst the factors which have had a major impact on arable plants. Many once-familiar species, including shepherd's-needle and spreading hedge-parsley, are now listed as priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.



Priority areas for arable plants

This map shows the priority areas for arable plants. It is intended to help you establish whether the options below are suitable for your farm. More detailed regional maps are available on the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk/es.
If your farm lies in a high-priority or medium-priority area, it may already support one or more threatened species, or your fields might support a range of species that together comprise a particularly rich assemblage of arable plants.

Alternatively, other farms in your local area may hold important populations of arable plants, meaning that your own fields could have considerable potential, with suitable management, to support some or all of these species.

What you can do for arable plants

If you have light free-draining soils then you can benefit arable plants by creating cultivated margins or leaving conservation headlands. If you choose ELS uncropped cultivated margins, evidence shows you can produce habitat for up to five times as many arable plants than a conventional cereal crop.

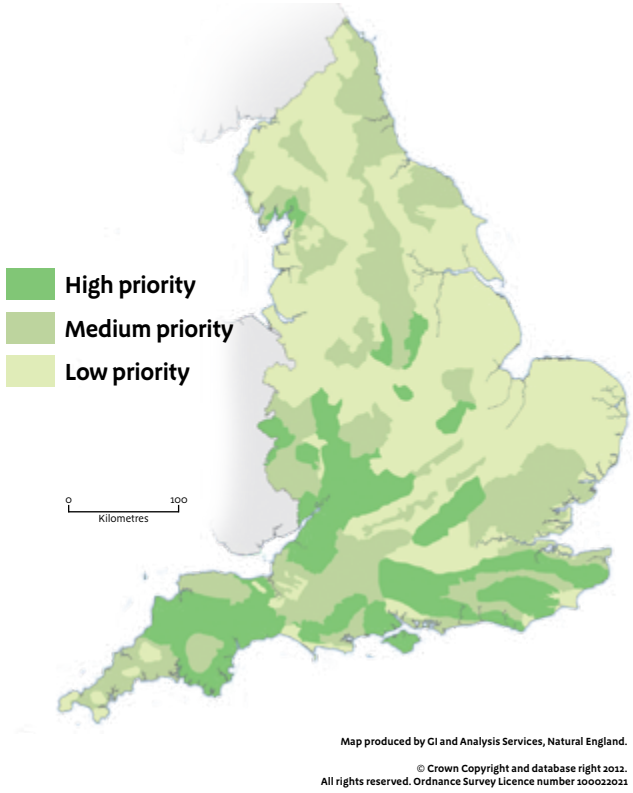
Code	Option description	Page
EF9	Cereal headlands for birds	80
EF10	Unharvested cereal headlands for birds and rare arable plants	81
OF11/EF11	Uncropped cultivated margins for rare plants	81
OF13	Uncropped cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds	82
EF13	Uncropped cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds on arable land	82
EF15	Reduced herbicide cereal crops followed by overwintered stubble	83

2.4 Managing habitats for bats and dormice

Why your farm is important

There are 17 species of bat known to breed in England, the majority are adapted for feeding across a complex and diverse landscape mosaic comprised of woodland, waterbodies, grassland and heathland. Bats spend over half of their life roosting, using a variety of structures both man-made and natural. Since the mid-20th century, a number of bat species have suffered dramatic population declines. The main causes of declining bat populations are roost destruction and disturbance, and habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation. Hedgerows, woodland edges and streams are essential for providing commuting routes to and from roosts and feeding grounds.

Dormice are most frequently found in broad-leaved woodland with either a thick coppice structure or over-mature woodland with good ground cover. They can also be found in mixed conifer plantations, scrub and hedgerows. Dormice benefit from species-rich hedgerows with a plentiful supply of fruit and berries, sometimes linked to brambles. The dormouse has suffered historical decline in England and is now absent from a number of counties where it was recorded in the late 19th century. The decline is due to habitat fragmentation, degradation, loss or inappropriate management.



Map produced by GI and Analysis Services, Natural England.

Priority areas for bats and dormice

This map shows the priority areas for bats and dormice. It is intended to help you establish whether the options below are suitable for your farm. More detailed regional maps are available on the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk/es.
If your farm is located in a high-priority or medium-priority area, then by including the options into your agreement, you will be helping bats and dormice to thrive on your farm.

What you can do for bats and dormice

Hedgerows and woodland edges are incredibly important for bats as they tend to navigate to their roosts and feeding grounds along them. Maintaining good-quality hedgerows, including trees, providing shelter, feeding perches and roosting opportunities will greatly benefit bat species. Bats will also benefit from options which increase insect populations, eg permanent pasture with low/very low inputs and the maintenance of ponds and ditches.

Brown long-eared bats

Dormouse

Dormice will benefit from options which promote range expansion, for example, the maintenance of rides, glades to allow light to reach the woodland floor and promote the growth of the ground cover and woodland connections to allow the dormice to move through their habitat; and options which promote a diversity of food sources throughout the dormouse active period.

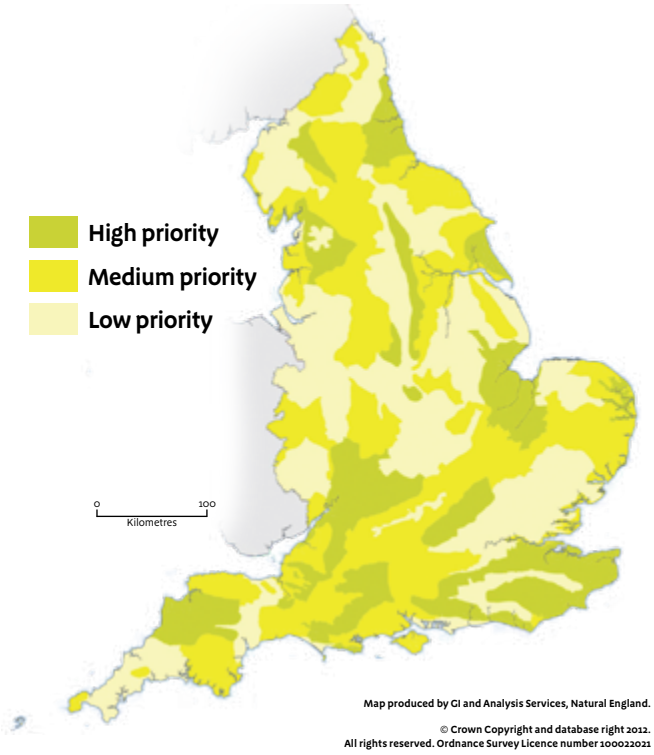
Code	Option description	Page
OB3/EB3	Hedgerow management for landscape and wildlife	48
OB10/EB10	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EB3/ OB3)	51
OB14/EB14	Hedgerow restoration	54
OC3/EC3	Maintenance of woodland fences	57
OC4/EC4	Management of woodland edges	57
OC23/EC23	Establishment of hedgerow trees by tagging	59
OC24	Hedgerow tree buffer strips on rotational land	60
EC24	Hedgerow tree buffer strips on cultivated land	60
OC25	Hedgerow tree buffer strips on organic grassland	61
EC25	Hedgerow tree buffer strips on grassland	61

Planted up gaps in hedge

2.5 Managing habitats for butterflies, bees and vulnerable grassland

Why your farm is important

The provision of pollen and nectar sources for butterflies, moths, bees, hoverflies and other insects is now more important than ever. Many species in the countryside struggle to find enough of the right sorts of pollen and nectar to sustain their populations due to loss of flower-rich habitats, especially grasslands. This threatens them (and their position in the food chain) and their availability as pollinators and pest controllers. To benefit pollinators, swards should contain a range of native flowering plants (clovers and flat-topped species, eg hogweed and cow parsley, are useful). These must provide flowers over many months and ensure there is no 'hungry gap'. Whilst seed mixes often contain grasses, the best swards for bees and butterflies tend to be grass poor. These vulnerable grasslands contain a wide range of plant species which support a variety of invertebrates. Where a range of native plants are not present, pollen and nectar flower mixture can be sown as an alternative to flowers.



Priority areas for butterflies, bees and vulnerable grassland

This map shows the priority areas for butterflies, bees and vulnerable grassland. It is intended to help you establish whether the options below are suitable for your farm. More detailed regional maps are available on the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk/es.

If your farm is located in a high-priority or medium-priority area, then by including the options into your agreement, you will be helping butterflies, bees and vulnerable grassland to thrive on your farm.

What you can do for butterflies, bees and vulnerable grassland

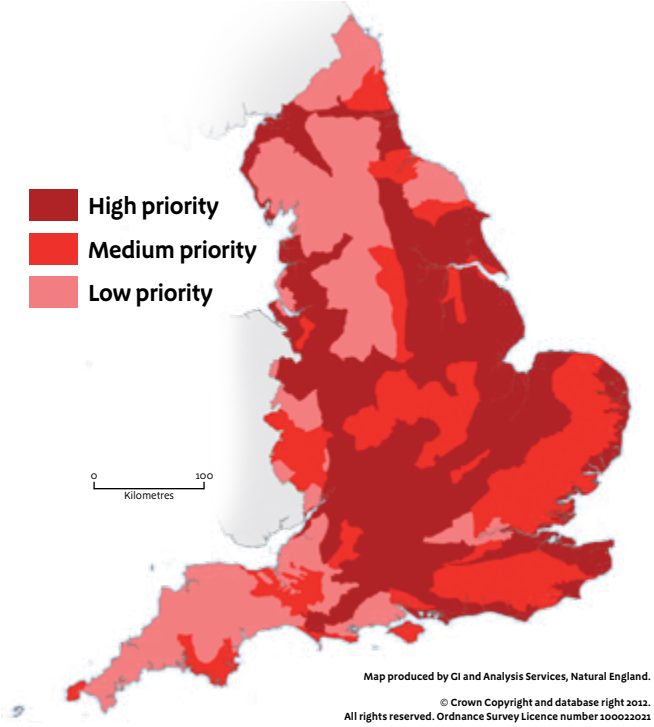
You can benefit bees, butterflies and other pollinators by establishing a network of flower-rich habitats across the farm. Scientific evidence shows that farmers who plant OELS nectar mixes instead of grass margins can attract up to 14 times as many bumblebees. Locating flower-rich mixes in sunny sheltered positions will make them more attractive to pollinators. If you have a range of swards, treat some like a hay crop and cut and remove the cuttings, but ensure the whole resource is not removed in any one season as some species will over-winter in the standing stems. Also, by not cutting all the flowers off, you will ensure part of the forage resource is available throughout the season (March–September).

Code	Option description	Page
OB3/EB3	Hedgerow management for landscape and wildlife	48
OB10/EB10	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EB3/OB3)	51
OC4/EC4	Management of woodland edges	57
OE12/EE12	Supplement to add wildflowers to field corners and buffer strips on cultivated land	73
OF1/EF1	Management of field corners	73
OF4/EF4	Nectar flower mixture	76
OK3/EK3	Permanent grassland with very low inputs	95
OK20/EK20	Ryegrass seed-set as winter/spring food for birds	97
OK21/EK21	Legume- and herb-rich swards	97

2.6 Managing habitats for brown hare

Why your farm is important

The brown hare was once very common and widespread across the country; however, the population has declined substantially in recent decades. The brown hare is now most common in the open arable landscapes of eastern Britain. Changes in farming practices, post World War II, such as larger fields, less stubble and a simpler crop rotation, have all reduced the amount of food available for hares and have contributed towards their decline.



Priority areas for brown hare

This map shows the priority areas for brown hare. It is intended to help you establish whether the options below are suitable for your farm. More detailed regional maps are available on the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk/es. If your farm is located in a high-priority or medium-priority area, by including the options into your agreement, you will be helping brown hare thrive on your farm.

What you can do for the brown hare

Hares require quiet, undisturbed cover to raise young and to hide from predators. Wild bird seed and grass mixes provide cover and a good source of food. Stubbles and game crops can also provide good cover for hares. Hares require continuous grazing throughout the year, so options which improve all year round grazing are beneficial for hare populations.

Code	Option description	Page
OC4/EC4	Management of woodland edges	57
OF2/EF2	Wild bird seed mixture	75
OF6/EF6	Overwintered stubble	77
OF7/EF7	Beetle banks	78
EF9	Cereal headlands for birds	80
EF10	Unharvested cereal headlands for birds and rare arable plants	81
OF13	Uncropped cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds	82
EF13	Uncropped cultivated areas for ground nesting birds on arable land	82
EF15	Reduced herbicide cereal crops followed by overwintered stubble	83
EF22	Extended overwintered stubble	84
OG1/EG1	Undersown spring cereals	86
OG4/EG4	Cereals for whole-crop silage followed by overwintered stubble	86
OJ13/EJ13	Winter cover crops	92

2.7 Managing habitats for uplands wildlife

Why your farm is important

Many of England's most characteristic upland species have adapted to habitats maintained by agriculture and are dependent on continued farming. The farm management practices of generations have provided what these species need to thrive. Retaining this skill and knowledge is crucial to secure the future of our most cherished upland wildlife. Drumming snipe over rush pastures in spring, hay meadows rich in wild flowers, and purple moorland at the summer's end are all still familiar sights across the uplands of England.

However, studies over the last 60 years have shown that upland wildlife has declined. Reclamation, increased grazing and other moorland management resulted in the loss of 27 per cent of heather moorland between 1947 and 1980. Increased intensity of grassland management has led to the loss of 33 per cent of unimproved meadows in some areas since the 1980s. These factors have caused once common species to become scarcer and some species to be lost from parts of upland England.

Since the introduction of agri-environment schemes in 1987, these declines have slowed dramatically thanks to concerted action by upland farmers. Ensuring continuity and increasing the coverage of agri-environment management in the uplands is therefore crucial in reversing these long-term wildlife declines. Through OELS, simple management measures can be put in place that will make a huge difference to the wildlife across your farm.

Priority areas for uplands wildlife

The wildlife focus for OELS in the uplands is to maintain the extent of semi-natural habitat and the mosaic of habitats present in moorland and the upland fringe, which support a number of species. Some of these species, including breeding waders such as curlew and redshank and butterfly species such as small pearl bordered fritillary, have not always been 'upland' specific but have persisted in these areas due to the habitats and mosaics that remain (whilst similar habitats have been fragmented or lost in the lowlands as a result of more intensive agriculture).

What you can do to benefit wildlife in the uplands

The tables opposite show the four main habitat types in the uplands, with an explanation of their importance and the management practices and OELS options which can benefit wildlife.

Red Grouse, North Yorkshire

Moorland – Many species of upland bird use areas of heather moorland, tussocky grassland and wet flushes to breed throughout the summer.

- Protect habitats through minimising the impact of supplementary feeding and not undertaking any further drainage work, and by maintaining different ages and heights of heather.
- Follow the Heather and Grass Burning Code to minimise damage where conducted.
- Allow taller areas of vegetation to develop to provide insects and seeds and potential nesting habitat for wildlife.

Code	Option description	Page
EL6	Unenclosed moorland rough grazing	105
UOL17/UL17	No supplementary feeding on moorland	117
UOL18/UL18	Cattle grazing on upland grassland and moorland	118
UOL22/UL22	Management of enclosed rough grazing for birds	120

Moorland edges – These areas are particularly important for breeding waders and black grouse (in the north), providing chick-rearing habitat through spring and summer months.

- Encourage a variety of sward heights for breeding waders and other wildlife.
- Allow taller areas of vegetation to develop to provide insects, seeds and potential nesting habitat for wildlife.
- Use stock to break up stands of bracken to provide open areas for fritillary butterflies.

Code	Option description	Page
EL6	Unenclosed moorland rough grazing	105
UOL18/UL18	Cattle grazing on upland grassland and moorland	118
UOL22/UL22	Management of enclosed rough grazing for birds	120

Hay meadows and other in-bye grassland – Hay meadows cut in late summer are often diverse in flowering plants. Tall uncut areas can provide useful habitat for butterflies and other invertebrates.

- Choose hay making to give plants a chance to flower and increase abundance of seeds for birds. Cut hay meadows in late summer, ideally follow with cattle grazing to increase diversity.
- Use no cutting strips to allow taller areas of vegetation to develop to provide insects, seeds and potential nesting habitat for wildlife.
- Reduce fertiliser inputs on meadows and pastures to increase numbers of flowers, bees and butterflies.

Code	Option description	Page
OL3/EL3	Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs	102
UOL20/UL20	Haymaking	119
UOL21/UL21	No cutting strip within meadows	119
UOL23/UL23	Management of upland grassland for birds	121

Small native woodlands and scrub – Areas of native gill woodland are important for spring flowers and woodland birds. Fritillary butterflies may often be found in open bracken glades.

- Increase numbers of woodland birds and flowers by fencing-off and excluding livestock in small native woodlands.
- Retain dead wood to enhance diversity.

Code	Option description	Page
OC3/EC3	Maintenance of woodland fences	57
OC4/EC4	Management of woodland edges	57
UOC5/UC5	Sheep fencing around small woodlands	111
UOC22/UC22	Woodland livestock exclusion	120

2.8 Managing your land to protect and enhance the landscape

Why your farm is important

Patterns of field, wood, open moor, common and parkland reflect the long and complex story of our ancestors. The landscape character gives localities their recognisable sense of place and identity, which connects people to the area linking both the natural aspects and our past and current land use. Maintaining this character is usually very important to both local communities and to others who know, visit and experience the area.

Field boundaries, woods and trees are fundamental to the character of the countryside. As agriculture has intensified and farm machinery become more powerful, traditional field boundaries, field patterns, and a more diverse pattern of land use has often become less relevant to modern farming operations. Many distinctive features have been lost or neglected. Recent surveys have shown our upland landscape is particularly threatened. Careful management of important features and vegetation to conserve these can be integrated within a modern farm system to help reduce these impacts.

Priority sites

All of England's landscapes are important and valued in some way by society. Some are nationally recognised and well known for their beauty and special qualities and are designated as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), and others are equally special to the local communities living within or close to them.

To help decide how best to contribute to the stewardship of your area, consider how your farm fits into the surrounding countryside and identify the important landscape features on your farm. You may find it helpful to look at information on landscape character. National Character Areas descriptions are available at www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/landscape/default.aspx. If your farm is within a National Park or AONB, you may find a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) on their website which will describe the local landscape character more fully. Some local authorities also have LCAs for their area.

What you can do to protect and manage the landscape

By adopting the options appropriate to the local landscape character and features of your land you will be helping to protect our landscape heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. The tables below summarise some of the most significant actions you could take and the OELS options most suitable for those farming in the **lowlands** and those farming in the **uplands**. Other options for historic environment and habitat management, especially those for grassland, meadows and moorland, will also contribute significantly to enhancing and maintaining your landscape.

Reserve enhancement scheme, stone wall maintenance

Traditional boundaries and historic stock enclosures

- Maintain and restore boundaries and stock enclosures, using traditional materials and styles, ensuring their landscape and historic significance is retained. This also ensures that the boundaries and enclosures retain their usefulness for stock management and wildlife.
- Local forms of gate, stone gateposts and stiles are important features contributing to landscape character.

Woodland and trees

- Safeguard and maintain the open and expansive nature of upland landscapes and the more intimate diverse patterns of lowland landscapes. This can be achieved through careful use of appropriate management options for trees and woodland, grassland and moorland.

2.9 Managing your land for the historic environment

Why your farm is important

Archaeological sites, traditional farm buildings and the landscape they sit in are the only evidence we have for much of human history. Historic features are fundamental to the diversity, fascination and attractiveness of the countryside. Archaeological sites, traditional buildings and other historic features are fragile and irreplaceable.

The uplands are particularly important sources of information about our past. Historic features in the uplands are often better preserved than their lowland counterparts as they have not suffered the same intensive activity, which is why the uplands contain almost one quarter of all Scheduled Monuments (SMs). Many traditional farm buildings are threatened by disuse and lack of maintenance. Building maintenance and careful vegetation and stock management can reduce these threats.

The intensification of agriculture and increased farm mechanisation has resulted in many historic sites and buildings being damaged over time. Many distinctive features have been lost or neglected. OELS provides the opportunity to maintain archaeological sites and traditional farm buildings and to conserve the character of your farm for future generations.

Identifying historic features for management

All historic environment features on your holding are important and will benefit from options to encourage their best possible long-term management.

Within your application pack, the Environmental Information Map shows some of the historic features that can be managed using OELS options. Using the reference numbers provided, you can look up full descriptions of many of these on the **Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England (SHINE) website (www.myshinedata.org.uk**). You must also record any other historic features on your holding, such as archaeological sites, ridge and furrow and traditional farm buildings, to complete your Farm Environment Record (FER).

You are particularly encouraged to manage archaeological sites at high risk of damage from arable cultivation or where scrub is taking over. With English Heritage, we have produced lists of Scheduled Monuments at high risk due to arable or scrub, which can be viewed on the Natural England website at **www.naturalengland.org.uk/es**.

Note: *The lists are based on the Heritage at Risk Register, which is updated and published annually by English Heritage, so may not reflect recent changes to land management practices on particular monuments.*

Minimum tillage soil cultivation

What you can do for the historic environment and landscape

By adopting the options appropriate to the local landscape character and the historic features on your land, you will be helping to protect our heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. The tables below summarise actions you could take and the OELS options available. The information has list options most suitable for those farming in the **lowlands** and those farming in the **uplands**.

Archaeology under cultivation

- Continued arable cultivation gradually causes increasing damage. The most beneficial management option for sites under the plough is to completely remove them from cultivation, usually by sowing a productive grass sward.
- Where removal from cultivation is not feasible, creation of a 'buffer strip' prevents further encroachment by the plough and provides protection for buried features. Wide margins provide the greatest protection as well as benefit to wildlife and easier field operations.
- Sites surviving under arable cultivation can also be protected by reducing cultivation depth.

Code	Option description	Page
OD2	Take out of cultivation archaeological features currently on rotational land	64
ED2	Take out of cultivation archaeological features currently on cultivated land	64
OD3/ED3	Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on archaeological features (minimum till)	65

Archaeological features under grass

- Maintain adequate grazing levels, which prevents scrub and vegetation growth from obscuring features. Over-grazing, poaching, inappropriately sited ring feeders, mineral licks or water troughs and rutted tracks can cause damage to features, so management requires a careful balance.
- Prevent damage by controlling activities such as feeding stock, harrowing and rolling, and the use of heavy vehicles.
- Keep archaeological features visible to help everyone to enjoy and understand them.

Code	Option description	Page
OD4/ED4	Management of scrub on archaeological features	66
OD5/ED5	Management of archaeological features on grassland	66
UOD13/UD13	Maintaining visibility of archaeological features on moorland	115

Traditional farm buildings

- Ensure that buildings are well maintained if their historic importance and economic potential is to be safeguarded for the future.
- Buildings appropriate for management under OELS are those built before 1940 using traditional materials such as brick, stone, tile, slate and timber.
- Regular effort to keep buildings watertight can reduce expensive repairs at a later date.

Code	Option description	Page
OD1/ED1	Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings	62
UOD12/UD12	Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings in remote locations	113

Barn with lichens

2.10 Managing your land for cleaner water and healthier soil

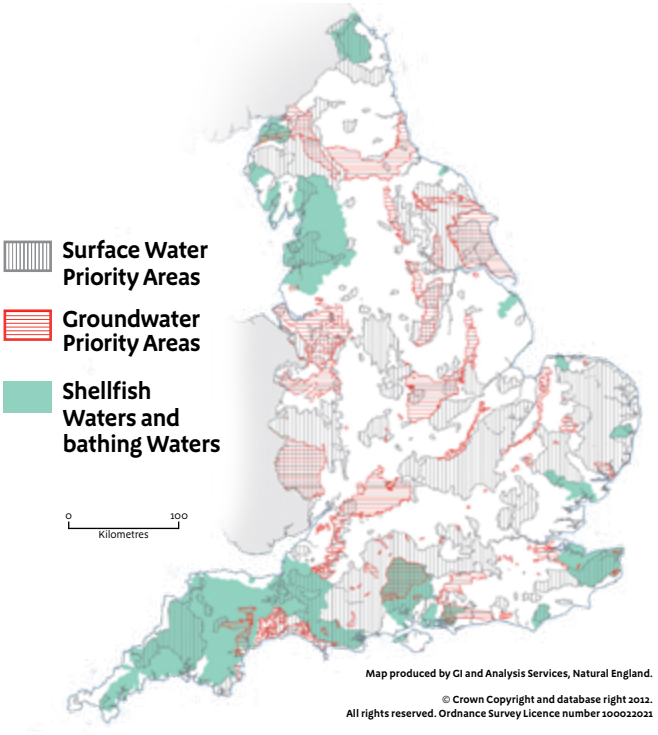
Why your farm is important

Soil is your farm's most valuable resource as the foundation for production. The most productive components of your soil lie in the top three to six inches of the profile – the layer most vulnerable to erosion. Erosion and run-off can result in valuable nutrients and environmentally damaging sediments, pesticides and disease organisms reaching water.

Water flowing over/through your farm can be almost as significant as the food you produce:

- Clean water is valuable for irrigation of your crops and drinking water for you and your livestock. Private water supplies can be particularly at risk from farming practices.
- Agricultural pollution can cause harm to aquatic life including fish, water plants and invertebrates.
- Clean water and good-quality wildlife habitats attract people for outdoor activities such as fishing, boating and walking which are important for people and the rural economy.
- Rural industries rely on clean water to ensure quality products and adherence to high standards.
- Localised flooding can cause damage to roads, houses and farmland.

Good agronomic practices are essential, but sometimes more is needed to avoid soil erosion and run-off which transport sediment and other pollutants into water.



Priority areas for soil and water protection

This Environment Agency map shows areas where the quality of water in watercourses, open water and coastal areas is most affected by pollution from agriculture. It is intended to help you establish whether the soil and water options (explained on the following pages) are a priority for your farm. Most of this priority land is covered by Catchment Sensitive Farming through which you can get free detailed advice and other grants to help you manage your farm to protect water quality. For more information see www.naturalengland.org.uk/csf.

If your farm is located in a priority area, then it is important to include appropriate options in your agreement to address soil erosion and run-off risks to help support cleaner water and healthier soil on and around your farm.

Note: *This map is correct at the time of print; however, the Environment Agency regularly monitors water quality, which will result in changes to this map. More detailed regional maps (which are kept up to date with the latest Environment Agency data) are available on the Natural England website at* www.naturalengland.org.uk/es.

What you can do to ensure cleaner water and healthier soil

Soil type, landscape and weather cannot be changed. However, land use and management can be adjusted and can make a big impact on reducing the amount of soil erosion and run-off from your farm. Your Cross Compliance Soil Protection Review is a good starting-point for identifying potential problems. Measures you adopt as a result of this may go some way to preventing erosion and run-off, but you may also need to consider other options. You should always try to **tackle the source** of any problems. Where this is not possible you should aim to **slow the pathway**, and finally consider how to **protect the water body**.

Actions and options in the lowlands

The tables below summarise actions you could take and the OELS options available. The information has been split into options most suitable for those farming in the **lowlands** and those farming in the **uplands**.

Tackle the source of soil erosion and run-off

- Manage maize crops to reduce soil erosion by reducing the likelihood of compaction and establishing a winter cover crop to protect soils that would otherwise be left bare.
- Sow a winter cover crop to capture excess nitrogen, improve soil structure and reduce run-off. Cover crops can reduce nitrate leaching by 50 per cent, enabling you to reduce fertiliser application, increase organic matter and potentially save money.

Code	Option description	Page
OG1/EG1	Undersown spring cereals	86
OJ2/EJ2	Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion	88
EJ10	Enhanced management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion and run-off	91
OJ13/EJ13	Winter cover crops	92

Slow the pathways of soil erosion and run-off

- Grass field corners to slow down overland flow of water or where run-off collects and makes it difficult to farm.
- Grass natural drainage pathways (eg valley bottoms) to reduce the channelling of run-off water that can cause soil erosion and produce rills or gullies.

Code	Option description	Page
OB14/EB14	Hedgerow restoration	54
OF1/EF1	Management of field corners	73
OF7/EF7	Beetle banks	78
OJ5/EJ5	In-field grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off	89
OK1/EK1	Take field corners out of management	93
OK2/EK2	Permanent grass with low inputs	94
OK3/EK3	Permanent grass with very low inputs	95
OK4/EK4	Management of rush pastures	96
OK21/EK21	Legume- and herb-rich swards	97

Protect the water body

- Fence watercourses to prevent livestock from contaminating and eroding river banks.
- Create buffer strips to slow, filter and trap pollutants before they enter ditches/watercourses.

Code	Option description	Page
OE9	6 m buffer strips on rotational land next to a watercourse	70
EE9	6 m buffer strips on cultivated land next to a watercourse	70
OE10	6 m buffer strips on organic grassland next to a watercourse	97
EE10	6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland next to a watercourse	70
OJ9	12 m buffer strips for watercourses on rotational land	90
EJ9	12 m buffer strips for watercourses on cultivated land	90
OJ11/EJ11	Maintenance of watercourse fencing	91

Actions and options in the uplands

Peat soils in the uplands, besides supporting agriculture, are valuable stores of water and carbon but they are particularly susceptible to erosion. This can lead to greenhouse gas emissions and water colouration. The latter is a problem that needs costly treatment to make the water suitable for public consumption.

Tackle the source of soil erosion and run-off

- Place supplementary feeding away from vulnerable parts of moorland and rough grazing, such as steep slopes and areas near to watercourses, to avoid problems from soil erosion.
- Regularly move supplementary feeding sites to control poaching and compaction and to help reduce soil erosion.
- Fence livestock out of woodland on steep valley sides to allow the woodland to flourish. This helps to stabilise the soil and prevents erosion.

Code	Option description	Page
OL5/EL5	Enclosed rough grazing	97
EL6	Unenclosed moorland rough grazing	105
UOC22/UC22	Woodland livestock exclusion	112
UOL17/UL17	No supplementary feeding on moorland	117
UOL22/UL22	Management of enclosed rough grazing for birds	120
UOL23/UL23	Management of upland grassland for birds	121

Slow the pathways of soil erosion and run-off

- Field boundaries can be very effective in slowing down overland flow of water. Placing a buffer strip, a strip of uncut grass or taller vegetation, against the boundary will enhance its effect.
- Ensure there is a good continuous grass cover on natural drainage pathways, eg valley bottoms, to reduce the channelling of run-off water that can produce rills and gullies.

Code	Option description	Page
OB14/EB14	Hedgerow restoration	54
OE6	6 m buffer strips on organic grassland	70
EE6	6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland	70
OF1/EF1	Management of field corners	73
OJ5/EJ5	In-field grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off	89
OL1/EL1	Take field corners out of management in SDAs	100

Protect the water body

- Fence watercourses to prevent livestock from contaminating and eroding river banks.
- Create buffer strips to slow, filter and trap pollutants before they enter ditches/watercourses.
- Manage waterside land with very low inputs and remove stock in winter to reduce the amount of nutrients and sediment likely to get into watercourses.

Code	Option description	Page
OE9	6 m buffer strips on rotational land next to a watercourse	70
EE9	6 m buffer strips on cultivated land next to a watercourse	70
OE10	6 m buffer strips on organic grassland next to a watercourse	70
EE10	6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland next to a watercourse	70
OJ11/EJ11	Maintenance of watercourse fencing	91
OL3/EL3	Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs	102
OL4/EL4	Management of rush pastures in SDAs	103
UOJ3/UJ3	Post and wire fencing along watercourses	116
UOJ12/UJ12	Winter livestock removal next to streams, rivers and lakes	117

2.11 Managing your land to focus on climate change

Why your farm is important

The climate is already changing: according to the Meteorological Office, temperatures in central England have increased by 1°C since the 1970s. The latest UK Climate Projections are for warmer, drier summers, wetter winters and more extreme weather events in the future. These changes are already affecting farming practices, for example, a greater risk of extreme events, such as drought and prolonged rainfall, increases the need to protect soils and water from erosion.

Mitigation: Taking action to reduce the scale of climate change, by reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions and protecting carbon stored in soils and vegetation.

Adaptation: To enable the natural environment to adapt to climate change there must be space for wildlife: a variety of habitats will enable different species to find suitable conditions. Farmers are in an important position to help provide those conditions.

How OELS can help you prepare for climate change

OELS can promote adaptation to climate change by:

- supporting farmers in adapting their land management practices to changing conditions, for example, by using the resource protection options to counteract the increasing risk of soil erosion from heavier rainfall events;
- providing the space and conditions in which the natural environment can adapt, for example, by buffering watercourses.

OELS can help you to mitigate climate change in two ways:

- some options help to reduce emissions without impacting on agricultural production;
- protecting the carbon currently stored in soils and vegetation, and helping to sequester more, through improved soil management, habitat restoration and increasing tree cover.

Investigate and reduce your emissions

Use the CALM-ES Calculator (Carbon Accounting for Land Managers – Environmental Stewardship) to estimate the emissions from your farm and consider how to reduce them. CALM-ES is an entirely voluntary tool that does not earn you OELS points, but will help you make the right choices in tackling climate change. So far, more than 7,000 farmers have chosen it to assess their Greenhouse Gas emissions (see www.calm.cla.org.uk).

Within OELS, options such as winter cover crops can help to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions without removing land from production. Our Technical Information Note (TIN107) *ES and climate change mitigation*, which you can download from the Natural England website, details in Appendix 2, contains further information on how you can use ES options to help mitigate climate change.

Protect soil and water

Tackling soil erosion and increasing soil organic matter levels will protect soil and improve water quality. It will also protect soil carbon. Soils that are protected in this way will be more resilient to climate change. The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology estimates that over 95 percent of the UK land carbon stock is located in soils.

Within OELS, resource protection options and low input management on permanent grassland will be especially valuable.

Increase tree cover

During their growth phase, trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Mature trees store the carbon and provide additional shade and shelter for livestock in the anticipated warmer, drier summers.

Within OELS, options to protect trees, hedgerows and establish new hedgerow trees will make a contribution.

Protect wildlife
Buffering hedges, ponds and woodlands, creating habitat patches in field corners, all help to provide the space and variety of conditions that wildlife will need if it is to adapt to climate change.

See the Farm Wildlife pages 14 to 23 for further information.

Section 3
Option directory for OELS and Uplands OELS

All new text, including new options and changes to existing options, is highlighted in blue.

The text of each prescription has been colour-coded as follows:

- Black text – these instructions must be followed irrespective of whether the land is eligible for Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) or Entry Level Stewardship (ELS).
- Green highlighted text – this refers to OELS options and prescriptions that must be followed on your OELS-eligible land only. OELS option codes are prefixed with an 'O' and Uplands OELS options start with 'UO'.
- Orange highlighted text – this refers to ELS options and prescriptions that must be followed on your ELS-eligible land only. ELS option codes are prefixed with an 'E' and Uplands ELS options start with a 'U'.

Please note: if you experience any difficulty distinguishing between the various colours, please contact your Natural England regional office for a black-and-white copy of the OELS (including Uplands OELS) and ELS (including Uplands ELS) requirements.

3.1 Introduction to compulsory requirements and options

To join OELS you must make a commitment to carry out certain environmental management options, on both your OELS-eligible land and where appropriate your ELS-eligible land, which you can choose from a wide-ranging menu. Each option is worth a certain number of points per unit of area (eg buffer strip options), length (eg hedge management options) or number (eg in-field tree options). If you agree to deliver enough OELS points on your OELS-eligible land and ELS points on your ELS-eligible land to meet (or exceed) your separate OELS and ELS points target, you will be guaranteed entry into the scheme.

Table 3 below is a list of all the OELS, ELS, Uplands OELS and Uplands ELS compulsory requirements and management options with their corresponding points allocations. This table includes icons which indicate which objective each option is a priority for (see below). Details about each requirement and option can be found in Sections 3.3 to 3.5 after the summary table.

Table 3 shows which options are a priority for the different OELS objectives (see Section 2 for more details) using a series of icons. The icons represent the objectives as follows:

Table 2 Priority, objectives and icons

	Climate change adaptation		Birds
	Climate change mitigation		Biodiversity (wildlife and upland birds)
	Historic environment		Water quality
	Landscape		Soil quality

Some options can only be applied on or across a limited area of land. This is known as an Area Constraint. If you fail to keep to the stated limits, you are liable to be penalised if you are inspected. The options that have Area Constraints are identified in Section 3.4, and you should read and understand all of the detailed management requirements for each option you select.

The Uplands OELS options are only available within the Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA) as part of an Uplands OELS application. You may also use OELS or ELS options within the SDA where the relevant eligibility conditions are met. You must have either UOX2, UX2, UOX3 or UX3 on each land parcel within the SDA.

There are several new options in 2013. They have been added as part of the programme, *Making Environmental Stewardship More Effective*. They are highlighted in the table. Some of the existing options have also been amended as part of the programme.

Table 3 Summary table of OELS, ELS, Uplands OELS and Uplands ELS compulsory requirements, options and points

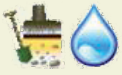
Code	Option	Unit	Points	Priority option for...	Page
Conversion aid payments					
	Top fruit orchard	ha	600		42
	Improved land category	ha	175		42
Compulsory requirements for OELS					
OU1	Organic management	ha	30		42
OA1/ EA1	Farm Environment Record ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	1		43
Compulsory requirements for SDA land in Uplands OELS					
UOX2 /UX2	Upland grassland and arable requirements	ha	11		43
UOX3 /UX3	Moorland requirements	ha	15		44
Options for OELS					
B Options for boundary features					
OB1 /EB1	Hedgerow management for landscape (on both sides of a hedge) ***UPDATED in 2013***	100 m	16		47
OB2 /EB2	Hedgerow management for landscape (on one side of a hedge) ***UPDATED in 2013***	100 m	8		47
OB3 /EB3	Hedgerow management for landscape and wildlife ***UPDATED in 2013***	100 m	42		48
OB4 /EB4	Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides	100 m	16		49
OB5 /EB5	Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side	100 m	8		49
OB6 /EB6	Ditch management	100 m	24		49
OB7 /EB7	Half ditch management	100 m	8		50
OB8 /EB8	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating OB1/ EB1 Hedgerow management for landscape [on both sides of a hedge]) ***UPDATED in 2013***	100 m	38		51
OB9 /EB9	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating OB2/ EB2 Hedgerow management for landscape [on one side of a hedge])	100 m	26		51
OB10 /EB10	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating OB3/ EB3 Hedgerow management for landscape and wildlife) ***UPDATED in 2013***	100 m	56		51

Code	Option	Unit	Points	Priority option for...	Page
OB11 /EB11	Stone wall protection and maintenance ***UPDATED in 2013***	100 m	15		52
OB12 /EB12	Earth bank management on both sides ***UPDATED in 2013***	100 m	14		53
OB13 /EB13	Earth bank management on one side ***UPDATED in 2013***	100 m	7		53
OB14 /EB14	Hedgerow restoration ***NEW in 2013*** *Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission*	m	10		54
C Options for trees and woodland					
OC1	Protection of in-field trees on rotational land ***UPDATED in 2013***	tree	16		56
EC1	Protection of in-field trees on arable land ***UPDATED in 2013***	tree	16		56
OC2	Protection of in-field trees on organic grassland ***UPDATED in 2013***	tree	11		56
EC2	Protection of in-field trees on grassland ***UPDATED in 2013***	tree	11		56
OC3 /EC3	Maintenance of woodland fences	100 m	4		57
OC4 /EC4	Management of woodland edges ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	380		57
OC23 /EC23	Establishment of hedgerow trees by tagging ***UPDATED in 2013***	tree	1		59
OC24	Hedgerow tree buffer strips on rotational land	ha	500		60
EC24	Hedgerow tree buffer strips on cultivated land	ha	400		60
OC25	Hedgerow tree buffer strips on organic grassland	ha	500		61
EC25	Hedgerow tree buffer strips on grassland	ha	400		61
D Options for historic and landscape features					
OD1 /ED1	Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings ***UPDATED in 2013***	m^2	2		62

Code	Option	Unit	Points	Priority option for...	Page
OD2	Take out of cultivation archaeological features currently on rotational land	ha	600		64
ED2	Take out of cultivation archaeological features currently on cultivated land	ha	460		64
OD3 /ED3	Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on archaeological features (minimum till)	ha	100/60		65
OD4 /ED4	Management of scrub on archaeological features	ha	120		66
OD5 /ED5	Management of archaeological features on grassland	ha	16		66
E Options for buffer strips					
OE1	2 m buffer strips on rotational land ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	340		69
EE1	2 m buffer strips on cultivated land ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	255		69
OE2	4 m buffer strips on rotational land ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	425		69
EE2	4 m buffer strips on cultivated land ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	340		69
OE3	6 m buffer strips on rotational land ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	425		70
EE3	6 m buffer strips on cultivated land ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	340		70
OE4	2 m buffer strips on organic grassland ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	340		70
EE4	2 m buffer strips on intensive grassland ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	255		70
OE5	4 m buffer strips on organic grassland ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	425		70
EE5	4 m buffer strips on intensive grassland ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	340		70
OE6	6 m buffer strips on organic grassland ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	425		70

Code	Option	Unit	Points	Priority option for...	Page
EE6	6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	340		70
OE7	Buffering in-field ponds in organic grassland	ha	500		71
EE7	Buffering in-field ponds in improved permanent grassland	ha	400		71
OE8	Buffering in-field ponds in rotational land	ha	500		71
EE8	Buffering in-field ponds in arable land	ha	400		71
OE9	6 m buffer strips on rotational land next to a watercourse ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	500		70
EE9	6 m buffer strips on cultivated land next to a watercourse ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	400		70
OE10	6 m buffer strips on organic grassland next to a watercourse ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	500		70
EE10	6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland next to a watercourse ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	400		70
OE12 /EE12	Supplement to add wildflowers to field corners and buffer strips on cultivated land ***NEW in 2013*** *Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission*	ha	63		73
F Options for arable and rotational land					
OF1 /EF1	Management of field corners ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	500/ 400		73
OF2 /EF2	Wild bird seed mixture ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	550/ 450		75
OF4 /EF4	Nectar flower mixture ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	550/ 450		76
OF6 /EF6	Overwintered stubble ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	150/ 120		77
OF7 /EF7	Beetle banks	ha	750/ 580		78
OF8 /EF8	Skylark plots	plot	5		79

Code	Option	Unit	Points	Priority option for...	Page
EF9	Cereal headlands for birds ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	100		80
EF10	Unharvested cereal headlands for birds and rare arable plants ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	330		81
OF11 /EF11	Uncropped cultivated margins for rare plants	ha	460/ 400		81
OF13	Uncropped cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds	ha	360		82
EF13	Uncropped cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds on arable land	ha	360		82
EF15	Reduced herbicide cereal crops followed by overwintered stubble ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	195		83
EF22	Extended overwintered stubble	ha	410		84
OF23 /EF23	Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds ***NEW in 2013*** *Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission*	tonne	612/ 630		85
G Options to encourage a range of crop types					
OG1 /EG1	Undersown spring cereals	ha	150/ 200		86
OG4 /EG4	Cereals for whole-crop silage followed by overwintered stubble ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	250/ 230		86
J Options to protect soil and water					
OJ2 /EJ2	Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion	ha	18		88
OJ5 /EJ5	In-field grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	454		89
OJ9	12 m buffer strips for watercourses on rotational land ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	500		90
EJ9	12 m buffer strips for watercourses on cultivated land ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	400		90
EJ10	Enhanced management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion and run-off	ha	94		91

Code	Option	Unit	Points	Priority option for...	Page
Options for Uplands OELS					
UOB Options for boundary features in the uplands					
UOB4 /UB4	Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line	100 m	24		106
UOB5 /UB5	Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line	100 m	12		106
UOB11 /UB11	Stone wall protection and maintenance on or above the Moorland Line ***UPDATED in 2013***	100 m	32		106
UOB12 /UB12	Earth bank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line ***UPDATED in 2013***	100 m	18		107
UOB13 /UB13	Earth bank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line	100 m	9		107
UOB15 /UB15	Stone-faced hedgebank restoration	m	55		107
UOB16 /UB16	Earth bank restoration	m	12.5		109
UOB17 /UB17	Stone wall restoration	m	30		110
UOC Options for trees and woodlands in the uplands					
UOC5 /UC5	Sheep fencing around small woodlands	100 m	50		111
UOC22 /UC22	Woodland livestock exclusion ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	75		112
UOD Options for historic and landscape features in the uplands					
UOD12 /UD12	Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings in remote locations ***UPDATED in 2013***	m^2	4		113
UOD13 /UD13	Maintaining visibility of archaeological features on moorland ***UPDATED in 2013***	feature	53		115
UOJ Options to protect soils and water in the uplands					
UOJ3 /UJ3	Post and wire fencing along watercourses ***UPDATED in 2013***	100 m	50		116
UOJ12 /UJ12	Winter livestock removal next to streams, rivers and lakes ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	35		117

Code	Option	Unit	Points	Priority option for...	Page
UOL Options for upland grassland and moorland					
UOL17 /UL17	No supplementary feeding on moorland ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	4		117
UOL18 /UL18	Cattle grazing on upland grassland and moorland ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	30		118
UOL20 /UL20	Haymaking ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	60		119
UOL21 /UL21	No cutting strip within meadows ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	250		119
UOL22 /UL22	Management of enclosed rough grazing for birds ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	35		120
UOL23 /UL23	Management of upland grassland for birds ***UPDATED in 2013***	ha	37		121

3.2 Conversion aid payments

These payments are made for the conversion of conventional land to organic production. They are additional to the payments you will receive for meeting your points target. To be eligible for these payments, the land must be registered as 'in conversion' with an Organic Inspection Body. The land must be in its first year of conversion; land in its second year of conversion when the application is submitted is not eligible. Land that has previously received conversion aid is also ineligible as is land that has previously converted to full organic production at any time since 10 August 1993. It is possible to combine conversion payments with other OELS options provided that the requirements for conversion and the option prescriptions can be met.

Top Fruit Orchard £600/ha per year for 3 years

This payment is for the conversion of top fruit orchards planted with pears, plums, cherries and apples. Eligible orchards must be fully stocked at the appropriate spacing for the species and variety of fruit tree. Orchards used for the production of alcoholic drinks are not eligible. There is no minimum or maximum size of block.

Improved Land Category £175/ha per year for 2 years

To be eligible for this payment, land must have been ploughed or have received artificial fertiliser in the 20 years ending on the date of application to OELS. Land that is planted with mature trees, shrubs, woodland or coppice is not eligible unless it is used for grazing or keeping livestock. Top fruit orchards are not eligible for this option.

3.3 Compulsory requirements for OELS and upland management

OU1 Organic management 30 points per ha

This option must be located on all of your OELS and Uplands OELS-eligible land; it cannot be located on ELS and Uplands ELS-eligible land. The option must be applied to whole parcels of land.

Managing the land according to organic standards provides biodiversity benefits – both within fields and around field margins. You must register with an approved Organic Inspection Body and adhere to the standards of organic management. These include:

- Do not apply synthetic nitrogen fertilisers, pesticides or any herbicides.
- Use diverse crop rotations (this will contribute to soil fertility and biodiversity on both a macro-scale and a micro-scale).
- Limit applications of nitrogen sourced from animal manures to an average of 170 kg per ha per year (not exceeding 250 kg/ha on any one field parcel).
- Only use substances that are permitted by European Union (EU) Regulation 834/2007, implementing Regulation 889/2008 and Defra's Compendium of Organic Standards, as interpreted by the Organic Inspection Body you register with.
- Undertake organic management on all of the land for which you claim OELS points.
- Maintain continuous registration of the land (as fully organic or in conversion) with an Organic Inspection Body licensed by Defra.

UPDATED in 2013

OA1/EA1 Farm Environment Record 1 point 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 4.3.3, Step 5, 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.

Compulsory requirements for SDA land in Uplands OELS

The management requirements UOX2, UX2, UOX3 and UX3 are compulsory. Depending on the category of land, either UOX2, UX2, UOX3 or UX3 must be located on each SDA land parcel.

Fenced and ungrazed woodland in the SDA is not eligible for UOX2, UX2, UOX3 or UX3.

UOX2/UX2 Upland grassland and arable requirements 11 points per ha

This requirement must be located on all SDA parcels below the Moorland Line. It can only be used on whole-fields. Please note that OELS buffer strip options OE1–10 and OJ9 cannot be located next to watercourses on land in UX2 or UOX2.

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 within 6 m of the top of a bank of a watercourse. Selective mechanical control of weeds is permitted. 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 (NVZs), 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.
- 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, 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, see Appendix 2 for details.
- 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, hedgebanks, ruins or buildings. Where it is impractical to retain stone gateposts, wooden posts should be installed.

- Any maintenance, restoration and repair of hedgebanks 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 two 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 m^2), 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 (GAEC 11).

Scrub is defined, for the purpose of this requirement, as areas greater than 100 m^2 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 manufacturer's instructions.

Where scrub covers archaeological features, options OD4 and 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 crushing. In some circumstances, bracken areas provide valuable wildlife habitats. However, the spread of bracken can reduce biodiversity, damage archaeological features and change the character of the landscape.
- 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, rolling and/or the application of an approved herbicide in accordance with manufacturer's 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).

UOX3/UX3 Moorland requirements — 15 points per ha

This requirement must be located on all SDA parcels above the Moorland Line. It can only be used on whole-fields.

- Avoid overgrazing and undergrazing and, in any case, maintain a minimum stocking rate of 0.05 livestock units (LUs) 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 LU conversion factors shown at Appendix 4. The list of hardy native breeds of sheep is shown at Appendix 5.

  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 LUs 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 Appendix 6) 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 Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It may also be restricted on common land by the landowner or by custom as declared by a Commoners 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 office or download it from the Natural England website, details in Appendix 2.

- Do not apply fertilisers or manures.

- Do not plough, cultivate, re-seed or harrow.

- 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 two 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 m^2), at least half of which are native species.

3.4 Detailed management prescriptions

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 (a woody plant where the distance between the ground and the base of the leafy layer is less than 2 m) which is **over 20 m long and less than 5 m wide between major woody stems at the base**. Features which are tall trees over most of their length with no shrub layer are not eligible for these options.

In addition, eligible hedgerows must:

- be under your management control. For management options that apply to both sides of the hedge, you must have management control of both sides of the hedge and of the land adjacent to the hedge. If you do not have management control of both sides of the hedge and the land adjacent, you must use the one-sided management options;
- be in management by regular trimming or on a traditional hedge-laying or coppicing cycle; and
- be predominantly composed of native shrubs (at least 80 per cent).

Where the hedgerow includes gaps or gates, these may be included in the length entered into an option, providing they comprise less than 10 per cent of the total length of the particular hedge. Gaps above this 10 per cent threshold should be deducted from the length included **unless you intend to plant up the gaps in the first two years of your agreement to achieve a hedge with no more than 10 per cent gaps**. 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 1** below).

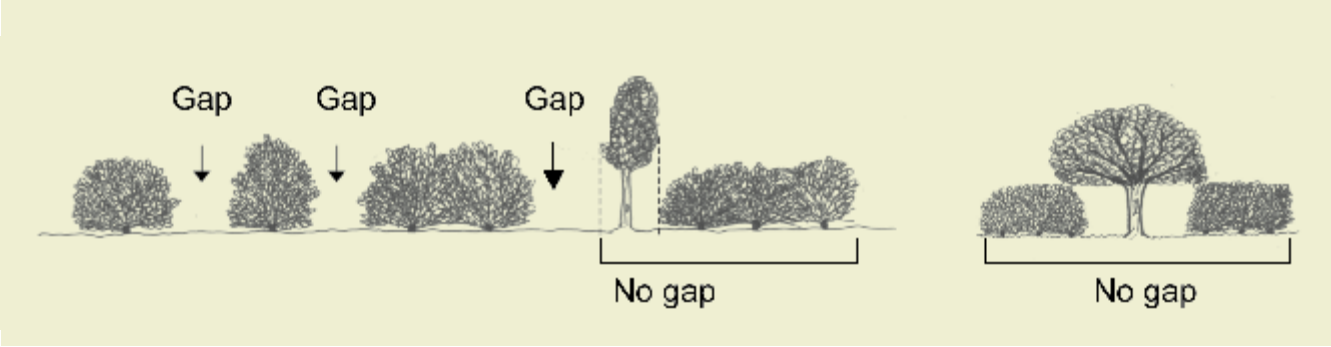


Figure 1 – Defining gaps in a hedgerow

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. The minimum height requirement does not apply to sections of hedge which are laid, coppiced or gapped up during the term of the agreement; however, all other prescriptions should be followed.

Although maximum trimming frequencies are stated (once every two years, or once in every three 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. 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.

Road and trackside hedgerows that require annual or more frequent trimming for public safety are not eligible for options OB1/EB1 (two-sided management) **or** OB3/EB3 (hedgerow management for landscape and wildlife). However, the non-road side of the hedge may be entered into option OB2/EB2 (one-sided management).

Where a hedge is directly adjacent to a woodland edge, only OB2/EB2 (one-sided management) can be included.

Where a ditch runs alongside the hedge and you wish to manage both features, use options OB8, OB9, OB10, EB8, EB9 and EB10, rather than the separate hedge and ditch options (OB1,OB2, OB3, OB6, EB1, EB2, EB3 and EB6).

Hedges, or lengths of hedges managed under options OB1, OB2, OB3, OB8, OB9, OB10, EB1, EB2, EB3, EB8, EB9 and EB10 can also be entered into OB14 or EB14 or be eligible for Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) capital item payments if you make an HLS application. With the exception of OB14 or EB14, you cannot use more than one hedgerow management option on the same length of hedgerow.

Where there is woody growth on top of an earth bank or stone-faced bank which meets the necessary criteria for options OB4, OB5, OB12, OB13, EB4, EB5, EB12 or EB13, you may also apply for one of the hedgerow options OB1, OB2, OB3, OB14, EB1, EB2, EB3 or EB14. 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 downloaded from the Natural England website, details in Appendix 2.

Further information about hedge laying and coppicing can be found in the Hedgelink pamphlet *The Hedgerow Management Cycle and Scale*, details in Appendix 2

Combining OELS/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.

UPDATED in 2013

OB1/EB1 Hedgerow management for landscape (on both sides of a hedge)	16 points per 100 m
OB2/EB2 Hedgerow management for landscape (on one side of a hedge)	8 points per 100 m

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For these options, you must comply with the following:

- Maintain hedgerows to a height of no less than 1.5 m (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 two 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.
- Where a length of hedge managed under the option has more than 10 per cent gaps, in the first two years of the agreement plant up gaps with locally native shrubs typical of the hedge to achieve a hedge which has no more than 10 per cent gaps.

- 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.

UPDATED in 2013

OB3/EB3 Hedgerow management for landscape and wildlife

42 points per 100 m

©NHLS/Nigel Adams

This option is only available where you have control of the management of both sides of the hedge and of the land adjacent. The option is designed to introduce a cutting regime which promotes increased blossom availability for invertebrates and allows fruits and berries to ripen and provide a vital source of food for over-wintering birds.

In addition to the conditions for OB1/EB1 and OB2/EB2 (see above), you must also comply with the following:

- Maintain hedgerows to a height of no less than 2 m (except when laid or coppiced as part of a regular management cycle).
- Cut each hedgerow no more than once every three calendar years, cutting no more than a third of your hedgerows each year **or**, cut each hedgerow no more than once every two calendar years between 1 January and 28 February only, cutting no more than half of your hedgerows each year.

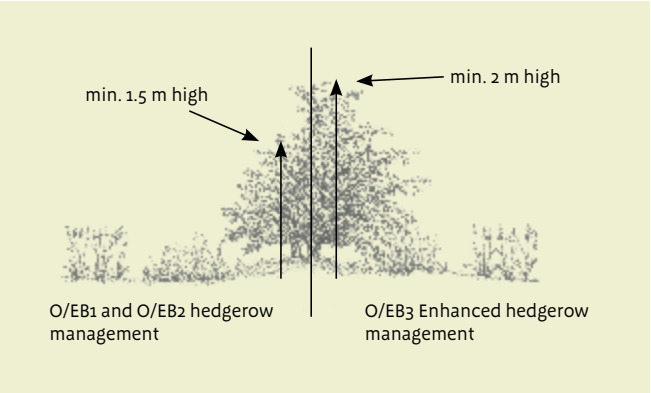

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Figure 2 – O/EB1 and O/EB2 hedgerow management on left and O/EB3 Enhanced hedgerow management shown on right, results in a taller and bushier hedge.

OB4/EB4 Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides 16 points per 100 m
OB5/EB5 Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side 8 points per 100 m

Where there is hedge growth on top of the bank, you may also apply for options OB1, OB2, OB3, OB14, EB1, EB2, EB3 and EB14 where they meet the necessary criteria.

© Natural England/Kerry Smith

As well as supporting a range of wildlife, stone-faced hedgebanks are important landscape features

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.

OB6/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 watercress 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 OELS or ELS options to both, you must use option OB8, OB9 or OB10, or 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 two 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

OB7/EB7 Half ditch management

8 points per 100 m

This option is available for ditches as described above for option OB6 or 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 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.

Combined hedge and ditch management options

UPDATED in 2013

OB8/EB8 (incorporating OB1/EB1 hedgerow management for landscape)	38 points per 100 m
OB9/EB9 (incorporating OB2/EB2 hedgerow management for landscape)	26 points per 100 m
OB10/EB10 (incorporating OB3/EB3 Enhanced hedgerow management for landscape and wildlife)	56 points per 100 m

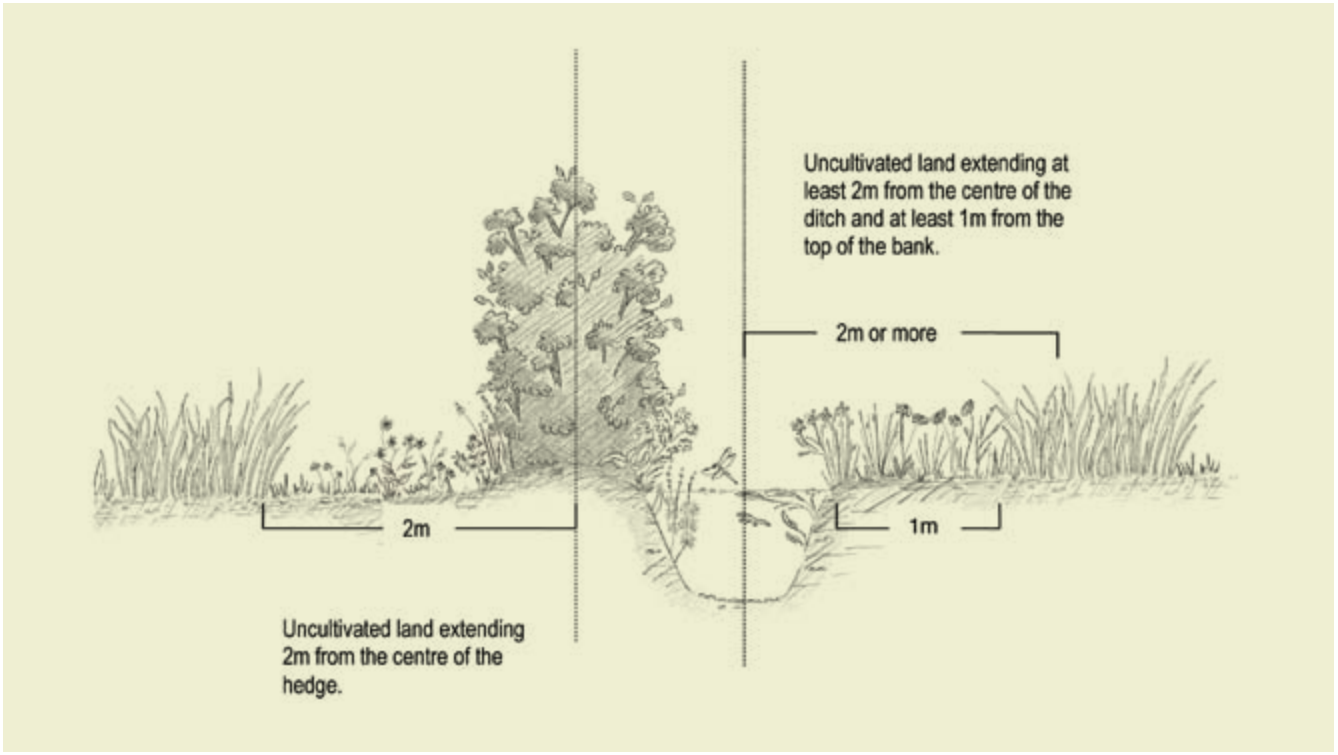

Figure 3 – Combined hedge and ditch management

These options are available for hedgerows with a ditch that meets the eligibility criteria of OB6/EB6 or OB7/EB7 immediately alongside. For OB8/EB8 and OB10/EB10, you must have control over the management of adjacent land on both sides of the hedge and ditch. If you have control of the land adjacent to only one side of the hedge and ditch, you must use OB9/EB9. The aim is to establish a diverse hedgerow, bank side and aquatic vegetation.

You must apply for these options (OB8, OB9 and OB10 and EB8, EB9 and EB10) where you have a hedge alongside a ditch and you wish to manage both under the scheme (ie you cannot combine individual hedge or ditch options).

For these options, you must follow the conditions for:

- OB1, OB2 or OB3, depending on whether you are managing one side of your hedge or both sides, and OB6.
- 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.

UPDATED in 2013

OB11/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 be applied to complete walls in good condition. A wall in good condition is at its original height to below the top stones with at least 75 per cent of top stones in place (where they formed part of the original construction) and no gaps along the entire length. A wall is measured between two end points. An end point includes connections between two or more walls, or connections to other features, for example, fences, gateways, buildings, roads, ditches, and hedgerows, or the point at which there is a change in management/ownership. This option can also be applied to livestock enclosures such as sheep folds and walls which end mid-field.

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. Undertake a visual inspection of the walls to check their condition and identify any sections that need repair at least once a year. Keep a record (written or photographic) of the problems identified and the repair work undertaken.
- Where gaps occur during the course of the agreement carry out the necessary repairs.
- 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.

UPDATED in 2013

OB12/EB12 Earth bank management on both sides 14 points per 100 m

OB13/EB13 Earth bank management on one side 7 points per 100 m

© Natural England/Pete Johnstone

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. For OB12/EB12, you must have control over the management of both sides of the bank. If you have control of the land adjacent to only one side of the bank, you must use OB13/EB13. Flood banks and warp banks are not eligible for these options.

Where there is hedge growth on top of the bank, you may also apply for options OB1, OB2, OB3, OB14, EB1, EB2, EB3 or EB14 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.

NEW in 2013

OB14/EB14 Hedgerow restoration — 10 points per m

Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.

The aim of this option is to rejuvenate hedgerows on the farm to encourage the development of thick, dense, continuous hedges, which link other hedges and habitats, such as ponds and woodlands to benefit wildlife and improve the historic landscape character.

Hedges that are a priority for restoration

- Short, overtrimmed and gappy hedges, or tall, thin and gappy hedges.
- Hedges connected to woods or adjacent to ponds, or other watercourses, to link habitats.
- Hedges adjacent to other management options such as 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 such as parish boundaries.

You must have management control over both sides of the hedge and of the land adjacent to the hedge, and the hedge must fit the eligibility criteria for all hedge options (see page 45).

How can a hedge be restored?

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. Hedges or sections of hedge suitable for laying are those 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).
- Hedge gapping up. This 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. To be eligible for gapping up at least one-quarter of the hedge must still consist of shrubs and/or trees.

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 OELS/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					
End of agreement year	1	2	3	4	5
Minimum total length restored	40	80	120	160	200
Maximum total length restored	200	200	200	200	200
Points earned	400	400	400	400	400

Hedges, or lengths of hedges, in this option can also be entered into the hedge management options (OB1, OB2, OB3, OB8, OB9, OB10, EB1, EB2, EB3, EB8, EB9 and EB10).

Management requirements

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.
- Control 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) by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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 two-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.

C Options for trees and woodland

UPDATED in 2013

OC1/EC1 Protection of in-field trees on arable land — 16 points per tree

OC2/EC2 Protection of in-field trees on grassland — 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.

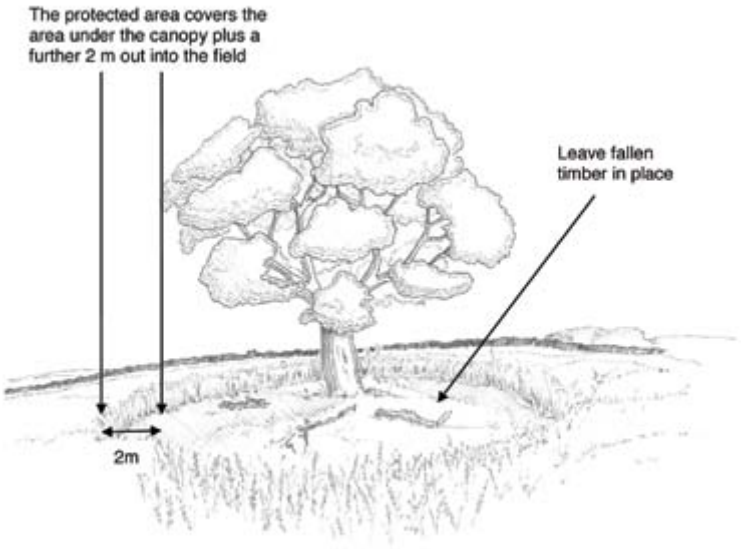

Figure 4 – Illustration of the protected area around an in-field tree

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 6 m buffer strips or field corner options can be used to protect them. If the canopies do not overlap at the start of the agreement, 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.

Where you have another management option in the same field, this must not overlap with an area managed under OC1/EC1 or OC2/EC2. The area of the other in-field option must be reduced by the area covered by OC1/EC1 or OC2/EC2, ie the area of the tree canopy plus 2 m. This is to prevent double payments. The exception to this is OK5/EK5, which can be co-located (overlapped) with OC1/EC1 and OC2/EC2.

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.

OC3/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.

UPDATED in 2013

OC4/EC4 Management of woodland edges 380 points per ha

The option is for the management of the strip of land adjacent to the woodland and not the woodland itself. 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. The woodlands can be under active or passive management. 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.

Woodland fringe habitat

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.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping, spear and field thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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.

Please note that any areas containing scrub may become ineligible for Single Payment Scheme (SPS) payments and would have to be removed from your SPS claim form. Please refer to the *SPS Handbook* and any supplements for more information, details in Appendix 2. Scrub areas are still eligible for OELS or ELS points. Please see Appendix 6 for a definition of scrub for SPS purposes.

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.

View of the edge of Exmoor, showing the importance of hedgerow trees in the landscape

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, details in Appendix 2.

UPDATED in 2013

OC23/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 three 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 OELS or ELS hedgerow management options: OB1, OB2, OB3, OB8, OB9, OB10, OB14, EB1, EB2, EB3, EB8, EB9, EB10 or EB14.

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.

Options for hedgerow tree buffer strips

These options are only available adjacent to hedgerows entered into an OELS or ELS hedgerow management option (OB1, OB2, OB3, OB8, OB9, OB10, OB14, EB1, EB2, EB3, EB8, EB9, EB10 or EB14), 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).

It is desirable that eligible hedgerows have buffer strips on both sides, using either the hedgerow tree buffer strip on arable land or the hedgerow tree buffer strip on grassland option as appropriate. Hedgerows alongside roads or ownership boundaries, where it is not possible to protect both sides, are also eligible for these options.

OC24/EC24 Hedgerow tree buffer strips on rotational/cultivated land 500/400 points per ha

© Natural England/Charlotte Lemmon

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.

- 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.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping, spear and field thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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.

OC25/EC25 Hedgerow tree buffer strips on organic grassland/grassland 500/400 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.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping, spear and field thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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 FER Map. You can obtain information about historic features on your land from the Historic Environment Record (HER) 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 and Appendix 2 for a link).

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 OELS that you mark them on your FER and retain and protect them. This includes meeting the relevant scheme conditions detailed at Sections 5.5.4 and 5.5.5 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.

UPDATED in 2013

OD1/ED1 Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm building 2 points per m^2 of ground floor area

© Natural England/James LePage

Weatherproof traditional farm building

Please be aware that the cash equivalent of points gained through use of this option are classified as non-agricultural de minimis State Aid. See Section 5.5.11 for more information about State Aid payments.

A traditional farm building 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 traditional farm buildings (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 (RLR) (see Section 5.4.1), but you must record them on the FER.

Ineligible buildings include:

- metal-framed Dutch barns;
- 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 TFBtfb(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. Retain these photographs and submit a copy of them 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.

OD2/ED2 Take out of cultivation archaeological features currently on rotational/cultivated land

600/460 points per ha

© Bob Middleton

A barrow showing as a crop mark

© English Heritage, NMR 21405-24

A prehistoric enclosure overlain by medieval ridge and furrow

This option is available on cultivated land and on temporary grass leys that are re-sown at least once every five years. Land that is being managed under this option in an existing OELS or 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.

OD3/ED3 Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on archaeological features (minimum till)

100/60 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.
- 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.

© Neil Harris

This Roman mosaic was discovered a few inches under cultivated land

© English Heritage

An example of a site that would benefit from scrub clearance

OD4/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.

OD5/ED5 Management of archaeological features on grassland

16 points per ha

© Catherine Burgess

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:

- OC4/EC4 Management of woodland edges
- OC24/EC24 Hedgerow tree buffer strips on rotational/cultivated land
- OC25/EC25 Hedgerow tree buffer strips on organic grassland/grassland
- OD2/ED2 Take out of cultivation archaeological features currently on cultivated land
- OJ5/EJ5 In-field grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off
- OJ9/EJ9 12m buffer strips for watercourses on rotational/cultivated land.

See also options for arable land in Section OF/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 can be placed across the slope (using option OJ5/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 OD2/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 OELS and 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 OELS or ELS options, such as OELS and 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 OELS or ELS compulsory requirement UOX2/UX2. (This is because UOX2/UX2 prohibits the application of fertilisers and herbicides adjacent to watercourses.)

You must start your OELS or 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 OELS or 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 OELS or 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 OELS or ELS buffer strips alongside 2 m Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) grass margins, but you must not establish any OELS or 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 OELS agreement can continue to be managed within OELS under a renewed agreement.

For land that is part of an arable/grass ley rotation, you must manage land in buffer strip options OE1-OE3, OE9, EE1–EE3 or EE9 according to the prescriptions of options OE4-OE6, OE10, EE4–EE6 or EE10 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 OELS or 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 OC4/EC4 Management of woodland edges; OC24/EC24 and OC25/EC25 Hedgerow tree buffer strips on cultivated land or grassland and OJ9/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 m^2)).

Table 4 How to calculate the area of buffer strip options

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
RLR field no	Option code	Option description	Width (m)	Length (m)	Area in m^2 (width x length)	Area in ha (divide area in m^2 by 10,000)	Area in ha to the nearest 0.01 ha
XY23456789	EE3	6 m buffer strips on cultivated land	6	238	(6 x 238) 1428	0.1428	0.14

UPDATED in 2013

OE1 2 m buffer strips on rotational land	340 points per ha
EE1 2 m buffer strips on cultivated land	255 points per ha
OE2 4 m buffer strips on rotational land	425 points per ha
EE2 4 m buffer strips on cultivated land	340 points per ha

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.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistle, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by cultivation before establishment, by cutting in the first year and by selective trimming or manual removal thereafter.

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2m margin to buffer the hedge

- 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 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.

UPDATED in 2013

OE3 6 m buffer strips on rotational land	425 points per ha
EE3 6 m buffer strips on cultivated land	340 points per ha
OE9 6 m buffer strips on rotational land next to a watercourse	500 points per ha
EE9 6m buffer strips on cultivated land next to a watercourse	400 points per ha

OE9/EE9 should always be used when a 6 m buffer on cultivated land is placed alongside a watercourse.

OE9/EE9 can also be placed adjacent to farm trackways or roads that channel run-off water and sediment directly into a watercourse.

For these options, you must follow the management for options OE1/OE2 or 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.

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6 m margin against a watercourse buffers this river from arable operations

UPDATED in 2013

OE4 2 m buffer strips on organic grassland	340 points per ha
EE4 2 m buffer strips on intensive grassland	255 points per ha
OE5 4 m buffer strips on organic grassland	425 points per ha
EE5 4 m buffer strips on intensive grassland	340 points per ha
OE6 6 m buffer strips on organic grassland	425 points per ha
EE6 6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland	340 points per ha

UPDATED in 2013

OE10 6m buffer strips on organic grassland next to a watercourse	500 points per ha
EE10 6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland next to a watercourse	400 points per ha

OE10/EE10 should always be used when a 6m buffer on intensive grassland is placed alongside a watercourse.

Option OE10/EE10 can also be placed adjacent to farm trackways or roads that channel run-off water and sediment directly into a watercourse.

The OELS options are only available on grassland stocked at more than 1.00 LU/ha (see Appendix 4). The ELS options are only available on improved grassland receiving more than 100 kg/ha of nitrogen per year in fertilisers or manures.

© Natural England/Emily Ledder

4 m margin between access track and hedge

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.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistle, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by cultivation before establishment, by cutting in the first year and by selective trimming or manual removal thereafter.

6 m grass margin on intensive grassland provides valuable small mammal habitat

- 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).
- 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.

OE7 Buffering in-field ponds in organic grassland	500 points per ha
EE7 Buffering in-field ponds in improved permanent grassland	400 points per ha
OE8 Buffering in-field ponds in rotational land	500 points per ha
EE8 Buffering in-field ponds in arable land	400 points per ha

Area Constraints apply to these options.

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.

The OELS options are only available on grassland that is stocked at more than 1.00 LU/ha (OE7) or on rotational land (OE8) (see Appendix 4).

The ELS options are only available on grassland that is currently receiving over 50 kg/nitrogen per ha (EE7) or on arable land (EE8).

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.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistle, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by cultivation before establishment, by cutting in the first year and by selective trimming or manual removal thereafter.
- 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.

Please note that any areas containing scrub may become ineligible for SPS payments, and would have to be removed from your SPS claim form. Please refer to the *SPS Handbook* and any supplements for more information, details in Appendix 2. Scrub areas are still eligible for OELS or ELS points. Please see Appendix 6 for a definition of scrub for SPS purposes.

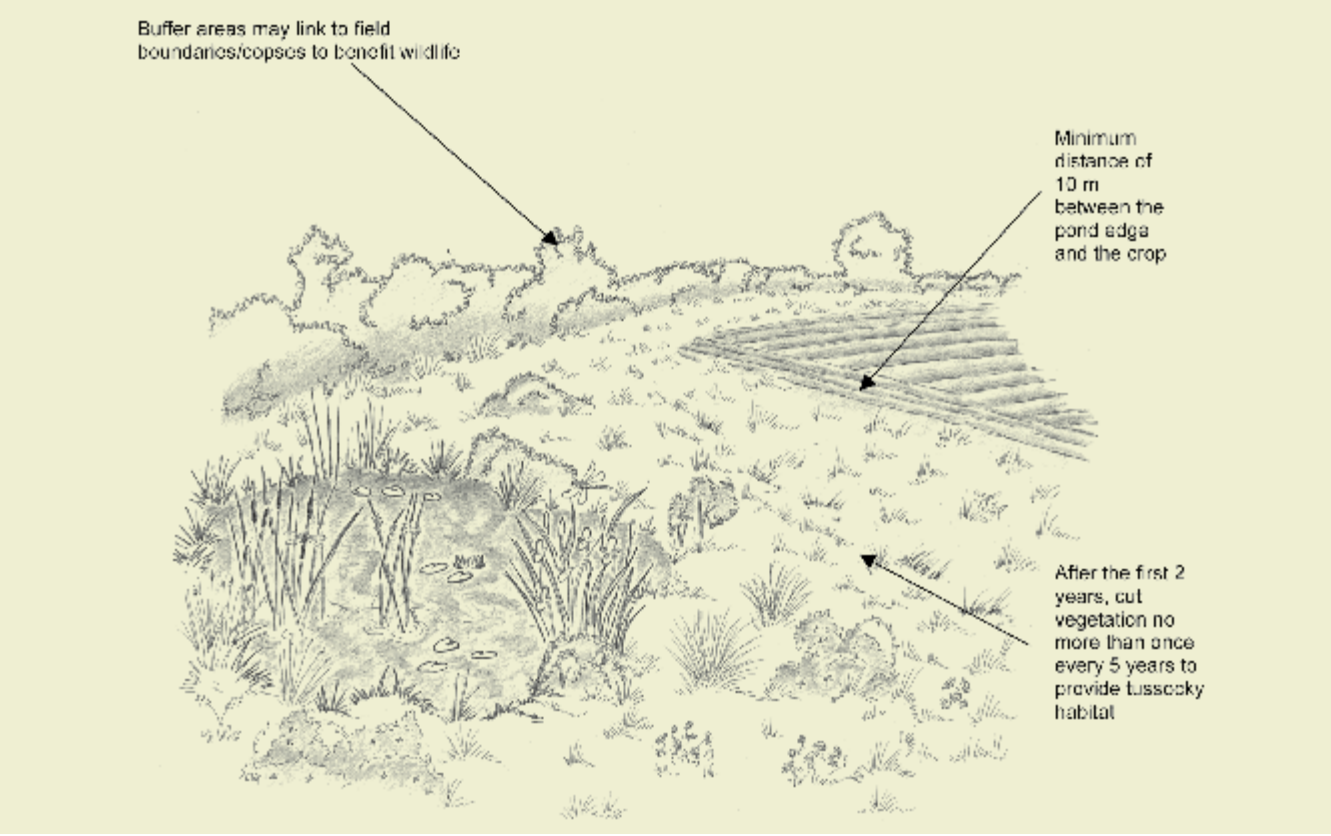

Figure 5 – Buffering in-field ponds

NEW in 2013

OE12/EE12 Supplement to add wildflowers to field corners and buffer strips on cultivated land 63 points per ha

Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.

The aim of this supplement is to create flower-rich areas on cultivated land that will provide valuable sources of food for invertebrates and birds and a greater diversity and structure of vegetation compared to grass only areas.

This supplement can only be used with options OC24, OE1-OE3, OE9, OF1, OJ5, OJ9, EC24, EE1-EE3, EE9, EF1, EJ5 and EJ9. It must not be used to sow wildflowers into established buffer strips, field corners and in-field grass areas unless the areas are present at the start of the agreement and will be managed to ensure successful flower establishment in the first year.

You must follow the management for the base option except the sowing and cutting requirements and in addition comply with the following:

- Use only organic seed mixes on OELS-eligible land. Where this is not possible, you must contact your Organic Inspection Body for a derogation.
- By the end of the first 12 months of the agreement, establish a mix or maintain existing areas containing fine-leaved grasses (such as crested dog's tail, chewings fescue, slender red fescue, smooth stalked meadow grass and common bent) and flowers (such as knapweed, bird's-foot trefoil, self-heal, oxeye daisy, yarrow, wild red clover and wild carrot).
- Where sown, the flower component must be included at a minimum seed rate of 1.0 kg/ha.
- Do not sow tussock-forming grasses such as cocksfoot, meadow foxtail and meadow fescue, as these can swamp the wild flowers.
- By the beginning of year three, there must be at least five flower species (excluding injurious weeds) and three fine-leaved grass species present frequently across the flower-rich area. Maintain this floristic area for the duration of your agreement.
- Regular cutting and removal of cuttings in the first 12 months after sowing may be needed to ensure successful establishment of sown species.
- After establishment, cut the whole area to 10 cm between 1 August and 30 September, removing cuttings to avoid patches of dead material developing. If excess vegetation threatens to suppress the flowers, cut again the following March or April providing no birds are nesting in the flower-rich area.

F Options for arable land

These options are only available for arable or rotational land (see Appendix 6 for definition).

UPDATED in 2013

OF1/EF1 Management of field corners 500/400 points per ha

Area constraints apply to this option.

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.

Addition of the OE12/EE12 Supplement for wildflowers will greatly increase the value of field corners/areas for farmland biodiversity.

You can apply option OF1/EF1 to a whole field provided it is no greater than 2 ha in size. This is important in landscapes where fields have often been left uncropped (eg as set-aside or Campaign for the Farmed Environment (CFE) voluntary measures) and continue to deliver valuable wildlife areas in a production landscape.

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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. 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.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistle, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by cultivation before establishment, by cutting in the first year and by selective trimming or manual removal thereafter.
- 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.

Please note that any areas containing scrub may become ineligible for SPS payments, and would have to be removed from your SPS claim form. Please see the *SPS Handbook* and any supplements for more information, details at Appendix 2. Scrub areas are still eligible for OELS or ELS points. Please see Appendix 6 for a definition of scrub for SPS purposes.

UPDATED in 2013

OF2/EF2 Wild bird seed mixture 550/450 points per ha

Wild bird seed mixture placed against woodland

Area constraints apply to this option.

This option is available on arable land or temporary grassland (sown to grass for less than five 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 hectarage must be maintained each year. Relocating these blocks or strips will help to avoid the build-up of weeds or soil-borne disease. Rotating them with OF4/EF4 Nectar flower mixtures makes use of any residual fertility from that option.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Use only organic seed mixes on OELS-eligible land. Where this is not possible, you must contact your Organic Inspection Body for a derogation.
- 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 (maize) and game covers (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 3 ha in size. 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 sufficient seed production to feed birds during the late autumn/early winter.
- Fertilisers or manures (but not within 10 m of watercourses) and seed treatments may also be used to aid establishment and ensure sufficient seed production during that period.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by cultivation before establishment, by cutting in the first year and by selective trimming or manual removal thereafter.
- 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.
- Apply environmentally sympathetic insecticides 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 British Agrochemical Standards Inspection Scheme (BASIS) professional before any insecticides are used.
- Do not use the area for access, turning or storage.
- Do not graze.

UPDATED in 2013

OF4/EF4 Nectar flower mixture

550/450 points per ha

This option is available on arable land or temporary grassland (sown to grass for less than five 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. This option provides valuable benefits to wildlife at a landscape scale and is ideally suited to larger blocks and small fields.

© Natural England/ Rebecca Pitt

Nectar flower mixtures increase numbers of beneficial insects, such as bees

This option 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. Relocating these blocks or strips will help to avoid the build up of weeds or soil borne disease and can be rotated with OF2/EF2 Wild bird seed mixture to utilise any residual fertility left behind.

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.
- Use only organic seed mixes on OELS-eligible land. Where this is not possible, you must contact your Organic Inspection Body for a derogation.
- 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 in early spring or late summer.
- Re-establish the mix as necessary, to maintain a sustained nectar supply (this is typically after three years).
- Regular cutting and removal of cuttings in the first 12 months after sowing may be needed to ensure successful establishment of sown species.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by cultivation before establishment, by cutting in the first year and by selective trimming or manual removal thereafter.
- 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.

UPDATED in 2013

OF6/EF6 Overwintered stubble

150/120 points per ha

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 (ie land identified in your FER as at risk of soil erosion and where rills are regularly seen in wet weather).

© Natural England/Charlotte Lemmon

Overwintered stubble

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 establishment of green cover through natural regeneration and loosen any surface compaction or capping. If the stubble is already weedy, do not cultivate.
- 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 the autumn to enhance feeding and foraging value. Do not cultivate areas at high risk of soil erosion and run-off as identified on your FER.
- 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.

OF7/EF7 Beetle banks 750/580 points per ha

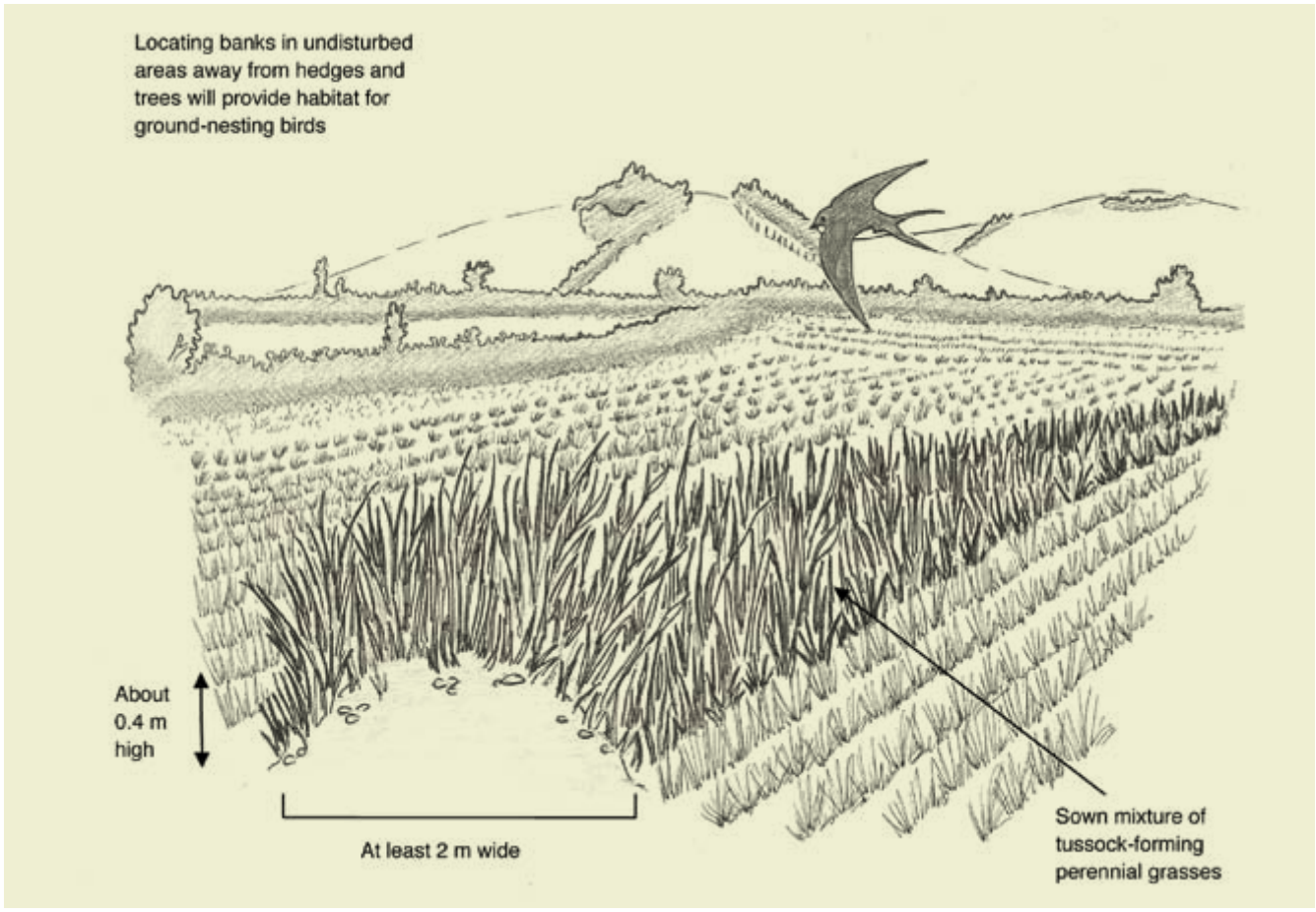

Figure 6 – Beetle bank

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.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by cultivation before establishment, by cutting in the first year and by selective trimming or manual removal thereafter.
- 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.

OF8/EF8 Skylark plots 5 points per plot

Area constraints apply to this option.

Figure 7 – 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 by turning off the drill during sowing to leave an unsown area. Alternatively, use cultivation to produce a bare area within the crop by 31 December.
- 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 m^2 (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.

UPDATED in 2013

EF9 Cereal headlands for birds

100 points per ha

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 3 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, tralkoxydim, 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).

UPDATED in 2013

EF10 Unharvested cereal headlands for birds and rare arable plants — 330 points per ha

This option provides a year-round food supply for birds, and habitat for arable plants and insects, within any arable field over two 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.

© Natural England/James LePage

This open and herb-rich headland will provide feeding habitat through the summer and winter

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.
- Sow and manage a 3 m–24 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, tralkoxydim, clodinafop-propargyl or pinoxaden.

OF11/EF11 Uncropped cultivated margins for rare plants — 460/400 points per ha

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.
- Control 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) by cultivation before establishment, by manual removal.
- 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).

Uncropped cultivated margin, on the right of the picture, with an unfertilised headland in the edge of the crop

OF13 Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds	360 points per ha
EF13 Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds on arable land	360 points per ha

Area constraints apply to this option.

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 (OF6/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 can be controlled using mechanical means. Work must take place in a single 3-day window, so that any disturbed ground-nesting birds can return to nest. If cutting, start from the centre and work outwards. This will allow any birds or mammals in the crop to seek refuge at the margins of the field.
- 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.

UPDATED in 2013

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 arable plants or or 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, 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.
- 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 the autumn to enhance feeding and foraging value. Do not cultivate areas at high risk of soil erosion and run-off as identified on your FER.
- 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.

EF22 Extended overwintered stubble — 410 points per ha

Area constraints apply to this option.

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. It also provides valuable habitat for other farmland wildlife and can help to improve water quality through reduced erosion and run-off on vulnerable areas.

This option is targeted at whole or part fields that are left uncropped to produce naturally regenerated cover. 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 (ie 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 moved 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 two 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.
- 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).
- The stubble and any subsequent natural regeneration must be left undisturbed until 31 July of the following year, except for the treatment of weed problems, as specified above.
- 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.

NEW in 2013

OF23/EF23 Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds

612/630 pts/tonne

Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.

Many farmland birds, including yellowhammer, grey partridge, tree sparrow, corn bunting, linnet and skylark, require seed food throughout the year. A decline in seed availability during the non-breeding season has been a major cause of decline in many seed-eating species. Overwinter stubbles and wild bird seed mixtures provide winter food for seed eaters, but this has typically run out by mid-winter, leaving these birds with a 'hungry gap' before natural food resources become available again in spring.

Providing cereal, oilseed and specialised grains will help farmland birds both survive through this hungry gap and also enter the breeding season in much improved condition.

This is a rotational option. This means it can move around the farmed area but the same total tonnage of feed must be maintained each year.

(OF23 only) This option can only be used with option OF2 Wild bird seed mixture. The maximum amount of OF23 Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds that can be entered into the agreement is 0.5 tonnes per hectare of OF2 Wild bird seed mixture.

(EF23 only) This option can only be used with options EF2 Wild bird seed mixture and/or EF22 Extended overwintered stubble. The maximum amount of this option that can be entered into the agreement is 0.5 tonnes per hectare of EF2 Wild bird seed mixture and/or 0.2 tonnes per hectare of EF22 Extended overwintered stubble.

Please note, where the option is located on areas ineligible for SPS (for example, an area of hard standing), the SPS eligibility rules will still apply and the feeding area cannot be claimed for SPS.

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Select a feeding area/s **either** on firm free-draining farm tracks or hard standing areas close to existing areas of overwintered stubbles or wild bird seed mixtures **or** on overwintered stubbles or

wild bird seed mixtures. Selecting areas next to hedges, bushes or trees (shelter belts) to provide a safe haven for the feeding birds would be beneficial.

- Spread the food on the ground at least once a week from 1 January until 31 March. Hoppers (feed distributors) may be used to support ground feeding but should not be the sole method of supplementary feeding. Move hoppers regularly and/or protect them by guards or cages to reduce the impact of vermin.
- **(OF23 only)** Use only organic seed mixes on OELS-eligible land. Where this is not possible, you must contact your Organic Inspection Body for a derogation.
- **(OF23 only)** The food must be a mixture of wheat, barley and oats (75%) and red millet, white millet and canary seed (25%). Tailings (small seeds removed from the harvested crop) are not permitted.
- **(EF23 only)** The food must be a mixture of wheat and oilseed rape (75%), red millet, white millet and canary seed (25%). Tailings (small seeds removed from the harvested crop) are not permitted.
- Distribute enough food to match consumption, ensuring a fresh supply of food is maintained without leaving seed unconsumed. This is especially important where ground feeding is undertaken.
- A 'feeding diary' must be kept to include details of:
  - mixture (weight of components and cost)
  - date of feeding
  - amount fed
  - location of feeding.

In addition, all receipts for the purchase of seed must be retained and made available on inspection.

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.

OG1/EG1 Undersown spring cereals — 150/200 points per ha

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.

UPDATED in 2013

OG4/EG4 Cereals for whole-crop silage followed by overwintered stubble — 250/230 points per ha

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:

- Sow a cereal (but not maize) crop in the autumn or spring.
- Use only organic seed mixes on OELS-eligible land. Where this is not possible, you must contact your Organic Inspection Body for a derogation.
- 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, 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.
- 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 the autumn, to enhance feeding and foraging value. *Do not cultivate areas at high risk of soil erosion and run-off as identified on your FER.*
- 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

Examples of run-off due to poor farm management

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 8 provides an illustration of how these options can combine to minimise the risks of soil erosion and run-off.

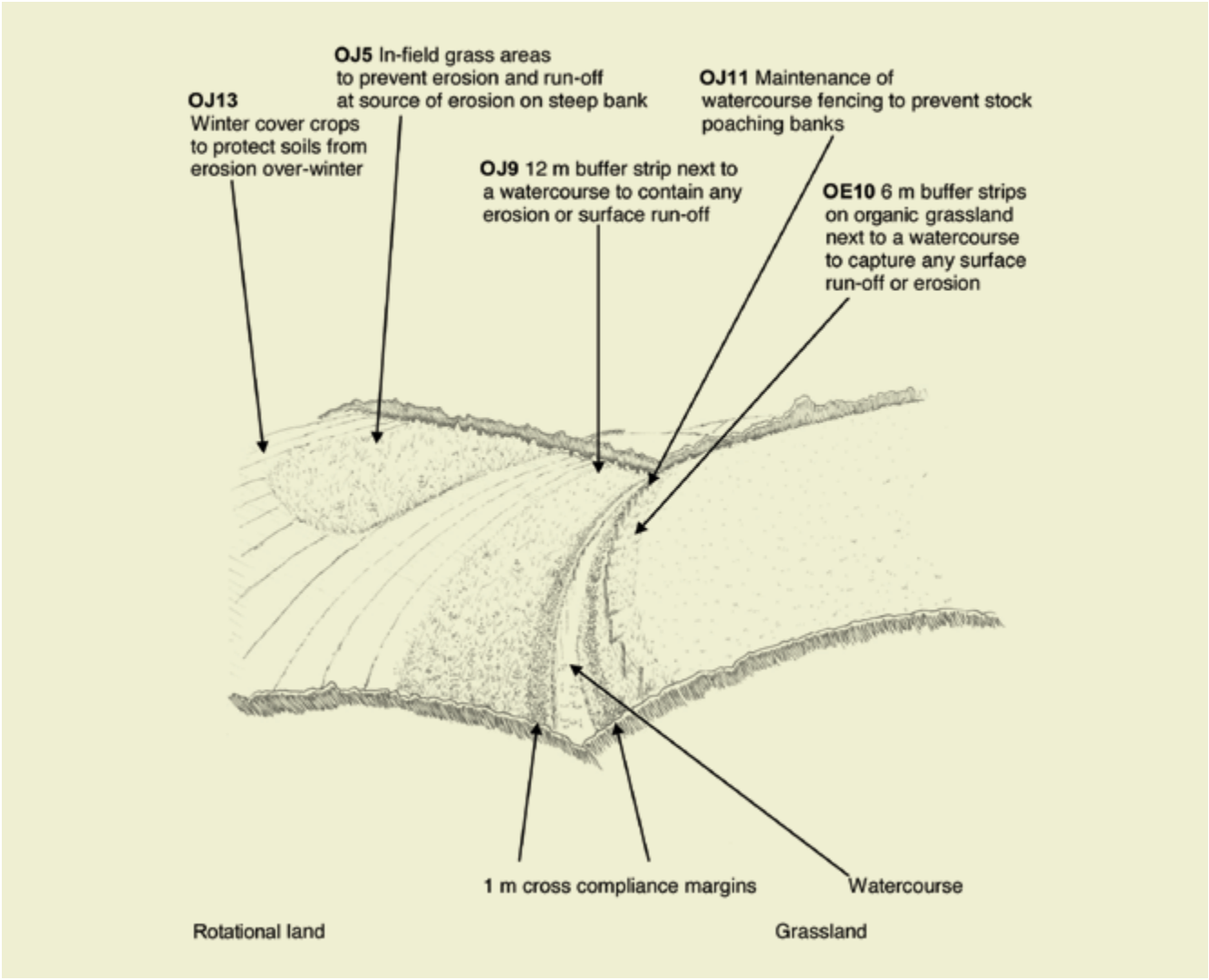

Figure 8 – How OELS options can be used to protect soil and water

OJ2/EJ2 Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion

18 points per ha

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 two 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 two 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 3 for a recognised fertiliser recommendation system). Any such slurry or manure must be applied at appropriate times, to minimise the risk of run-off.

UPDATED in 2013

OJ5/EJ5 In-field grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off 454 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 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 erosion or run-off. It applies to part-fields only, up to a maximum permissible area of 30 per cent of the field.

These areas are more efficient at trapping sediment when they do not receive large volumes of overland flow channelled from surrounding land. Therefore, it is important to manage your adjacent land to maximise water infiltration.

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

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.
- Control 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) by cultivation before establishment, by cutting in the first year and by selective trimming or manual removal thereafter.
- Only apply herbicides to spot-treat or weed-wipe for the control of injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistle, curled and broad-leaved 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.

UPDATED in 2013

OJ9/EJ9 12 m buffer strips for watercourses on rotational/cultivated land — 500/400 points per ha

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A wide buffer strip

This option aims to reduce the risk of transport of potential pollutants, such as sediment, nutrients (principally phosphate) and pesticides, to watercourses.

This option is intended for 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). This option is only available on arable or rotational land that has been identified (and recorded on your FER) as at risk of soil erosion or run-off.

The payment for this option is based on the area of the buffer, but if it exceeds 24 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.
- Control 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) by cultivation before establishment, by cutting in the first year and by selective trimming or manual removal thereafter.
- 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.

EJ10 Enhanced management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion and run-off — 94 points per ha

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 EJ2 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 two 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 3). 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 six weeks before establishment of the following spring-sown crop.

OJ11/EJ11 Maintenance of watercourse fencing — 4 points per 100 m

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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 Appendix 6) form one or more boundaries of the field, or are present within the field, and livestock are grazed for at least three 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.

OJ13/EJ13 Winter cover crops — 65 points per ha

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.

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

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.

Unless stated otherwise, 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 five 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.

OK1/EK1 Take field corners out of management 500/400 points per ha

Area constraints apply to this option.

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.

OK1 is only available on improved grassland that is stocked at more than 1.00 LU/ha.
EK1 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.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) or bracken by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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 five 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.

Please note that any areas containing scrub may become ineligible for SPS payments and would have to be removed from your SPS claim form. Please refer to the *SPS Handbook* and any supplements for more information, details in Appendix 2. Scrub areas are still eligible for OELS or ELS points. Please see Appendix 6 for a definition of scrub for SPS purposes.

OK2/EK2 Permanent grassland with low inputs

115/85 points per ha

© Natural England/Matt Wilmot

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

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.
- 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 for hay, haylage or silage. 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 3 showing average total N (nitrogen) supplied by various manures.
- You can only apply lime with the written consent of your Organic Inspection Body.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear field thistles, curled broad-leaved docks and common ragwort), invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) or bracken by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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 3 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.

OK3/EK3 Permanent grassland with very low inputs

180/150 points per ha

© Natural England/James Le Page

Permanent pasture with very low inputs of fertiliser and herbicide provides better wildlife habitats

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 OK4/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 3 showing average total nitrogen supplied by various manures.
- You can only apply lime with the written consent of your Organic Inspection Body.
- You may continue adding lime where this is your regular practice.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) or bracken by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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.

OK4/EK4 Management of rush pastures

180/150 points per ha

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 eight 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 3 showing average total nitrogen supplied by various manures.
- You can only apply lime with the written consent of your Organic Inspection Body.
- You may continue adding lime where this is your regular practice.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort), invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) or bracken by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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.

NEW in 2013

OK20/EK20 Ryegrass seed-set as winter/spring food for birds 190/80 points per ha

Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.

The aim of this option is to allow silage fields to go to seed in autumn, providing a food resource throughout winter and into the 'hungry gap' in February for buntings (such as yellowhammer) and other granivorous birds. It may also increase abundance of invertebrates and small mammals.

This option is only available on swards containing at least 50 per cent ryegrass (perennial, Italian or hybrid). Temporary grassland (sown to grass or other herbaceous forage for less than 5 years) and grassland that has been cultivated and re-sown within the last 5 years are eligible for this option. It can be applied on whole- or part-fields. If used on part-fields the area should be at least 10 m wide. For most birds it will be beneficial to site next to a hedge but for skylark it should be sited away from trees and hedges.

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

(EK20 only) There is no restriction on use of lime, fertiliser, manure, fungicides, insecticides or selective herbicides prior to taking the silage cut(s).

(OK20 only) There is no restriction on use of lime, manure, or other inputs permitted by your organic registration body prior to taking the silage cut(s).

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Close the field for at least 5 weeks and take a silage cut by 31 May.
- On swards containing at least 70 per cent Italian or hybrid ryegrass, you may also take a second cut of silage (or hay) by 30 June.
- After cutting and removal, close the field, allowing the sward to flower and set seed in the autumn. Leave the sward undisturbed with no harrowing, rolling, cultivation, application of manure or fertiliser until at least 1 March. You may then destroy the sward or restore it by harrowing or grazing. (This may be helped by the establishment of fallen seeds.)

NEW in 2013

OK21/EK21 Legume- and herb-rich swards 250/200 points per ha

Please note this option is subject to approval by the European Commission.

This option will provide habitat and food for invertebrates including crop pollinators, benefit soil structure, mitigate climate change by reducing nitrogen fertiliser use and provide productive high-quality forage for livestock.

This option is only available on temporary grassland (sown to grass or other herbaceous forage for less than five years) or grassland that has been cultivated and re-sown within the last five years. It can be applied on whole- or part-fields.

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

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Use only organic seed mixes on OELS-eligible land. Where this is not possible, you must contact your Organic Inspection Body for a derogation.

- In the first 12 months of the agreement, establish a mixed sward of grasses, legumes and herbs/ wildflowers (eg chicory, yarrow, ribwort plantain, forage burnet, black knapweed, common sorrel). This is usually most reliably achieved by sowing into a clean seedbed, but could be done by oversowing existing grassland following creation of 50 per cent bare ground.
- For the remainder of the agreement the sward must contain a minimum cover of 10 per cent red clover and an additional 10 per cent other legumes plus herbs, plus wildflowers (cover does not include white clover, creeping buttercup or injurious weeds). The sward must include at least five species of grass, three species of legume (including bird's-foot trefoil) and five species of herb/wildflower.
- Re-establish, if necessary, on the same or a different field, to maintain these minima.
- Manage by cutting or grazing but allow to flower by resting for a 3-5 week period between 1 May and 31 July. You must delay cutting until the majority of red clover plants have started to flower.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort), invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) or bracken by selective trimming or manual removal.
- Do not apply pesticides except herbicides to spot treat or weed-wipe for 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.
- You may apply lime and organic manures.
- You may apply inorganic fertilisers provided they do not contain nitrogen.

K Option for mixed stocking on grassland

OK5/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 Table 6.

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 two-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 LUs 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 LUs can be made up of the same, or other types of livestock, such as horses or domesticated deer. For details of LU conversion factors, please refer to Appendix 4.

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 OELS.

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 five 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 (OK1 to OK4, OK20, OK21, EK1 to EK4, EK20 and EK21).

The availability of the grassland options within each area is summarised in Table 5.

Table 5 Availability of upland and lowland grassland options

Options	Land outside SDAs	Land in an SDA		
		Below the Moorland Line	Above the Moorland Line	
			Parcels of less than 15 ha	Parcels of 15 ha or more
OK/EK1–4, OK/EK20, OK/EK21	✓			
OK/EK5	✓	✓	✓	✓
OL/EL1–3		✓		
OL/EL4		✓	✓	
OL/EL5			✓	
OL/EL6				✓

OL1/EL1 Take field corners out of management in SDAs — 100 points per ha

Area constraints apply to this option.

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 OD4, OD5, 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.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort), invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) or bracken by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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 five 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.

OL2/EL2 Permanent grassland with low inputs in SDAs — 35 points per ha

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.

- 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 types 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 3 showing the average total nitrogen supplied by various manures.
- 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 3 showing average total nitrogen supplied by various manures.
- You can only apply lime with the written consent of your Organic Inspection Body.
- You may continue adding lime where this is your regular practice.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort), invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) or bracken by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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.

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

OL3/EL3 Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs

60 points per ha

Permanent pasture with very low inputs of fertiliser and herbicide provides better wildlife habitats

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 OL4/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.
- 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 3 showing average total nitrogen supplied by various manures.
- You can only apply lime with the written consent of your Organic Inspection Body.
- You may continue adding lime where this is your regular practice.

- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort), invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) or bracken by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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.

OL4/EL4 Management of rush pastures in SDAs

60 points per ha

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 3 showing average total nitrogen supplied by various manures.

- You can only apply lime with the written consent of your Organic Inspection Body.
- You may continue adding lime where this is your regular practice.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort), invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) or bracken by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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.

OL5/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 an approved herbicide 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.
- Prevent the spread of rhododendron and other invasive non-native species to new areas of land, where this is within your control, by selective trimming or manual removal.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks, or common ragwort) by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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).

Enclosed rough grazing

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 an approved herbicide 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).

Options for Uplands OELS

UOB Options for boundary features in the uplands

These options are available for boundary features above, or that form the boundary of, the Moorland Line.

UOB4/UB4 Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line — 24 points per 100 m

UOB5/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 OB1, OB2, OB3, OB14, EB1, EB2, EB3 or EB14 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.

UPDATED in 2013

UOB11/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 be applied to complete walls in good condition. A wall in good condition is at its original height to below the top stones with at least 75 per cent of top stones in place (where they formed part of the original construction) and no gaps along the entire length. A wall is measured between two end points. An end point includes connections between two or more walls, or connections to other features for example; fences, gateways, buildings, roads, ditches, and hedgerows, or the point at which there is a change in management/ownership. This option can also be applied to livestock enclosures such as sheep folds and walls which end mid-field.

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. Undertake a visual inspection of the walls to check their condition and identify any sections that need repair at least once a year. Keep a record (written or photographic) of the problems identified and the repair work undertaken.
- Where gaps occur during the course of the agreement carry out the necessary repairs.

- 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.

UPDATED in 2013

UOB12/UB12 Earth bank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line 18 points per 100 m

UOB13/UB13 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.

These options only apply to complete sections of earth and turf-faced banks that are at least 1 m in height.

For UOB12/UB12, you must have control over the management of both sides of the bank. If you have control of the land adjacent to only one side of the bank, you must use UOB13/UB13. Flood banks and warp banks are not eligible for these options.

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 OB1, OB2, OB3, OB14, EB1, EB2, EB3 or EB14. 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.

UOB15/UB15 Stone-faced hedgebank restoration 55 points per m

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 OELS/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					
End of agreement year	1	2	3	4	5
Minimum total length restored	40	80	120	160	200
Maximum total length restored	200	200	200	200	200
Points earned	2200	2200	2200	2200	2200

Banks in this option may not be entered in options OB4, UOB4, OB5, UOB5, 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.

UOB16/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 OELS/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					
End of agreement year	1	2	3	4	5
Minimum total length restored	40	80	120	160	200
Maximum total length restored	200	200	200	200	200
Points earned	500	500	500	500	500

Banks in this option may not be entered in options OB12, UOB12, OB13, UOB13, 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.

UOB17/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 OELS/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					
End of agreement year	1	2	3	4	5
Minimum total length restored	40	80	120	160	200
Maximum total length restored	200	200	200	200	200
Points earned	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200

Walls in this option may not be entered into options OB11, UOB11, 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.

UOC5/UC5 Sheep fencing around small woodlands

50 points per 100 m

© Natural England/Peter Dullaghan

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.

UPDATED in 2013

UOC22/UC22 Woodland livestock exclusion

75 points per ha

Area constraints apply to this option.

This option is only available on SDA land below the Moorland Line. It can only be used on whole-fields.

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.

© Natural England

Ungrazed woods are able to regenerate naturally and provide a better wildlife habitat

Where new fencing, or the maintenance of existing fencing, is required to exclude livestock, you may also apply for options UOC5, UC5, OC3 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.

UOD Options for historic and landscape features in the uplands

UPDATED in 2013

UOD12/UD12 Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings in remote locations — 4 points per m^2 of ground floor area

© Natural England/Dave Key

Remote buildings get a higher maintenance payment under Uplands O/ELS

This option is only available on land within the SDA.

Please be aware that the cash equivalent of points gained through use of this option are classified as non-agricultural de minimis State Aid. See Section 5.5.11 for more information about State Aid payments.

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:

- metal-framed Dutch barns;
- 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 RLR, but you must record them on the FER (see Section 5.4.1).

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.

UPDATED in 2013

UOD13/UD13 Maintaining visibility of archaeological features on moorland

53 points per feature

© Natural England/Dave Key

A Roman bank south of Hadrian's Wall

This option is only available on SDA land above the Moorland Line. It can only be used on part-fields.

This option aims to retain archaeological features in the uplands as visible features in the landscape: ie 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 Appendix 2

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. If scrub is present, use ELS option OD4/ED4 Management of scrub on archaeological features instead.

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. Stockproof walls and banks are not eligible.

© Natural England

Top: Wheel ruts and supplementary feeding are damaging the stone circle
Bottom: Changing the grazing management has improved the feature condition

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.
- 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.
- 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.

UOJ Options to protect soils and water in the uplands

UPDATED in 2013

UOJ3/UJ3 Post and wire fencing along watercourses

50 points per 100 m

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 three 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 five years. The new fencing must result in, or contribute to, the effective exclusion of stock.

© Natural England/Peter Wakely

Fencing off of watercourses maintains the stability of banks and helps prevent erosion

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.

- In the first year of the agreement 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.
- 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 4102 and be properly strained and fastened with galvanised staples.

UPDATED in 2013

UOJ12/UJ12 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. It can only be used on whole-fields.

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.

UOL Options for upland grassland and moorland

UPDATED in 2013

UOL17/UL17 No supplementary feeding on moorland 4 points per ha

This option is only available on SDA land above the Moorland Line. It can be used on part- or whole-fields, the area must be marked on the Options map.

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.

UPDATED in 2013

UOL18/UL18 Cattle grazing on upland grassland and moorland 30 points per ha

© Natural England/James LePage

Cattle grazing can help maintain a good mix of sward heights

This option is only available on permanent grassland within the SDA. It can only be used on whole-fields.

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 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. The grass cover must be in place for the full duration of the agreement.

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 two-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 one of the two years.

Grazed woodlands can be included provided that most of the woodland (ie over 50 per cent of the area) consists of moorland and grassland that is accessible for grazing **and** that the compulsory requirements (UOX2/UX2 and/or UOX3/UX3) can also be applied.

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 LU conversion factors shown in Appendix 4.

UPDATED in 2013

UOL20/UL20 Haymaking 60 points per ha

This option is only available on SDA land below the Moorland Line. It can only be used on whole-fields.

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.

© Natural England/Dave Key

The later cutting dates associated with haymaking allow more wildflowers 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 OL3 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.

UPDATED in 2013

UOL21/UL21 No cutting strip within meadows 250 points per ha of strip

Area constraints apply to this option.

This option is only available on SDA land below the Moorland Line. It can only be used on part-fields.

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.

UPDATED in 2013

UOL22/UL22 Management of enclosed rough grazing for birds 35 points per ha

© Natural England/ Mervyn Edwards

This mixture of short grass and taller tussocks provides good nesting habitat and shelter for ground-nesting birds

This option is only available on SDA land in parcels of less than 15 ha above the Moorland Line. It can only be used on whole-fields.

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 (ie within a 2 km radius), 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 LUs 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. 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 on a Scheduled Monument, you must seek consent from the appropriate authority.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping, spear and field thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks, and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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 an approved herbicide 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.

UPDATED in 2013

UOL23/UL23 Management of upland grassland for birds 37 points per ha

This option is only available on SDA land below the Moorland Line. It can only be used on whole-fields.

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.

Diverse sward provides opportunities for feeding and breeding birds

For this option, you must comply with the following:

- Maintain as grass. Do not plough, cultivate or reseed.
- Manage by grazing only. Limit the daily level of stocking between 1 April and 30 June to a maximum of 0.6 LUs 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.
- 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 can only apply lime with the consent of your Organic Inspection Body. You must not apply lime between 1 April and 1 August.
- Control injurious weeds (ie creeping, spear and field thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks and common ragwort) or invasive non-native species (eg Himalayan balsam, rhododendron or Japanese knotweed) by selective trimming or manual removal.
- 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.

3.5 Combinations of OELS options, including Uplands OELS options, that can occupy the same land

As a general rule, an OELS or Uplands OELS 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 6 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. For combinations of ELS and Uplands ELS options, please refer to Table 7.

In OELS, 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 OELS, you can have up to **three** land management options overlapping on the same area of land at the same time, provided the parcel is within the SDA, ***and*** there is at least one Uplands OELS option on the parcel (excluding compulsory requirements and UOL18). .
- The Uplands OELS compulsory requirements (UOX2 and UOX3) do not count towards this limit. Hence within Uplands OELS, you can have up to three options on the same area of land plus the relevant compulsory requirements. **But, please note**, buffer strip options (OE1 - OE10 and OJ9) cannot be located next to watercourses on land in UOX2.
- OK5 Mixed stocking and UOL18 Cattle grazing, do not count towards these limits of two options (OELS) or three options (Uplands OELS).
- Supplements do not count towards the limit of two or three options.

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, OK5 (Mixed stocking) states: 'Supplementary feeding is allowed, but move feeders as often as required to avoid poaching'. OL3 (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 6 Co-location of OELS and Uplands OELS options

Option code	OELS/Uplands OELS option title	OELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column	Uplands OELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
OB1	Hedgerow management for landscape (on both sides of a hedge)	OB4, OB5, OB12, OB13, OB14	UOB4, UOB5, UOB12, UOB13, UOB15, UOB16
OB2	Hedgerow management for landscape (on one side of a hedge)	OB4, OB5, OB12, OB13, OB14	UOB4, UOB5, UOB12, UOB13, UOB15, UOB16
OB3	Hedgerow management for landscape and wildlife	OB4, OB5, OB12, OB13, OB14	UOB4, UOB5, UOB12, UOB13, UOB15, UOB16
OB4	Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides	OB1, OB2, OB3, OB6, OB7, OB8, OB9, OB10, OB14	
OB5	Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side	OB1, OB2, OB3, OB6, OB7, OB8, OB9, OB10, OB14	
OB6	Ditch management	OB4, OB5, OB12, OB13, OB14	UOB4, UOB5, UOB12, UOB13, UOB15, UOB16, UOB17

Option code	OELS/Uplands OELS option title	OELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column	Uplands OELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
OB7	Half ditch management	OB4, OB5, OB12, OB13, OB14	UOB4, UOB5, UOB12, UOB13, UOB15, UOB16, UOB17
OB8	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating OB1)	OB4, OB5, OB12, OB13, OB14	UOB4, UOB5, UOB12, UOB13, UOB15, UOB16
OB9	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating OB2)	OB4, OB5, OB12, OB13, OB14	UOB4, UOB5, UOB12, UOB13, UOB15, UOB16
OB10	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating OB3)	OB4, OB5, OB12, OB13, OB14	UOB4, UOB5, UOB12, UOB13, UOB15, UOB16
OB12	Earth bank management (on both sides)	OB1, OB2, OB3, OB6, OB7, OB8, OB9, OB10, OB14	
OB13	Earth bank management (on one side)	OB1, OB2, OB3, OB6, OB7, OB8, OB9, OB10, OB14	
OB14	Hedgerow restoration	OB1, OB2, OB3, OB4, OB5, OB6, OB7, OB8, OB9, OB10, OB12, OB13	UOB4, UOB5, UOB12, UOB13, UOB15, UOB16
OC2	Protection of in-field trees on organic grassland	OK5	UOL18
OC24	Hedgerow tree buffer strips on rotational land	OE12	
OC25	Hedgerow tree buffer strips on organic grassland	OK5	
OD2	Take out of cultivation archaeological features currently on rotational land	OK5	
OD3	Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on archaeological features (minimum till)	OF8, OG1, OG4, OF13, OJ13	
OD4	Management of scrub on archaeological features	OK4, OK5	UOJ12, UOL18
OD5	Management of archaeological features on grassland	OE4, OE5, OE6, OE7, OE10, OK2, OK3, OK5, OL2, OL3	UOJ12, UOL17, UOL18, UOL20, UOL21, UOL22, UOL23
OE1	2 m buffer strip on rotational land	OE12	
OE2	4 m buffer strip on rotational land	OE12	
OE3	6 m buffer strip on rotational land	OE12	
OE4	2 m buffer strips on organic grassland	OD5, OK5	UOL18

Option code	OELS/Uplands OELS option title	OELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column	Uplands OELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
OE5	4 m buffer strips on organic grassland	OD5, OK5	UOL18
OE6	6 m buffer strips on organic grassland	OD5, OK5	UOL18
OE7	Buffering in-field ponds in organic grassland	OD5, OK5	UOL18
OE9	6 m buffer strips on rotational land next to a watercourse	OE12	
OE10	6 m buffer strips on organic grassland next to a watercourse	OD5, OK5	UOL18
OE12	Supplement to add wildflowers to buffer strips and field corners	OC24, OE1, OE2, OE3, OE9, OF1, OJ5, OJ9	
OF1	Management of field corners	OE12	
OF2	Wild bird seed mixture	OF23	
OF8	Skylark plots	OD3	
OF13	Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds	OD3	
OF22	Extended overwintered stubble	OF23	
OF23	Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds	OF2, OF22	
OG1	Undersown spring cereals	OD3	
OG4	Cereals for whole-crop silage followed by overwintered stubble	OD3	
OJ5	In-field grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off	OE12	
OJ9	12 m buffer strips for watercourses on rotational land	OE12	
OJ13	Winter cover crops	OD3	
OK2	Permanent grassland with low inputs	OD5, OK5	
OK3	Permanent grassland with very low inputs	OD5, OK5	
OK4	Management of rush pastures	OD4, OK5	
OK5	Mixed stocking	OC2, OC25, OD2, OD4, OD5, OE4, OE5, OE6, OE7, OE10, OK2, OK3, OK4, OK21, OL2, OL3, OL4, OL5	UOD13, UOJ12, UOL17, UOL20, UOL21, UOL22, UOL23

Option code	OELS/Uplands OELS option title	OELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column	Uplands OELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
OK21	Legume- and herb-rich swards	OK5	
OL2	Permanent grassland with low inputs in SDAs	OD5, OK5	UOJ12, UOL18, UOL20, UOL21
OL3	Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs	OD5, OK5	UOJ12, UOL18, UOL20, UOL21
OL4	Management of rush pastures in SDAs	OK5	UOD13, UOJ12, UOL17, UOL18
OL5	Enclosed rough grazing	OK5	UOD13, UOL18
UOB4	Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line	OB1, OB2, OB3, OB6, OB7, OB8, OB9, OB10, OB14	
UOB5	Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line	OB1, OB2, OB3, OB6, OB7, OB8, OB9, OB10, OB14	
UOB12	Earth bank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line	OB1, OB2, OB3, OB6, OB7, OB8, OB9, OB10, OB14	
UOB13	Earth bank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line	OB1, OB2, OB3, OB6, OB7, OB8, OB9, OB10, OB14	
UOB15	Stone-faced hedgebank restoration	OB1, OB2, OB3, OB6, OB7, OB8, OB9, OB10, OB14	
UOB16	Earth bank restoration	OB1, OB2, OB3, OB6, OB7, OB8, OB9, OB10, OB14	
UOB17	Stone wall restoration	OB6, OB7	
UOD13	Maintaining visibility of archaeological features on moorland	OK5, OL4, OL5	UOL17, UOL18, UOL22
UOJ12	Winter livestock removal next to streams, rivers and lakes	OD4, OD5, OK5, OL2, OL3, OL4	UOL18, UOL20, UOL21, UOL23
UOL17	No supplementary feeding on moorland	OD5, OK5, OL4	UOD13, UOL18, UOL22
UOL18	Cattle grazing on upland grassland and moorland	OC2, OD4, OD5, OE4, OE5, OE6, OE7, OE10, OL2, OL3, OL4, OL5	UOD13, UOJ12, UOL17, UOL20, UOL21, UOL22, UOL23
UOL20	Haymaking	OD5, OK5, OL2, OL3	UOJ12, UOL18, UOL21
UOL21	No cutting strip within meadows	OD5, OK5, OL2, OL3	UOJ12, UOL18, UOL20
UOL22	Management of enclosed rough grazing for birds	OD5, OK5	UOD13, UOL17, UOL18
UOL23	Management of upland grassland for birds	OD5, OK5	UOJ12, UOL18

Table 7 Co-location of ELS and Uplands ELS options

Option code	ELS/Uplands ELS option title	ELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column	Uplands ELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
EB1	Hedgerow management for landscape (on both sides of a hedge)	EB4, EB5, EB12, EB13, EB14	UB4, UB5, UB12, UB13, UB15, UB16
EB2	Hedgerow management for landscape (on one side of a hedge)	EB4, EB5, EB12, EB13, EB14	UB4, UB5, UB12, UB13, UB15, UB16
EB3	Hedgerow management for landscape and wildlife	EB4, EB5, EB12, EB13, EB14	UB4, UB5, UB12, UB13, UB15, UB16
EB4	Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides	EB1, EB2, EB3, EB6, EB7, EB8, EB9, EB10, EB14	
EB5	Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side	EB1, EB2, EB3, EB6, EB7, EB8, EB9, EB10, EB14	
EB6	Ditch management	EB4, EB5, EB12, EB13, EB14	UB4, UB5, UB12, UB13, UB15, UB16, UB17
EB7	Half ditch management	EB4, EB5, EB12, EB13, EB14	UB4, UB5, UB12, UB13, UB15, UB16, UB17
EB8	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EB1)	EB4, EB5, EB12, EB13, EB14	UB4, UB5, UB12, UB13, UB15, UB16
EB9	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EB2)	EB4, EB5, EB12, EB13, EB14	UB4, UB5, UB12, UB13, UB15, UB16
EB10	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EB3)	EB4, EB5, EB12, EB13, EB14	UB4, UB5, UB12, UB13, UB15, UB16
EB12	Earth bank management (on both sides)	EB1, EB2, EB3, EB6, EB7, EB8, EB9, EB10, EB14	
EB13	Earth bank management (on one side)	EB1, EB2, EB3, EB6, EB7, EB8, EB9, EB10, EB14	
EB14	Hedgerow restoration	EB1, EB2, EB3, EB4, EB5, EB6, EB7, EB8, EB9, EB10, EB12, EB13	UB4, UB5, UB12, UB13, UB15, UB16
EC2	Protection of in-field trees (grassland)	EK5	UL18
EC24	Hedgerow tree buffer strips on cultivated land	EE12	
EC25	Hedgerow tree buffer strips on grassland	EK5	
ED2	Take out of cultivation archaeological features currently on cultivated land	EK5	

Option code	ELS/Uplands ELS option title	ELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column	Uplands ELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
ED3	Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on archaeological features (minimum till)	EF8, EF9, EF10, EG1, EG4, EF13, EF15, EJ13	
ED4	Management of scrub on archaeological features	EK4, EK5	UJ12, UL18
ED5	Management of archaeological features on grassland	EE4, EE5, EE6, EE7, EE10, EK2, EK3, EK5, EL2, EL3	UJ12, UL17, UL18, UL20, UL21, UL22, UL23
EE1	2 m buffer strip on cultivated land	EE12	
EE2	4 m buffer strip on cultivated land	EE12	
EE3	6 m buffer strip on cultivated land	EE12	
EE4	2 m buffer strips on intensive grassland	ED5, EK5	UL18
EE5	4 m buffer strips on intensive grassland	ED5, EK5	UL18
EE6	6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland	ED5, EK5	UL18
EE7	Buffering in-field ponds in improved permanent grassland	ED5, EK5	UL18
EE9	6 m buffer strips on cultivated land next to a watercourse	EE12	
EE10	6 m buffer strips on intensive grassland next to a watercourse	ED5, EK5	UL18
EE12	Supplement to add wildflowers to buffer strips and field corners	EC24, EE1, EE2, EE3, EE9, EF1, EJ5, EJ9	
EF1	Management of field corners	EE12	
EF2	Wild bird seed mixture	EF23	
EF8	Skylark plots	ED3	
EF9	Cereal headlands for birds	ED3	
EF10	Unharvested cereal headlands for birds and rare arable plants	ED3	
EF13	Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds on arable land	ED3	

Option code	ELS/Uplands ELS option title	ELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column	Uplands ELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
EF15	Reduced herbicide cereal crops followed by overwintered stubble	ED3	
EF22	Extended overwintered stubble	EF23	
EF23	Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds	EF2, EF22	
EG1	Undersown spring cereals	ED3	
EG4	Cereals for whole-crop silage followed by overwintered stubble	ED3	
EJ5	In-field grass areas to prevent erosion and run-off	EE12	
EJ9	12 m buffer strips for watercourses on cultivated land	EE12	
EJ13	Winter cover crops	ED3	
EK2	Permanent grassland with low inputs	ED5, EK5	
EK3	Permanent grassland with very low inputs	ED5, EK5	
EK4	Management of rush pastures	ED4, EK5	
EK5	Mixed stocking	EC2, EC25, ED2, ED4, ED5, EE4, EE5, EE6, EE7, EE10, EK2, EK3, EK4, EK21, EL2, EL3, EL4, EL5, EL6	UD13, UJ12, UL17, UL20, UL21, UL22, UL23
EK21	Legume- and herb-rich swards	EK5	
EL2	Permanent grassland with low inputs in SDAs	ED5, EK5	UJ12, UL18, UL20, UL21
EL3	Permanent grassland with very low inputs in SDAs	ED5, EK5	UJ12, UL18, UL20, UL21
EL4	Management of rush pastures in SDAs	EK5	UD13, UJ12, UL17, UL18
EL5	Enclosed rough grazing	EK5	UD13, UL18
EL6	Unenclosed moorland rough grazing	EK5	UD13, UL17, UL18
UB4	Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line	EB1, EB2, EB3, EB6, EB7, EB8, EB9, EB10, EB14	

Option code	ELS/Uplands ELS option title	ELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column	Uplands ELS option codes that may be located on the same land as those listed in the first column
UB5	Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line	EB1, EB2, EB3, EB6, EB7, EB8, EB9, EB10, EB14	
UB12	Earth bank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line	EB1, EB2, EB3, EB6, EB7, EB8, EB9, EB10, EB14	
UB13	Earth bank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line	EB1, EB2, EB3, EB6, EB7, EB8, EB9, EB10, EB14	
UB15	Stone-faced hedgebank restoration	EB1, EB2, EB3, EB6, EB7, EB8, EB9, EB10, EB14	
UB16	Earth bank restoration	EB1, EB2, EB3, EB6, EB7, EB8, EB9, EB10, EB14	
UB17	Stone wall restoration	EB6, EB7	
UD13	Maintaining visibility of archaeological features on moorland	EK5, EL4, EL5, EL6	UL17, UL18, UL22
UJ12	Winter livestock removal next to streams, rivers and lakes	ED4, ED5, EK5, EL2, EL3, EL4	UL18, UL20, UL21, UL23
UL17	No supplementary feeding on moorland	ED5, EK5, EL4, EL6	UD13, UL18, UL22
UL18	Cattle grazing on upland grassland and moorland	EC2, ED4, ED5, EE4, EE5, EE6, EE7, EE10, EL2, EL3, EL4, EL5, EL6	UD13, UJ12, UL17, UL20, UL21, UL22, UL23
UL20	Haymaking	ED5, EK5, EL2, EL3	UJ12, UL18, UL21
UL21	No cutting strip within meadows	ED5, EK5, EL2, EL3	UJ12, UL18, UL20
UL22	Management of enclosed rough grazing for birds	ED5, EK5	UD13, UL17, UL18
UL23	Management of upland grassland for birds	ED5, EK5	UJ12, UL18

Silver-studded Blue

Section 4
How to apply for OELS and Uplands OELS

4.1 Before you apply

4.1.1 Things to do before you apply

Before you apply, you need to make sure that:

- You understand the scheme requirements – see Section 5.
- You have read the scheme rules – see Section 5.
- You are eligible to apply for the scheme – see Section 5.3.
- Your land is eligible to be included in your application – see Section 5.4.
- You have registered all of your farm land on your holding on the Rural Land Register (RLR) administered by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) (see Appendix 2 for contact details).
- You have a vendor number, County Parish Holding (CPH) number and Single Business Identifier (SBI) number. If you have previously claimed payments under the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) an England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) or Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) scheme, you will already have been issued with a vendor number. The CPH number enables Natural England to identify the location of your holding and provide your application maps. If you do not have a vendor number or CPH number you must obtain one from the RPA (see Appendix 2 for contact details).

4.1.2 Register conventionally managed land and organically managed land separately

Where a parcel of land is managed both conventionally and organically, you must split the parcel into two and register each area separately on the RLR before it can be included in your application or contribute towards either your OELS-eligible or ELS-eligible land areas. If you need to register a split parcel, request an RLE1 form when you contact the RPA (see Appendix 2 for contact details).

In order for the area of organically managed land that previously made up the split parcel to be eligible for OELS and count towards your OELS-eligible land area and points target, it must also be registered as either fully organic or in conversion with your Organic Inspection Body and listed as such on your annual certificates of organic registration and accompanying schedules.

However, where you find it difficult to split a parcel, you may choose to exclude it entirely from your application. If you choose to do this, please be aware that you will not receive any OELS or ELS payment for the excluded area.

If you need to delete a split parcel from your pre-filled application form, you should follow the instructions provided in Section 4.3.3 Step 1.

4.1.3 Obtain an application form and maps

OELS applications must be submitted by post. To apply by post, you will have to obtain an application pack. To do so, you should call your local Natural England office (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

You will be asked to confirm the following:

- your name and correspondence address;
- your vendor number; and
- the CPH numbers covering the eligible RLR land parcels you are entering into OELS.

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 5.4.2).

- 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 5.4.1).

You may also request the following forms:

- Agent authorisation form (NE-auth) (see Section 1.2.9)
- Supplementary land ownership and control form (NE-LOC) (see Section 5.3.2)
- OELS field parcel reconciliation form (NE-FPR) (see Section 4.3.3, Step 9).

Natural England will then send you the personalised application form and application maps that you will need in order to prepare your postal application (see Section 4.3.3 for how to complete these).

Please note that requesting and receiving a set of maps and a personalised application 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.

4.1.4 Check your application pack is complete

Your application pack will include:

- A personalised application form, which has been pre-filled with information about you and your land, including RLR parcel numbers and areas. You must ensure that you choose enough options to reach your points target and 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 (SSSIs), Scheduled Monuments and Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs), 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 4.3.3 Step 5 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 4.3.3 Steps 7 and 8 and the example Options Map included with this handbook) and should be returned with your application form.

Step-by-step advice on completing the application form is given at Section 4.3.2.

4.2 Choosing your options

4.2.1 Selecting the right options for your farm

Choosing the right combination of options and locating these in the right places on your land can make a huge difference to the environmental outcomes you see through the scheme. By carrying out the following simple steps you will ensure your OELS agreement makes a positive contribution to the environment whilst complementing your farming system.

a. First read the information about the aims and objectives of OELS in Section 2.
b. The maps in the theme pages and at **www.naturalengland.org.uk/es** will show you which of the objectives are a priority in your area.
c. Use this information to select which of the schemes objectives you want your OELS agreement to address. You can choose to address more than one objective, depending on which ones are a priority in your area.
d. The Environmental Information Map included in your application pack will show any features of particular historic, landscape or wildlife interest on your farm. Use this to complete your FER.
e. Match the options in your selected theme or themes against the features listed in your FER. Where there is a clear link, select these options first.
f. Make up the balance of points by selecting other options from within your chosen theme(s). A mixture of different options within an agreement is always preferable. The theme pages provide details about the best combinations of options.

g. Position your options where they will deliver the maximum benefit for your local environment. The theme pages provide information about where to locate your options.
h. You must ensure that you do not locate any options where they would be detrimental to an environmental feature.

Section 3 of this handbook, the Option directory, contains the complete list of O/ELS and Uplands O/ELS options. It describes in detail 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 ensure you understand the management you will be required to undertake, and the standards you must meet. A number of options have area constraints requirements, so you must ensure that you do not exceed the limit for the options you select.

4.2.2 Advice on conversion to organic farming

You can get advice on conversion to organic farming and organic certification and standards from Business Link at **www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1083732127**.

4.2.3 Further help: free farm visits and events

Natural England can provide a free OELS farm visit from an organic farming and environment specialist. The support provided can include:

- a discussion on the options most suited to your farm to benefit farmland birds, wildlife, water, soil, the historic environment and climate change;
- practical suggestions on option location and management, such as tips on establishing wild bird and nectar seed mixes, guidance on buffer strip weed control, how to get a good sward structure;
- information on new and updated options;
- an explanation of the financial benefits of the scheme and how options can complement your existing farming practices;
- information and support relating to applications for OELS.

Natural England also runs a programme of farm events to deal with the above topics from a local perspective. To arrange a FREE farm visit or to book a place on a farm event please contact our events team on 0300 060 1695. You should note that our advisers cannot complete your application for you, but can advise on suitable options for your holding.

4.2.4 Meet your points target

Your application form will be pre-populated with a points target, based on the area of your eligible land. (If you have both organic and conventional land, you will have separate OELS and ELS points targets. To join the scheme, you will need to choose enough options to reach your points target(s).

Each option that you choose will earn points towards your points target. You will also earn 1 point per hectare for completing your FER. In Uplands OELS, the compulsory requirements UOX2 and UOX3 will also earn you points towards your points target.

Your OELS and ELS points target(s) 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. You are responsible for ensuring any areas or lengths entered on the application form are accurate. These will be checked by the RPA during an inspection and a penalty could be applied if they are wrong. 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 5.7).

For Uplands OELS you can use any combination of Uplands OELS and OELS options to meet your points target, provided the individual option eligibility requirements are met.

4.2.5 Can you have more than one option on the same area of land?

Under OELS, 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.

Under Uplands OELS, you can have up to **three** land management options overlapping on the same area of land at the same time. However, three options can only be co-located (overlapping) in the following circumstances: 1) when the parcel is within the SDA ***and*** 2) when there is at least one Uplands OELS option on the parcel (excluding compulsory requirements and UOL18).

Tables 6 and 7 in Section 3.5 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-parcel options may be placed in the same land parcel, as long as they do not overlap on the ground.

4.2.6 What should you do if you have already sown your 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.

If your options involve work that can only take place at certain times of year/under certain conditions(for example, fencing options, creating beetle banks) you must complete the work and comply with the option prescriptions as soon as possible within the first 12 months of your agreement.

4.3 How to complete your application

4.3.1 Before you begin

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.

Copies of your current valid certificates of organic registration and accompanying schedules must be submitted along with your FER and Options Maps.

Detailed instructions and guidance on how to complete the application form and how to prepare the maps are provided below. Table 8 provides a step-by-step summary of the application process.

4.3.2 Step-by-step summary of how to apply

Please read Section 5, Terms and conditions in this handbook to make sure that you and your land are eligible before you start to complete your application. This step-by-step guide covers both OELS and Uplands OELS.

If you are applying for OELS only, please refer to Steps 1–3, 5–7, 9–11 and 13–14; if you are applying for combined ELS/OELS, please refer to Steps 1–14.

Table 8 Step-by-step summary of how to apply for OELS or combined OELS/ELS

		OELS	OELS /ELS
Step 1	Check that your maps and the pre-filled details on your application form are correct. Check that your RLR parcel details on your Field Data Sheet in Annex 2 of your application form are correct.	✓	✓
Step 2	Calculate the areas of land eligible to attract conversion aid payments and complete the conversion aid columns in Annex 2 of your application form.	✓	✓
Step 3	Calculate your points target for your OELS-eligible land.	✓	✓
Step 4	Calculate your points target for your ELS-eligible land		✓
Step 5	Complete your FER by marking the features on your land on your FER Map and adding your points for the FER to Annex 1 of the application form.	✓	✓
Step 6	Identify and record on your FER Map any fields at risk from soil erosion or run-off.	✓	✓
Step 7	Choose which options to include on your OELS-eligible land, mark your OELS option choices on the Options Map, and add the options to Annexes 1a and 2 of the application form.	✓	✓
Step 8	Choose which options to include on your ELS-eligible land, mark your ELS option choices on the Options Map, and add the options to Annexes 1b and 2 of the application form.		✓
Step 9	Complete your NE-FPR form to reconcile the SPS or Ordnance Survey (OS) parcel numbers on your current valid certificates of organic registration and accompanying schedules with the RLR numbers on your OELS application form.	✓	✓
Step 10	Complete Sections 1 and 2 of your application form, making sure that: ■ you have chosen your preferred agreement start date by ticking the relevant box in Question 7; ■ if you are making a countersigned application, you have completed Question 8 and the relevant person has completed Question 8a–d and completed and signed the Land Ownership and Control Declaration and Undertakings section; and ■ you have entered details of your farm enterprise(s) at Question 13.	✓	✓
Step 11	Complete Section 3 of your application form and check that you have met or exceeded your points target on your OELS-eligible land.	✓	✓
Step 12	Complete Section 4 of your application form and check that you have met or exceeded your points target on your ELS-eligible land.		✓
Step 13	Complete the Checklist and complete and sign Section 5 of your application form, making sure that: ■ you have checked that you have completed all sections of the application form and included any supplementary forms or photographs if required with your application; ■ you have checked the box in Section 5 to confirm which scheme you are applying for; ■ if you are making a countersigned application, you and the counter signatory have read and understood the declarations and undertakings in Section 2; ■ you have read and understood all the terms and conditions contained in this handbook; and ■ you have read and understood the declarations and undertakings in Section 5.	✓	✓
Step 14	Submit your application to Natural England in the envelope provided. You should include valid schedules and certificates from an Organic Inspection Body for all the land parcels being entered into OELS.	✓	✓

4.3.3 How to fill in your application form and mark 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 the Terms and conditions section 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 us for a new application form and maps. You must not add any parcels to your pre-filled details on the Field Data Sheet.

If you need to delete any parcels, for example, if a Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) or Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) option covers the whole parcel and therefore is not eligible for OELS, 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 OELS applications, Box 1a, 1b, 2a or 2b should be amended.
- At Tables A and C, 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 Tables A and C if you are applying for OELS without Uplands, or Part 2 of Tables A and C if you are applying for Uplands OELS.
- Alternatively, you may find it easier to contact us and ask for a replacement application form and map(s) covering the correct parcels.

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

Step 2: Calculating conversion aid and details of organic farm enterprise

You will need:

- Section 2 and Annex 2 of your application form – your Field Data Sheet(s); and
- your current valid certificates of organic registration and accompanying schedules issued by your Organic Inspection Body.

Use Annex 2 and your certificates and schedules to identify the parcels that are eligible for, and on which you wish to claim, conversion aid. Record the eligible areas under each conversion aid category column in Annex 2.

Guidance on what land is eligible for conversion aid payments can be found at Section 3 of this handbook.

Step 3: Calculate your points target for your OELS-eligible land

You will need:

- Section 3 and Annex 2 of your application form – your Field Data Sheet(s).

Calculate your OELS points target as follows:

- Identify the relevant fields listed in Annex 2 that are eligible for OELS by placing a tick in the 'Tick if eligible for OELS' column (see Section 5.4 for details of the land that can be entered into OELS). If you have already ticked this box as a result of claiming conversion aid payments on that particular parcel, there is no need to tick it again.

- Calculate the total area of all fields eligible for OELS and write this figure in Box 1 at the bottom of Annex 2 and in Table A (Part 2 for Uplands OELS applications) at Section 3.
- Complete Table A by multiplying this figure by 60 and record the result in the column headed 'Points target' in Table A. The result is your points target on your OELS-eligible land.

Step 4: Calculating your points target on your ELS-eligible land

You will need:

- Section 4 and Annex 2 of your application form – your Field Data Sheet.

Calculate your ELS points target as follows:

- See Section 5.4 for details of the land that can be entered into the ELS element of your application.
- Calculate the total area of all fields listed on the Field Data Sheet that are eligible for ELS, excluding common land and those land parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line. Write this figure in Box 2 at the bottom of the Field Data Sheet at Annex 2 and into Table C (Part 2 for Uplands OELS applications) at Section 4.
- Multiply this figure by 30 and record the result in the column headed 'Points target' in Table C.
- Calculate the total area of any fields listed on the Field Data Sheet that are land parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line. Write this figure in Box 3 at the bottom of the Field Data Sheet and in Table C (Part 2 for Uplands OELS applications) at Section 4 of the application form.
- Multiply this figure by 8 and record the result in the column headed 'Points target' in Table C.
- Complete Table C at Section 4 of the application form by adding together the points targets for the two categories of ELS-eligible land. The result is your points target on your ELS-eligible land.

Step 5: 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 1a of your application form; and
- (combined OELS/ELS only) you will also need Section 4 and Annex 1b 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 holding and marking the features on a copy of your FER Map as you go may help you 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 OELS, 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 UOX2 or UOX3 requirements.

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

Only boundaries with, on average, one 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 one point 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, we 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 Tables A and C 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 Tables A and C. For applications which include SDA land, this will be Part 1 of Tables A and C if you are applying for OELS without Uplands, or Part 2 of Tables A and C if you are applying for Uplands OELS.
- Use your total OELS-eligible land area in hectares (recorded in Section 3 of your application form) to give your points score for the FER on your OELS-eligible land. Record your points score in the top row of the table in Annex 1a of the application form (see Figure 9). For applications which include SDA land, this will be Part 1 of Table A if you are applying for OELS without Uplands, or Part 2 of Table A if you are applying for Uplands OELS.
- Use your total ELS-eligible land area (if any) 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 1b of the application form.

Step 6: Identify fields where soil erosion and run-off occur, or may do so in the future

You will need:

- your FER Map; and
- Annex 2 of your application form (your Field Data Sheet).

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 parcel or when stock have poached the soil):

- if rills or gullies develop in wet weather, including along tramlines;
- if muddy water from the parcel enters a ditch, stream or river or sediment is deposited on a road or 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 parcel that may cause run-off and erosion; and
- run-off will reach ditches, streams, rivers, roads, or neighbouring properties down-slope of the parcel.

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 soils and water) of this handbook.

Step 7: Choose which options to include on your OELS-eligible land

You will need:

- your Options Map;
- the example Options Map (included in this handbook), which will help to show you how to mark your map; and
- Annexes 1a and 2 and Section 3 of your application form.

You must include sufficient options to meet your points target. Section 1.2.5 explains how your points target is calculated. Your points target will be shown in Table A on your application form.

Read Section 2 of this handbook to find out which options are a priority for your area.

Read Section 3 of this handbook to find out which OELS options can be located on your OELS-eligible land. You will see that there is a wide range of options designed for a variety of farming systems. Please read through all the OELS options and decide which ones you would like to include in your application in addition to option OU1 (Organic management), which is mandatory on all of your OELS-eligible parcels. 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 OELS applications only, compulsory options UOX2 (Upland grassland and arable requirements) and UOX3 (Moorland requirements), which must be included where the respective land type forms part of your application.

To record option OU1 (Organic management) on Annex 2 of your application form, you must:

- enter the area of the fields eligible for OELS (see Section 5.4) into the column headed 'OU1 Organic management' in Annex 2. Calculate the total area of option OU1 and record this figure in the row marked 'Total amount (ha/no.)' in Annex 2; and
- write the code OU into each of these fields on your Options Map(s).

For all other OELS options you wish to locate on your OELS-eligible land, you must:

- decide where the option is to be located on the land (you may decide that you want to have the option in more than one location);
- check if the option has an area constraint requirement and that you have not exceeded the limit for that option (see Section 3);
- mark every instance of the option with a coloured pencil on your Options Map(s) using the colour for that option as specified on the Options Map key. Do not mark rotational options on your Options Map – these are recorded at Annex 1a (see below); and
- write the appropriate option code, using a fine black pen, on or against the option in each place where you have marked it on your Options Map(s).

In addition, if you have any CSS, ESA or Energy Crops Scheme (ECS) non-rotational options on a part-parcel basis, you must mark their location on your Options Map(s). Please note that if a CSS or ESA option covers a whole parcel, the parcel is not eligible for OELS. See Section 5.4.4 for details. If you have any CSS or ESA options on a part-parcel, that parcel is not eligible for Uplands OELS.

Please take care to measure option lengths or areas and 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 OELS-eligible land, using Annexes 1a and 2 of your application form:

- Use Annex 1a for OELS boundary, rotational and traditional farm building options. Instructions and guidance on how to complete Annex 1a are provided in Figure 9.
- Use Annex 2 (the Field Data Sheet) for OELS non-rotational options within fields (for example, buffer strips). Instructions and guidance on how to complete Annex 2 are provided in Figure 11. Do not use Annex 2 to record OELS rotational options.

Step 8: Choose which options to include on your ELS-eligible land

You will need:

- your Options Map;
- the example Options Map (included in this handbook), which will help to show you how to mark your map; and
- Annexes 1b and 2 and Section 4 of your application form.

You must include sufficient options to meet your points target. Section 1.2.5 explains how your points target is calculated. Your points target will be shown in Table A on your application form.

Read Section 2 of this handbook to find out which options are a priority for your area.

Read Section 3 of this handbook to find out which options can be located on your ELS-eligible land. Please read through all of the options and decide which ones you would like to include in your application. For Uplands OELS applications only, compulsory options UX2 (Upland grassland and arable requirements) and UX3 (Moorland requirements) must be included where the respective land type is part of your application. A summary table of OELS and ELS options (Table 3) is provided at Section 3.

Refer to your Environmental Information Map and FER to ensure that your option choices will help to protect and manage the environmental features on your land.

For each of your chosen options 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);
- check if the option has an area constraint requirement and that you have not exceeded the limit for that option (see Section 3);
- 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 are recorded at Annex 1b of your application form; and
- write the appropriate option code, using a fine black pen, on or against the option in each place where 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-parcel basis, you must mark their location on your Options Map(s). Please note that if a CSS or ESA option covers a whole parcel, the parcel is not eligible for ELS. See Section 5.4.4 for details. If you have any CSS or ESA options on a part-parcel, that parcel is not eligible for Uplands OELS.

Please take care to measure option lengths or areas and 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 1b and 2 of your application form:

- Use Annex 1b for ELS boundary, rotational and traditional farm building options. Instructions and guidance on how to complete Annex 1b are provided in Figure 10.
- Use Annex 2 (the Field Data Sheet) for ELS non-rotational options within fields (for example, buffer strips). Instructions and guidance on how to complete Annex 2 are provided in Figure 11.

Step 9: How to use the field parcel reconciliation form

You will need to identify and record each of the parcels affected on an OELS field parcel reconciliation (NE-FPR) form, a copy of which can be found in your application pack. Your certificates and accompanying schedules may well list your fields according to their IACS or OS parcel numbers, while Annex 2 of your application form will list them by their RLR equivalent.

If your certificates and accompanying schedules already list your parcels by their RLR reference numbers, you do not need to complete this form.

To identify your RLR parcel numbers/areas for each OELS-eligible parcel, you will need:

- your NE-FPR form;
- Annex 2 of your application – your Field Data Sheet; and
- your current, valid certificates of organic registration and accompanying schedules issued by your Organic Inspection Body.

On the NE-FPR form:

- List all of the RLR parcel numbers found in column 1 of Annex 2 (the Field Data Sheet) that do not match the parcel's entries in your certificates and accompanying schedules in column 1 of your NE-FPR form.
- Record the size of each RLR parcel in ha in column 2 of the NE-FPR form as it appears in Annex 2 of your Field Data Sheet.

- Using your current valid certificates and accompanying schedules, list the corresponding parcel numbers for each of your parcels against their corresponding RLR parcel entries in column 3 of the NE-FPR form.
- Record the size in ha of each parcel as it appears in your certificate and accompanying schedules against each RLR parcel entry in the appropriate column of the NE-FPR form.
- Finally, record the name of each parcel as it appears in your certificate of registration and accompanying schedules in column 5 of the NE-FPR form against each RLR parcel entry.

Step 10: Complete Sections 1 and 2 of your application form

Complete Sections 1 and 2 of your application form, making sure that:

- **You have chosen your preferred agreement start date** by ticking the relevant box at Question 7. Your farming system and choice of options may influence the time of year when you would like your agreement to start. OELS 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. You should note that your choice of start date will affect the timing of your payments (see Section 1.2.7).
- **If you are making a countersigned application** (see Section 5.3 of this handbook), you have completed Question 8 and the relevant person has completed Question 8a–d and completed and signed the Land Ownership and Control Declaration and Undertakings section (see Section 5.3).; and
- **You have entered details of your farm enterprise** at Question 13, by entering a '1' in the corresponding box for your primary farming enterprise, and, where you have a secondary farming enterprise only, entering a '2' in the corresponding box.

Step 11: Complete Section 3 of the application form and check that you have met your points target on your OELS-eligible land

You will need:

- Annexes 1a and 2 and Section 3 of the application form.

Once you have chosen your OELS options, you should calculate the total points accumulated as follows:

- Transfer your total OELS points from Annex 1a and Annex 2 (Box 4) (including any continuation sheets) to the corresponding boxes in Table B of Section 3 of your application form.
- Add these two figures together to determine your total points on your OELS-eligible land and record this figure in Table B. This figure must meet or exceed your OELS points target (Table A of Section 3) to qualify for entry to the scheme.

Remember that you are responsible for ensuring that all of the options listed at Annexes 1a and 2 of your application form are delivered. This information forms the basis of your agreement with Natural England.

Step 12: Complete Section 4 of the application form and check that you have met your points target on your ELS-eligible land

You will need:

- Annexes 1b and 2 and Section 4 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 1b and Annex 2 (including any continuation sheets) to the corresponding boxes in Table D of Section 4.
- Add these two figures together to determine your total ELS points and record this in Table D. This figure must meet or exceed your Total ELS Points Target (Table C of Section 4) to qualify for entry to the scheme.

Please note you must meet or exceed both your OELS and ELS points targets for your application to be successful. You will need to do a similar calculation to ensure you have met your Uplands OELS points target. You are also responsible for ensuring that all the options listed at Annexes 1b and 2 on your application form are delivered. This information forms the basis of your agreement with Natural England.

Step 13: Complete the Checklist and Section 5 of your application form
You will need:
- Checklist and Section 5 of the application form.

Complete the Checklist and complete and sign Section 5 of your application form, making sure that:
- you have checked that you have completed all sections of the application form and included any supplementary forms or photographs if required with your application;
- you have checked the box in Section 5 to confirm which scheme you are applying for;
- if you are making a countersigned application, you and the counter signatory have read and understood the declarations and undertakings in Section 2;
- you have read and understood all the terms and conditions contained in this handbook; and
- you have read and understood the declarations and undertakings in Section 5.

Step 14: Submit your application
Natural England contact details are provided in Appendix 1 of this handbook.

Please return the following to Natural England in the envelope provided with your application pack:
- your completed and signed application form;
- Annexes 1a, 1b and 2 of your application form;
- your FER Map marked with your FER features;
- your Options Map marked with the options you have chosen;
- copies of your current valid certificates of organic registration and accompanying schedules issued by your Organic Inspection Body for all of the land comprising your organic unit; and
- form NE-FPR (field parcel reconciliation form) – unless your current certificates and schedules list your land by RLR reference numbers, in which case you do not need to complete this form.

Where appropriate you should also include:
- Agent Authorisation form (NE-auth)
- Supplementary Land Ownership and Control Form(s) (NE-LOC)
- Any photographs you are required to submit (options OB11, OB14 and OD1, Uplands OELS options UOB15 to UOB17, UOD12 and UOD13, options EB11, EB14 and ED1 and Uplands ELS options UB15 to 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.

4.4 What happens next?

4.4.1 What happens once you have submitted your application?
Once your application has been received by us, it will be checked to see:
- if you meet the eligibility requirements;
- that all the necessary details have been entered on your application form;
- that all your maps have been completed; and
- that copies of your current valid certificates of organic registration and accompanying schedules have been provided.

If your application passes these simple checks, we 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. You can expect to receive a decision within three months of submitting your application.

4.4.2 What will you receive if your application has been successful?

If your application has been completed accurately and you have met your OELS (and, if appropriate ELS) points targets, we will send you a letter confirming:

- your acceptance into the scheme;
- your agreement start date;
- your total annual payment;
- the OELS (and ELS) options you have chosen, the locations for non-rotational options and the total amounts for each option, including rotational options; and
- summary details of the land entered into conversion and attracting conversion aid.

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 5.5.7).

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

4.4.3 What if your 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.

If you are unhappy with the decision, see Section 5.7.4.

Brown hare

Figure 9 How to complete Annex 1a

To record your FER

Step A: Record the total OELS-eligible area in the 'Measurement' column.

Step B: Convert the measurement to points (multiply the total OELS-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 OJ11)

Step C: 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.

Step D: Record each measurement, to the nearest metre, in the relevant row.

Step E: 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

Step F: Measure the total ground floor area of buildings to be included in this option.

Step G: Record the total area in the 'Measurement' column.

Step H: Convert the measurement to points, to the nearest whole point, and record this figure in the 'Your points' column.

To record rotational options

Step I: Assess the area of land to be managed under the rotational option.

Step J: Record the area in the 'Measurement' column of the relevant row. Record the area measurement to the nearest 0.01 ha (or for skylark plots – OF8 – record the number of plots, or for OF23 (Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds) the amount of feed in tonnes).

Step K: 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 1a and that the declared area and required management is delivered in every year of your agreement.

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

Once you have recorded all your chosen options at Annex 1a, you must calculate your total OELS 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 1a.

Please record your choice of OELS boundary, rotational and traditional farm buildings options on the table below. These options are only available on your OLES eligible land. Completion of the Farm Environment Record map and selection of option OA1 is compulsory

Code	Description	Points available	Measurement	Your points
OA1	Compulsory Farm Environment Record	3 per ha	*107* ha	*321*
OB1	Hedgerow management (both sides of hedge)	22 per 100 m	*1150* m	*253*
OB2	Hedgerow management (one side of hedge)	11 per 100 m	*234* m	*26*
OB3	Enhanced hedgerow management (both sides of hedge)	42 per 100 m	m	
OB4	Stone faced hedge bank management on both sides	16 per 100 m	m	
OB5	Stone faced hedge bank management on one side	8 per 100 m	m	
OB6	Ditch management	24 per 100 m	m	
OB7	Half ditch management	8 per 100 m	m	
OB8	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating OB1 hedgerow management)	38 per 100 m	m	
OB9	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating OB2 hedgerow management)	26 per 100 m	m	
OB10	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating OB3 hedgerow management)	56 per 100 m	*1500* m	*840*
OB11	Stone wall protection and maintenance	15 per 100 m	m	
OB12	Earth bank management on both sides	14 per 100 m	m	
OB13	Earth bank management on one side	7 per 100 m	m	
OC3	Maintenance of woodland fences	4 per 100 m	m	
OC23	Establishment of hedgerow trees by tagging	1 per tree	tree	
OD1	Maintenance of traditional farm buildings	2 per m^2	*81* m^2	*162*
OF2	Wild bird seed mixture	550 per ha	ha	
OF4	Nectar flower mixture	550 per ha	ha	
OF6	Over wintered stubble	150 per ha	*10* ha	*1500*
OF8	Skylark plots	5 per plot	*28* plots	*140*
OF13	Uncropped cultivated areas for ground nesting birds	360 per ha	ha	
OF23	Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds	612 per tonne	tonne	
OG1	Under sown spring cereals	150 per ha	ha	
OG4	Cereals for whole crop silage followed by over-wintered stubble	250 per ha	ha	
OJ2	Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion	18 per ha	ha	
OJ11	Maintenance of watercourse fencing	4 per 100 m	m	
OJ13	Winter cover crops	65 per ha	ha	
OK20	Ryegrass seed-set as winter/spring food for birds	190 per ha	ha	
OK21	Legume- and herb-rich swards	250 per ha	ha	
The following options can only be chosen if you are applying for Uplands OELS.				
UOB4	Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line	24 per 100 m	m	
UOB5	Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line	12 per 100 m	m	
UOB11	Stone wall protection and maintenance on or above the Moorland Line	32 per 100 m	m	
UOB12	Earth bank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line	18 per 100 m	m	
UOB13	Earth bank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line	9 per 100 m	m	
UOB15	Stone-faced hedgebank restoration	55 per m	m	
UOB16	Earth bank restoration	12.5 per m	m	
UOB17	Stone wall restoration	30 per m	m	
UOC5	Sheep fencing around woodlands	50 per 100 m	m	
UOD12	Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings in remote locations	4 per m^2	m^2	
UOJ3	Post and wire fencing along watercourses	50 per 100 m	m	
Total points for Annex 1a Please enter this total in the box at Section 3 table B of this application form				*3242*

Annex 1b.
Please record your choice of ELS boundary, rotational and traditional farm buildings options on the table below. These options are only available on any ELS eligible land you have on your holding. Completion of the Farm Environment Record map and selection of option EA1 is compulsory.

Code	Description	Points available	Measurement	Your points
EA1	Compulsory Farm Environment Record	3 per ha	40 ha	120
EB1	Hedgerow management (both sides of hedge)	22 per 100m	m	
EB2	Hedgerow management (one side of hedge)	11 per 100m	m	
EB3	Enhanced hedgerow management (both sides of hedge)	42 per 100m	m	
EB4	Stone faced hedge bank management on both sides	16 per 100m	m	
EB5	Stone faced hedge bank management on one side	8 per 100m	m	
EB6	Ditch management	24 per 100m	560 m	134
EB7	Half ditch management	8 per 100m	m	
EB8	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EB1 hedgerow management)	38 per 100m	m	
EB9	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EB2 hedgerow management)	26 per 100m	m	
EB10	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating EB3 hedgerow management)	56 per 100m	m	
EB11	Stone wall protection and maintenance	15 per 100m	m	
EC3	Maintenance of woodland fences	4 per 100m	m	
ED1	Maintenance of traditional farm buildings	2 per m^2	90 m^2	180
EF2	Wild bird seed mixture	450 per ha	ha	
EF4	Nectar flower mixture	450 per ha	ha	
EF6	Overwintered stubble	120 per ha	ha	
EF8	Skylark plots	5 per plot	2 plots	10
EF9	Unfertilised cereal headland within arable fields	100 per ha	ha	
EF10	Unharvested cereal headland within arable fields	330 per ha	ha	
EF13	Uncropped, cultivated areas for ground-nesting birds	360 per ha	ha	
EF15	Reduced herbicide cereal crops followed by over wintered stubble	195 per ha	ha	
EF22	Extended overwintered stubble	410 per ha	ha	
EF23	Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds	630 per tonne	tonne	
EG1	Under sown spring cereals	200 per ha	ha	
EG4	Cereals for whole crop silage followed by over-wintered stubble	230 per ha	ha	
EJ2	Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion	18 per ha	ha	
EJ10	Enhanced management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion and run-off	90 per ha	ha	
EJ11	Maintenance of watercourse fencing	4 per 100m	m	
EK20	Ryegrass seed-set as winter/spring food for birds	80 per ha	ha	
EK21	Legume- and herb-rich swards	200 per ha	ha	
The following options can only be chosen if you are applying for Uplands OELS.				
UB4	Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line	24 per 100m	m	
UB5	Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line	12 per 100m	m	
UB11	Stone wall protection and maintenance on or above the Moorland Line	32 per 100m	m	
UB12	Earth bank management on both sides on or above the Moorland Line	18 per 100m	m	
UB13	Earth bank management on one side on or above the Moorland Line	9 per 100m	m	
UB15	Stone-faced hedgebank restoration	55 per m	m	
UB16	Earth bank restoration	12.5 per m	m	
UB17	Stone wall restoration	30 per m	m	
UC5	Sheep fencing around woodlands	50 per 100m	m	
UD12	Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings in remote locations	4 per m^2	m^2	
UJ3	Post and wire fencing along watercourses	50 per 100m	m	
Total points for Annex 1b Please enter this total in the box at Section 4 table D of this application form				444

Figure 10 How to complete Annex 1b

To record your FER

Step A: Record the total ELS-eligible area in the 'Measurement' column.

Step B: 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 EJ11)

Step C: 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.

Step D: Record each measurement, to the nearest metre, in the relevant row.

Step E: 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

Step F: Measure the total ground floor area of buildings to be included in this option.

Step G: Record the total area in the 'Measurement' column.

Step H: Convert the measurement to points, to the nearest whole point, and record this figure in the 'Your points' column.

To record rotational options

Step I: Assess the area of land to be managed under the rotational option.

Step J: Record the area in the 'Measurement' column of the relevant row. Record the area measurement to the nearest 0.01 ha (or for EF8 (Skylark plots), record the number of plots, or for EF23 (Supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds) the amount of feed in tonnes).

Step K: Convert the measurement to points and record this in the 'Your points' column.

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

For applications that include SDA land, Uplands ELS options will also be shown on Annex 1b. If you are applying for Uplands OELS, these should be recorded in the same way as listed above under the relevant option type.

Once you have recorded all your chosen options at Annex 1b, 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 D in Section 4 of your application form.

Figure 11 How to complete Annex 2: Your OELS and ELS Field Data Sheet

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

Step B: Place a tick in the column headed 'Tick if eligible for OELS' against all OELS-eligible parcels.

Step C: Record the organic registered area of each OELS-eligible parcel in the corresponding row of the OU1 column to the nearest 0.01 ha (100 m²).

To record soil erosion and run-off risk

Step D: Place a tick in the column headed 'Soil erosion/run-off risk' for each relevant parcel (see Section 2.3.4 Step 6)

To record your compulsory requirements [Uplands OELS only]

Step E: For applications that include SDA land, compulsory requirements UOX2, UOX3, UX2 and UX3 will be shown to the right of the OU1 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:

- UOX2 column – all organic SDA parcels below the Moorland Line.
- UOX3 column – all organic SDA parcels above the Moorland Line.
- UX2 column – all conventional SDA parcels below the Moorland Line.
- UX3 column – all conventional SDA parcels above the Moorland Line.

Step F:

- OELS (without Uplands)

Calculate the total area of organic land, excluding parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line. Record this figure in Box 1 and in Table A (Part 1 for applications which include SDA land) at Section 3 of your application form.

- Uplands OELS
  - Calculate the total area of organic non-LFA land, Disadvantaged land and parcels under 15 ha of Disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line. Record this figure in Box 1a and in Table A, Part 2 at Section 3 of your application form.
  - Calculate the total area of organic Severely Disadvantaged land and parcels under 15 ha of Severely Disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line. Record this figure in Box 1b and in Table A, Part 1 at Section 3 of your application form.

Step G: Record the area of each parcel eligible for conversion aid in the relevant column.

Step H: Calculate the total area of all the parcels that are eligible for conversion aid. Record the figures in the 'Total amount' row of the relevant columns.

Annex 2: Field Data Sheet for OELS and ELS non-rotational options within fields

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

Application reference

RLR field no.	RLR field size (ha)	LFA Status*	Soil erosion/run off risk? (tick if YES)	Tick if eligible for OELS	OELS/ELS Options: Improved Land (ha)	Top Fruit (ha)	OU1 Organic Management (ha)	UXo2 Upland grassland & arable requirements (ha)	UXo3 Moorland requirements (ha)	UX2 Upland grassland & arable requirements (ha)	UX3 Moorland requirements (ha)	OE5 Amount (ha/no.)	OK1 Amount (ha/no.)	ED4 Amount (ha/no.)	Amount (ha/no.)	Total points ELS/OELS Points (this sheet)
XX1234 5678	33.27	N		✓	23.12		33.27					0.93				
XX1234 6789	19.93	N		✓	19.34		19.83						0.5			
XX1234 7890	21.54	N		✓		18.93	21.54									
XX1234 8901	22.51	N	✓	✓		22.51	22.51									
XX1234 9012	10.27	N	✓	✓	5.33	4.94	10.27									
XX1234 0123	19.45	N	✓													
XX1234 1234	9.54	N	✓											3.18		
XX1234 2345	11.32	N	✓													
Total amount (ha/no.)					47.79	46.40	107.42					0.93	0.5	3.18		
OELS points per unit							30					500	500			
OELS points							3222					465	250			4 3937
ELS points per unit														120		
ELS points														382		5 382

* N = non-Less Favoured Area (LFA) land, LFA land: D = Disadvantaged land, MD = Disadvantaged Land above the Moorland Line, S = Severely Disadvantaged Land, MS = Severely Disadvantaged Land above the Moorland Line

Land area totals

OELS (without Uplands)	1 107.42	Total area of organic land, excluding parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line and ineligible land (this sheet)
	2 40.31	Total area of conventional land, excluding parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line and ineligible land parcels (this sheet)
	3	Total area of parcels of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line, excluding ineligible land (this sheet)
Uplands OELS	1a	Total area of organic non-LFA land (N), 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 organic Severely Disadvantaged land (S) and parcels under 15 ha of Severely Disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line (MS), excluding ineligible land (this sheet)
	2a	Total area of conventional non-LFA land (N), Disadvantaged land (D) and parcels under 15 ha of Disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line (MD), excluding ineligible land (this sheet)
	2b	Total area of conventional Severely Disadvantaged land (S) and parcels under 15 ha of Severely Disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line (MS), excluding ineligible land (this sheet)
	3a	Total area of parcels of 15 ha or more of Disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line (MD), excluding ineligible land (this sheet)
	3b	Total area of parcels of 15 ha or more of Severely Disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line (MS), excluding ineligible land (this sheet)

1 (1a & 2b for Uplands OELS) Total area for this sheet should be added to the total on any continuation sheets and entered into table A at Section 3.
2, 3 (1b, 2a, 3a & 3b for Uplands OELS) Total area for this sheet should be added to the total on any continuation sheets and entered into table C at Section 4.
4 Total OELS points for this sheet should be added to the total on any continuation sheets and entered into table B at Section 3.
5 Total ELS points for this sheet should be added to the total on any continuation sheets and entered into table D at Section 4.

If necessary, please continue on additional sheets and indicate in the box how many have been attached.....

Step I:

- OELS (without Uplands)

Where necessary, calculate the total area of conventional land, excluding fields of 15 ha or more above the Moorland Line. Record this figure in Box 2, and in Table C (Part 1 for applications which include SDA land) at Section 4 of your application form.

- Uplands OELS
  - Where necessary, calculate the total area of conventional non-LFA land, Disadvantaged land and parcels under 15 ha of Disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line. Record this figure in Box 2a, and in Table C, Part 2 at Section 4 of your application form.
  - Where necessary, calculate the total area of conventional Severely Disadvantaged land and parcels under 15 ha of Severely Disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line. Record this figure in Box 2b, and in Table C, Part 2 at Section 4 of your application form.

Step J:

- OELS (without Uplands)

Where necessary, calculate the area of all parcels of 15 ha or more that are above the Moorland Line. Record this figure in Box 3 and in Table C (Part 1 for applications which include SDA land) at Section 4 of your application form.

- Uplands OELS
  - Where necessary, calculate the total area of parcels of 15 ha or more of Disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line. Record this figure in Box 3a, and in Table C, Part 2 at Section 4 of your application form.
  - Where necessary, calculate the total area of parcels of 15 ha or more of Severely Disadvantaged land above the Moorland Line. Record this figure in Box 3b, and in Table C, Part 2 at Section 4 of your application form.

Step K: Write the code of one of your chosen OELS and ELS options at the top of one of the 'OELS/ELS options' columns, working from left to right.

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

Step M: Record these amounts in the corresponding row of the 'OELS/ELS options' column. For each entry, calculate the area in ha, to the nearest 0.01 ha (100 m^2) or the number of trees (for OC1, OC2 and OC23). See Example 1 below.

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

Step O: Record the points per ha or number available for the option in the row marked 'OELS points per unit' or 'ELS points per unit' as appropriate eg for OE5 you would enter 500.

Step P: 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 'OELS points' or 'ELS points' as appropriate.

Step Q: Repeat Steps E–G for any Uplands OELS options you are using, should you be applying for Uplands ELS.

Step R: Once you have recorded all of your OELS non-rotational options within parcels, including any compulsory options, you must calculate your total 'OELS points' for the options you have chosen and record this figure at the base of the 'Total ELS/OELS points' column in Box 4. Copy this figure to Table B in Section 3 of your application form.

Step S: Repeat Step R for any ELS options, recording the Total ELS points in Box 5 and copying the figure to Table D of Section 4 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 ha, to the nearest 0.01 ha. An example calculation is provided below:

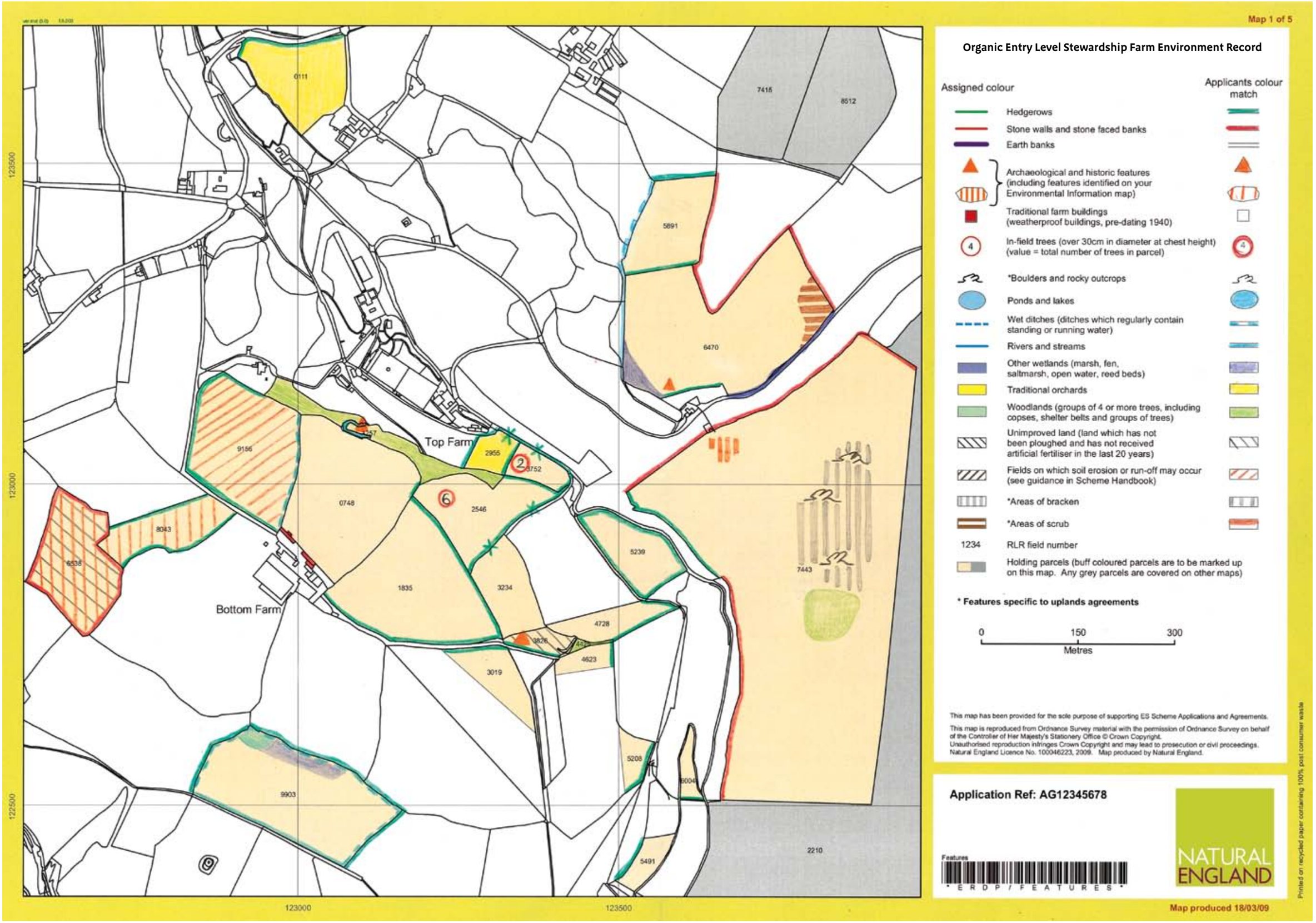
A 4 m wide buffer strip of 2,324 m in length would occupy (4 x 2,324) = 9,296 m^2.
A ha is 10,000 m^2 so the area occupied in ha is 0.9296 ha (9,296/10,000).
This would be recorded at Annex 2 as 0.93 ha (to the nearest 0.01 ha).

Example 2

To calculate your points for each option multiply the total amount by the points per unit.

In this case the option is OD4, management of scrub on archaeological sites, so the calculation is:
3.18 ha x 120 points/ha = 382 points (to the nearest whole point).

Organic Entry Level Stewardship Farm Environment Record


Map 1 of 5
Organic Entry Level Stewardship Farm Environment Record
Assigned colour
Applicants colour match
Hedgerows
Stone walls and stone faced banks
Earth banks
Archaeological and historic features (including features identified on your Environmental Information map)
Traditional farm buildings (weatherproof buildings, pre-dating 1940)
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 orchards
Woodlands (groups of 4 or more trees, including copses, shelter belts and groups of trees)
Unimproved land (land which has not been ploughed and has not received artificial fertiliser in the last 20 years)
Fields on which soil erosion or run-off may occur (see guidance in Scheme Handbook)
*Areas of bracken
*Areas of scrub
1234 RLR field number
Holding parcels (buff coloured parcels are to be marked up on this map. Any grey parcels are covered on other maps)
* Features specific to uplands agreements
0 150 300
Metres
This map has been provided for the sole purpose of supporting ES Scheme Applications and Agreements.
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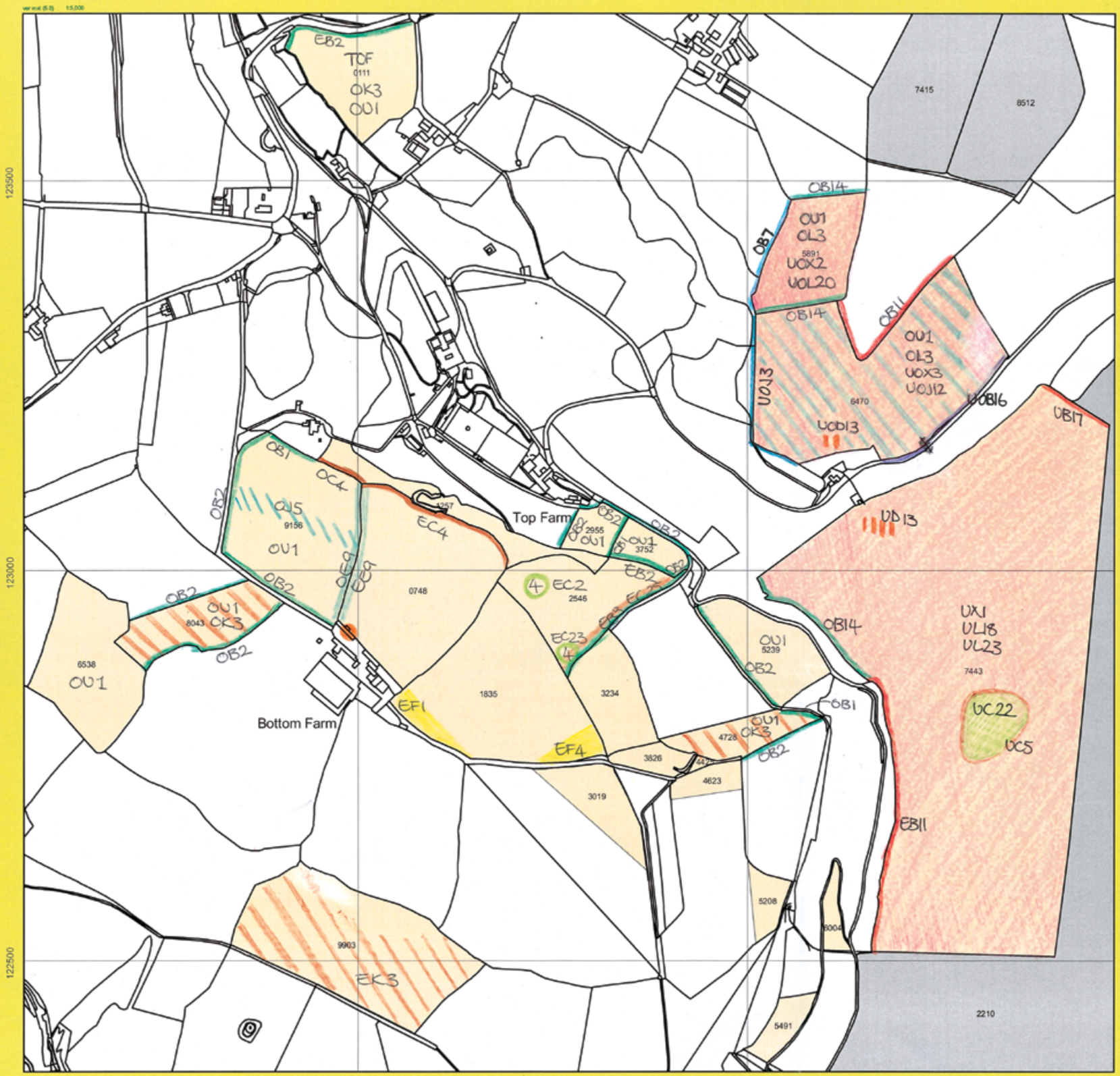
Natural England Licence No. 100046223, 2009. Map produced by Natural England.
Application Ref: AG12345678
Features
ERDP/FEATURES
NATURAL ENGLAND
Map produced 18/03/09
Printed on recycled paper containing 100% post consumer waste
Top Farm
Bottom Farm
0111
7415
8512
5891
6470
9156
2955
3752
0748
2546
8043
6538
1835
3234
5239
7443
4728
3826
4623
3019
5208
6004
9903
2210
5491
123500
123000
122500

Map 1 of 5



Organic Entry Level Stewardship Options Map

Options	Assigned colour	Applicants colour match
	Location of other AE scheme options (e.g. CSS, ESA, OFS or ECS)	
EB/OB/UB/UOB	Hedgerow management and restoration	
EB/OB/UB/UOB	Stone faced hedge bank management and restoration	
EB/OB	Ditch management	
EB/OB/UB/UOB	Stone wall protection, maintenance and restoration	
EB/OB/UB/UOB	Earth bank management and restoration	
EC/OC/UC/UOC	Woodland fences/Management of woodland edges/hedgerow buffer strips	
EC/OC	Protection of In-field trees and tree tagging *Number within circle represents number of trees in parcel or hedgerow	6
UC/UOC	Woodland livestock exclusion option	
ED/OD/UD/UOD	Maintenance of traditional farm buildings	
ED/OD/UD/UOD	Options for historic and landscape features	
EE/OE	Options for buffer strips	
EF/OF	Options for arable land	
EG/OG	Options to encourage a range of crop type	
EJ/OJ/UJ/UOJ	Watercourse fencing	
EJ/OJ/UJ/UOJ	Options to protect soil and water	
EK/OK	Options for grassland	
EL/OL/UL/UOL	Options for upland grassland and moorland	
ET/OT	Combined options for arable land	
1234	RLR field number	
	Holding parcels (buff coloured parcels are to be marked up on this map. Any grey parcels are covered on other maps)	

You must write the specific codes for the options that you have selected, and any required options, in black on the map, e.g. OU1, OB8, OG1, EB1, EE3, EF9, UOB12, UOX2
Options with a 'U' prefix have certain restrictions, refer to handbook

0 200 400
Metres

Application Ref: AG12345678

NATURAL ENGLAND

Map produced 25/03/09

Organic Entry Level Stewardship Options Map

Yellow Iris

Section 5
Terms and conditions

5.1 Introduction

Environmental Stewardship forms the major part of the Rural Development Programme for England (2007–2013) (RDPE) and is governed by EU Council Regulation 1698/2005 and Commission Regulations 1974/2006 and 65/2011 (as amended or as may be amended).

This section provides the terms and conditions that apply to Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS) (including Uplands OELS agreements). **If you sign up to an OELS agreement, the terms and conditions provided in this section will apply to you.**

5.2 About your agreement

5.2.1 What are you agreeing to do?

In signing your application form, you are agreeing to:

- **map and retain the environmental features** on your Farm Environment Record (FER) for the duration of the agreement;
- **choose sufficient options** so that together with your compulsory requirements (ie the FER, Organic management option OU1 and Upland OELS options UOX2 and UOX3) you meet your points target for your agreement land;
- **manage the land parcels shown on your OELS Options Map(s)**, in accordance with your choice of management options, as set out in the OELS/Uplands OELS option descriptions, for the duration of the agreement;
- (Uplands OELS only) **carry out the Uplands OELS compulsory requirements on your SDA land** as set out in the Uplands OELS compulsory requirements descriptions;
- (OELS only) **maintain registration and compliance** with an approved Organic Inspection Body for the full term of your agreement;
- (OELS only) **complete the conversion of all parcels** attracting conversion aid payments by the fifth anniversary of the start of your agreement; and
- **follow the scheme terms and conditions contained in this handbook**, including meeting cross compliance rules across all of your land, and complying with the other additional requirements listed (see Section 5.5).

5.2.2 What documentation is included in your agreement?

The agreement includes the following documents:

- an introductory letter;
- Part 1 of the agreement outlining the payment schedule for the agreement;
- Part 2 of the agreement setting out the options you have chosen;
- your Options Map(s), which shows the location of your options;
- Farm Environmental Record (FER) map(s), which shows the environmental features present on your farm and any fields at risk from soil erosion or run-off;
- this handbook, including the option descriptions (for the options that you have chosen for your land) and the terms and conditions are part of the agreement documentation. Each option description sets out the land management that you are agreeing to deliver under that option.

You must keep copies of all of these documents for future reference. If any are missing, please contact us and we will send another copy.

5.2.3 Duration of your agreement

Agreements last five years and you must fulfil your obligations for the full five-year term. You will incur a penalty if you withdraw from the scheme early or breach the terms of your agreement (see Section 5.7). There is no penalty if you transfer, with our approval, into Uplands OELS or HLS.

5.2.4 What payments will you receive?

For all the land you enter into OELS, you will receive the following rates of payment (£/ha/annum):

Table 9 Rates of payment for ELS and Uplands ELS

	Outside the SDA (ELS)	Within the SDA (Uplands ELS)	Outside the SDA (OELS)	Within the SDA (Uplands OELS)
Parcels below the Moorland Line	30	62	60	92
Parcels above the Moorland Line less than 15 ha	30	62	60	92
Parcels above the Moorland Line 15 ha or more	8	23	Not eligible	

(OELS only) For land undergoing conversion to organic status, conversion aid payments are also available:

- £175 per ha per year for 2 years for improved land; and
- £600 per ha per year for 3 years for top fruit orchards.

Subject to changes in EU rules (see Section 5.6.7), these payment rates will remain the same for the five years of your agreement, even if the rates are reviewed during that time. New rates will apply only to new agreements.

Details of the timing of payments are set out in the Introduction section of this handbook and on the Natural England website at www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/developments.aspx.

5.2.5 How will you be paid?

Your Environmental Stewardship payments are managed by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). The RPA will make payments directly into your bank account. If the RPA does not have your bank details, please contact them on **0845 603 7777** and request a Customer Registration form or visit the RPA website (see Appendix 2). Without your bank details, the RPA will not be able to pay you.

5.2.6 Will your details be made public?

The data controller is Natural England, Foundry House, 3 Millsands, Riverside Exchange, Sheffield, S3 8NH.

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 to ensure that it is accurate.

We will use the data for administering and analysing applications, agreements and claims under Environmental Stewardship. We will circulate and discuss it, in confidence, with those persons or organisations helping us 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.

Participation in Environmental Stewardship involves expenditure of public money and is therefore a matter of public interest. We make information about Environmental Stewardship applications, agreements and claims publicly available, in line with European Regulations, for example on a website such as www.natureonthemap.org.uk. Details disclosed may 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 5.5.7). On request, copies of individual applications and agreements will be made available.

We, or our appointed agents, may use the name, address and other details on your application form to contact you in connection with customer research aimed at improving the services that we provide 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.

5.3 Who can apply?

5.3.1 Who can join the scheme?

OELS is open to all farmers and land managers who are one of the following:

- owner occupiers;
- tenants (including farmers who may have an agreement labelled as a licence but who in practice have wider land management responsibilities) (see Sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3);
- landlords (see Section 5.3.4); and
- licensors (see Section 5.3.5).

You must have control of all the activities needed to meet the compulsory scheme requirements and prescriptions of the OELS, ELS and Uplands O/ELS land management options that you have selected. If you do not have full control of all such activities, for instance, where separate sporting tenancies are in place, please refer to Section 5.3.10.

You must also have management control of the land for the entire five years of your OELS agreement. If you are not certain to have management control lasting for five years, please refer to Section 5.3.2.

If Natural England find that you are ineligible to have an OELS agreement on any land, reductions and penalties as set out in Section 5.7.2 may apply. You may want to seek independent professional advice relating to your circumstances.

(OELS only) You must ensure that your name matches that on the organic licence and associated schedules. If you are a tenant or grazier, you should request that the Organic Inspection Body (with agreement from the landlord and/or any other certificate holder) amend the certificate and schedule to your name. If the licence is in a business name, then the signatory to the OELS agreement must be someone who legally represents that business (for example, business partner, employee, director etc). It is your responsibility to maintain organic registration for the entirety of the agreement.

5.3.2 What if you are a tenant?

When deciding if your occupation of land is sufficient to allow it to be eligible to include in an ES agreement, it is the rights and responsibilities that you have for the land, and how they operate in practice, that is more important than what any agreement with another party is called. For example, if you only have access to graze or mow land under a grazing licence you will not have sufficient management control of that land for you to use it to claim OELS. If, however, your agreement gives you other responsibilities for the management control of the land, you may in practice have a tenancy and may be able to use that land to apply for OELS.

If you are a tenant under the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986, Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995 (a Farm Business Tenancy) or equivalent, you must ensure that by joining OELS you do not breach the conditions of your tenancy.

To make an application in your own name you must have both:

- control of all the activities needed to meet the OELS, ELS and Uplands O/ELS compulsory requirements and the prescriptions of the selected OELS, ELS and Uplands O/ELS land management options; **and**
- management control of the land for the entire duration of the OELS agreement.

If you have control of all necessary activities, but do not have security of tenure over the five year duration of the OELS agreement (even if an extension or renewal to your tenancy is expected), you will not have sufficient management control of the land for the five year period of the OELS agreement. You will therefore need to submit an application countersigned by your landlord. You must discuss the proposal with your landlord and complete Section 2 of the application form. The relevant person must 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 five years of your ES agreement.

If you have more than one tenancy with less than five years to run, you need to complete a supplementary land ownership and control form (NE-LOC) for each additional tenancy. These forms are available from your Natural England office (see Appendix 1 for contact details) and can be downloaded from our website at **www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/forms/default.aspx**.

If a countersigned application 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.

A tenant's loss of management control of some or all the land under agreement because of the changing circumstances of their landlord is not a permitted category under force majeure, and will generally require the recovery of all payments on the affected land (see Section 5.6.9) save for in exceptional circumstances. If your ability to comply with scheme requirements will be partly dependent on a third party (eg a landlord) it is your responsibility to put arrangements in place to safeguard your position should the circumstances of the third party change.

If you are including land in an OELS agreement and another business is using the same land to claim for the Single Payment Scheme (SPS), please refer to Section 5.4.15 of this handbook and to the current *SPS Handbook* (and any supplements), details at Appendix 2.

5.3.3 What if you are a licensee?

In most cases, licensees will not have sufficient control of the range of agricultural activities that is needed to meet the scheme requirements and OELS, ELS and Uplands O/ELS land management option prescriptions.

When deciding if your occupation of land is sufficient to allow it to be eligible to include in an ES agreement, it is the rights and responsibilities that you have for the land, and how they operate in practice, that is more important than what any agreement with another party is called. For example, if you only have access to graze or mow land under a grazing licence you will not have sufficient management control of that land for you to use it to claim OELS. If however your agreement gives you other responsibilities for the management control of the land, you may in practice have a tenancy and may be able to use that land to apply for OELS.

5.3.4 What if you are a landlord?

Provided you can demonstrate that you have sufficient management control over the land, and you are confident that you can meet your obligations under an OELS agreement in full, you can apply for an agreement on land that has been let to a tenant under the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 or the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995 (a Farm Business Tenancy) or equivalent.

You must be able to provide evidence, if requested, that you have given the tenant a copy of your OELS agreement conditions and that you have required them to meet these. It is advisable to include these requirements in the tenancy agreement. It will be your responsibility to ensure that your tenant does not breach the terms of your OELS agreement. If your tenant is claiming the SPS on the same land, you must have written evidence signed by both parties. Please refer to Section 5.4.15 of this handbook and the current *SPS Handbook* (and any supplements), details at Appendix 2.

You may have tenants who wish to apply for OELS on the land themselves. Please note that where your tenant does not have security of tenure for the five year period of the OELS agreement, Natural England require them to secure your countersignature before their application can be accepted see Section 5.3.2.

You should be aware that, if your tenant claims Uplands Transitional Payment (UTP) and an Uplands OELS agreement commences on land that is available to them for grazing, they will no longer be eligible for UTP on that land and will be required to pay back the UTP they have received for the part of the calendar year in which the Uplands OELS agreement is in force.

5.3.5 What if you are a licensor?

It will be your responsibility to ensure that your licensee does not breach the terms of your ES agreement. You should ensure that the licensee is aware of the requirements of the ES agreement, as relevant to the license, and to include these in the license agreement.

You should be aware that if your licensee claims UTP and an Uplands OELS agreement commences on land that is available to them for grazing, they will no longer be eligible for UTP on that land and will be required to pay back the UTP they have received for the part of the calendar year in which the Uplands OELS agreement is in force.

5.3.6 What about using contractors to manage the land?

You may employ contractors to undertake agricultural work on your land, or to undertake work required under the O/ELS or Uplands O/ELS options you have chosen. You should notify the contractor about the agreement and your obligations under it. It will be your responsibility to ensure that they do not breach the terms of your agreement.

5.3.7 Are business partnerships and trusts eligible?

If you are a business partnership, trust, or similar, you can make an application, but we 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 an authorised 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.

(OELS only) In addition, the signatory must ensure that all of the land parcels managed by the group to be included in the application are registered with an Organic Inspection Body before the application is submitted. Copies of the certificates and accompanying schedules for all of the land managed by the group and included in the application must accompany the application. Where the land in question is being converted to organic production, a conversion plan will need to be agreed with the Organic Inspection Body prior to application.

(OELS only) The signatory will be expected to ensure that all of the organic land covered by the agreement remains registered with the Organic Inspection Body for the entire duration of the agreement and that all members of the group observe the scheme's general and specific organic requirements.

5.3.8 Are public bodies and their tenants eligible?

We cannot pay 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, 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.

Parish councils and former college farms are not considered to be public bodies and therefore are eligible to apply for Environmental Stewardship.

A list of NDPBs and other public bodies can be found on the Civil Service website at www.civilservice.gov.uk.

Table 10 Summary of the eligibility of public bodies for Environmental Stewardship

Landowners	ELS	HLS	Comments
Government departments, executive agencies and NDPBs (eg Ministry of Defence, Forestry Commission, Crown Estate)	Ineligible	Ineligible	
Other public bodies (eg local authorities, national park authorities and public corporations)	Ineligible	Eligible	Eligible for HLS provided the work does not form part of their obligations as a public body.
Tenants of public bodies	Eligible	Eligible	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.

5.3.9 Is common land and shared grazing eligible?

Common land and shared grazing is not eligible for OELS.

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 *Common Land and Shared Grazing: Supplement to the Environmental Stewardship Handbooks* (NE316) and the ELS Handbook provide further details, and are available on our website at www.naturalengland.org.uk.

5.3.10 What if others hold rights over your 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.

(OELS only) Before allowing any non-farming activities to be carried out on your organic land (for example, caravan parks), you must contact your Organic Inspection Body to ensure that the status of your organic land will not be compromised.

5.4 Is your land eligible?

5.4.1 What land can you enter into the scheme?

Land to be entered into the scheme must be registered on the Rural Land Register (RLR) and it must be part of the farmed environment. By 'farmed environment' we mean:

- all your farmed land. OELS 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.

Entering non-farmed land into OELS 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 CPH number or Single Business Identifier (SBI).

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 OELS.

To join Uplands OELS your eligible land must include at least one parcel within an SDA.

You must ensure that all of the organic land covered by the agreement remains registered with the Organic Inspection Body for the entire duration of the agreement.

The eligibility requirements for the organic conversion aid payments are set out in Section 3.

5.4.2 What land must be excluded from your application?

The following land must be excluded:

- 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 (TFB) that is recorded on your FER and 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 Environmental Stewardship (see Section 5.4.3);
- common land or shared grazing 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 5.3.9);
- land where you do not have management control for five years and a countersigned agreement is not possible.

5.4.3 Is land that is subject to another scheme or obligation eligible?

As a general rule, we 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 OELS is in receipt of funding from another grant scheme, you cannot also receive OELS funding for the same work. Work that is outside the scope of OELS 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 OELS agreement.

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

5.4.4 Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)

If you already have a CSS or ESA agreement covering some of your land, you cannot apply for OELS on the same land. You may, however, be able to apply for OELS on any land that is not receiving funding under the CSS or ESA agreement. **Uplands OELS and UTP cannot be claimed on the same holding at the same time.**

Follow the instructions below, to determine which land parcels should be included in your OELS application:

- If a CSS or ESA option covers a **whole parcel**, it may not be included in your OELS application or points target. This means that you can do one of the following:
  - ask us 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 4 for detailed instructions on how to do this). If you need to delete several parcels, you may prefer to ask us 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 OELS application. However, to avoid being paid twice for the same thing, you must not locate any OELS options on top of any of your CSS/ESA options. In Uplands OELS, if you have a CSS or ESA option covering part of a field, you cannot include those fields in your Uplands OELS application.
- Land in CSS/ESA **rotational options** should be included in your OELS application, but you must ensure that each year there is no overlap of CSS/ESA and OELS options on the ground. Whilst the CSS/ESA rotational options may overlap with the Uplands OELS compulsory requirement UOX2, there must be no overlap between the CSS/ESA rotational option and the actual management requirements of UOX2. In particular, there must be no overlap between the rotational option and the 6 m protection zone alongside watercourses required under UOX2.
- Land in receipt of CSS/ESA open, linear and educational **access payments** only, should also be included in your OELS application and points target. You must ensure, however, that any OELS options sited on the land do not obstruct or otherwise conflict with the objectives of the access.
- **CSS boundaries** – OELS 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. However, the OB14 boundary restoration option cannot be located on boundaries included within CSS options.
- **ESA boundaries** – OELS boundary options must not be located within the area covered by the ESA agreement.

Early transfer from CSS or ESA agreements

There are specific European regulations relating to the early transfer of CSS and ESA agreements into OELS – there must be significant environmental benefits, the commitments of the existing agreement must be substantially reinforced in the new one, and the new agreement must offer value for money. For these reasons, while it is possible to carry out early transfer from CSS or ESA agreements, in practice, these opportunities are very limited. We do not accept early transfer applications from CSS or ESA into OELS alone, and will only consider combined OELS/HLS applications in exceptional circumstances.

The Uplands Transitional Payment (UTP) is available in upland areas where farmers used to claim Hill Farm Allowance and there is still a live CSS or ESA agreement on the holding. Uplands OELS and UTP cannot be claimed on the same holding at the same time. UTP is paid each spring for the whole calendar year. If **you** have received UTP and then enter your holding into Uplands OELS/HLS through an early transfer before the end of the calendar year, all of your holding becomes ineligible for UTP when the Uplands OELS agreement starts and you will need to repay the UTP grant you have received for the remainder of the calendar year. If **another person** is claiming UTP on the holding you have entered into Uplands OELS, they will have to repay the UTP grant received in respect of that holding for the rest of the calendar year. The RPA will advise on repayment details – you should read the booklet *Uplands Transitional Payment 2012 to 2014* (RPA contact details are in Appendix 2).

Further details about UTP can be found in Section 5.4.18.

If you are considering early transfer, you should discuss this in detail with your CSS/ESA adviser within Natural England before submitting an application. The adviser will take advice from colleagues and will then advise on the most appropriate course of action. If you do not know who your CSS/ESA adviser is, please contact Natural England (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

Part farm entry to Uplands OELS

If you have a CSS/ESA agreement on part of your holding, you may decide to enter another part of your holding, not currently under any agri-environment scheme, into Uplands OELS. Uplands OELS and UTP cannot be claimed on the same holding at the same time. If **you** have received UTP and then enter part of your holding into Uplands OELS/HLS before the end of the calendar year, all of your holding becomes ineligible for UTP when the Uplands OELS agreement starts and you will need to repay the UTP grant you have received in respect of the holding for the remainder of the calendar year. If **another person** is claiming UTP on the holding you have entered into Uplands OELS, they will have to repay the UTP grant received in respect of that holding for the rest of the calendar year. The RPA will advise on repayment details – you should read the booklet *Uplands Transitional Payment 2012 to 2014* (RPA contact details are in Appendix 2).

5.4.5 Energy Crops Scheme (ECS)

Land in the ECS is not eligible for OELS.

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.

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

These regulations aim to protect environmentally significant areas, specifically uncultivated land and semi-natural areas, from being damaged by works which increase the agricultural productivity of the land.

Where this is the case, contact Natural England before carrying out any of the following activities on uncultivated or semi-natural land. The type of agricultural operations ('projects') covered include ploughing; chemical cultivation; digging; scraping; draining; liming; reseeding; 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. The regulations also cover certain types of restructuring projects on rural land holdings.

It is unlikely that O/ELS or Uplands O/ELS options will alter the status of land in relation to these regulations, but you should consider this before you apply. If you have any queries about the regulations please contact the Environmental Impact Assessment Helpline on **0800 028 2140**.

5.4.7 Felling Licences/Tree Preservation Orders

Where your OELS 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 m^3 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. Ask your local authority Tree Officer for advice.

5.4.8 Habitat Scheme

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

5.4.9 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 OELS. 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 O/ELS and Uplands O/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 the undertakings. Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure your application meets these scheme rules.

A guidance note – *Environmental Stewardship for heritage properties designated under the Inheritance Tax Act 1984* – is available for heritage properties designated under the Inheritance Tax Act 1984 (NE161, 2012). It

provides more detailed information for owners and tenants of Inheritance Tax exempt properties and their advisers. You can download it from the publications catalogue on our website at www.naturalengland.org.uk or you can request a paper copy from us, contact details at Appendix 1.

5.4.10 Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (NVZs)

If you are in an NVZ, you must make sure that you comply with the mandatory NVZ Action Programme rules. These rules apply to minimise the risk of nitrate pollution from agriculture to protect national water supplies and water habitats. 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 OELS. Where the rules overlap, you must meet those that are the most demanding.

For example, the maximum manure application rate for *Permanent grassland with very low inputs (OK3)* is 12.5 tonnes/ha of farm yard manure only (approximately 75 kg nitrogen/ha). This restriction is more demanding than the standard NVZ field limit of 250 kg of nitrogen per ha; as a result, the OELS restriction must be followed. Also be sure to include this calculation when considering your NVZ fertiliser plan and manure management plan.

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 (see Appendix 2 for other related websites, eg Farming Advice Service)

5.4.11 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 be funded under OELS.

5.4.12 Protected species

SSome species are partly or fully protected by legislation. Examples of the most commonly encountered protected wildlife include:

- All wild birds and 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 Part 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. 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 OELS 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 will need to 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 our website at www.naturalengland.org.uk.

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

5.4.13 Scheduled Monuments

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

Similarly, you may only locate O/ELS and Uplands O/ELS options on land covered by an English Heritage management agreement if there is no overlap between the requirements of the English Heritage agreement and the 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 English Heritage are eligible for OELS. You must ensure there is no conflict between O/ELS management and the management requirements of the Scheduled Monuments.

5.4.14 Single Payment Scheme (SPS)

SPS and OELS are two separate schemes and land used to claim payments under SPS may also be entered into OELS.

Natural England will cross-check all agri-environment payments against SPS claims. Therefore, when completing your OELS and SPS forms, you must ensure that the O/ELS and Uplands O/ELS options and SPS land use codes you use are compatible. Natural England will investigate any case where the SPS land use codes declared for the SPS conflict, or appear to conflict, with O/ELS or Uplands O/ELS option codes. For example, Natural England will check that an OELS arable option is not located on land registered as Permanent Pasture on your SPS claim (SP5).

When completing your future SPS claim forms, please note in particular that:

- The majority of ES options are eligible to be claimed under SPS, however, some may be eligible for ES but ineligible for SPS.
- Woodlands, scrub, inter-tidal habitats and some hedges, that form Permanent Ineligible Features and Temporary Ineligible Features are deductable from SPS claims, but are still eligible for payments under ES agreements. The RPA has produced guidance about these options and the circumstances in which they can be claimed for SPS. Please refer to the *SPS Handbook* and any supplements (see Appendix 2 for details).
- Most O/ELS grassland options must be coded as PP4 (Permanent pasture on EU agri-environment scheme land).
- Part-parcel O/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.
- You should only use SPS land use code AE1 if there is no other suitable land use code. For example, use OT1 for arable land and PP4 for permanent pasture, including moorland and rough grazing.
- Through required management under some O/ELS or Uplands O/ELS options, land may become ineligible for SPS by the end of your agreement, for example, management of woodland edges.

When completing your OELS application form, please note that:

- Some O/ELS grassland options can only be located on land already classed as permanent pasture on your SPS.
- Arable options can only be located on land currently under arable SPS codes.
- You can have more than one option adjacent to each other within a land parcel without affecting the RLR details, providing there is no permanent boundary between the options.

For further details of SPS codes, please refer to the *SPS Handbook* and any supplements or contact the RPA (see Appendix 2 for details). For details of how the cross compliance rules apply to OELS, see Section 5.5.1.

5.4.15 Can you use land to apply for ELS that someone else is using to apply for SPS?

In certain limited situations land may be included in an OELS agreement by one person and that same land used to claim SPS by someone else at the same time. This is known as 'dual use'.

The OELS agreement applicant has to be able to meet the OELS eligibility rules, including having management control of the land, whilst at the same time the SPS claimant must be able to demonstrate having the same land 'at their disposal' under the SPS rules. For example, a landlord may be able to have management control of the land for OELS purposes whilst the tenant has the same land at his disposal to claim SPS.

Where a tenant is eligible for, and holds an OELS agreement, a landlord would not be eligible for SPS. This is because they would not be able to demonstrate that they have land at their disposal for SPS purposes.

The fact that you may have an agreement with another party who will use the land to apply for payment does not mean that you have the land at your disposal. It is the rights and responsibilities you have in relation to the land, and how they operate in practice, which determine this.

If you are entering land into an OELS agreement on the same land that another farmer or land manager is using to claim SPS, you must have a written record which shows the rights and responsibilities you each have for the land. This written record should set out how you have management control for OELS and how the other party meets the SPS scheme rules, including having the land at their disposal. This must include evidence that you have given a copy of your OELS scheme agreement conditions to the other party and that they have been required to meet them (unless you can show that you are carrying out the required activities yourself). This written record could be a tenancy agreement, a letter or both, containing the required information, which must be signed and dated by both parties in advance of the SPS application deadline (usually 15th May). We may ask to see a copy of this as part of our checks. You may want to get independent professional advice relating to your circumstances, especially if you previously had a verbal agreement with the other party.

For further details, please refer to the current *Single Payment Scheme (SPS) Handbook* (including any supplements), details in Appendix 2.

5.4.16 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

OELS 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 permit any management options proposed on an SSSI before issuing an OELS agreement.

When giving such permission, it may be necessary for Natural England to amend an OELS application to ensure it is consistent with the SSSI management requirements, to protect the site from deterioration or to avoid hindering its recovery. This will be achieved either by adding or removing options from the SSSI land area, or by adding conditions to the standard option prescriptions. Where this is necessary, Natural England will discuss it with you first.

Permission for management activities on SSSI land granted as part of an OELS agreement are limited to the duration of that agreement and do not transfer from one land manager to another. For additional detail please refer to the *Uplands ELS/SSSI conditions and requirements* leaflet, available from Natural England (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

Please note also the specific requirements about derogations on SSSI land at Section 5.6.6.

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

5.4.17 Tenancy conditions

O/ELS and Uplands O/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. O/ELS and Uplands O/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.

5.4.18 Uplands Transitional Payment (UTP)

UTP is claimed by whoever previously claimed Hill Farm Allowance on that holding. That can be the landlord, tenant, or grazier on a holding; this is not always the CSS or ESA agreement holder.

If anyone has received payment for UTP on this land, the payment covers the full calendar year in which it was made, or the period up to the end of the last qualifying ESA and/or CSS agreement, whichever is the sooner.

Uplands OELS and UTP cannot be claimed on the same land at the same time. If you enter land into Uplands OELS where UTP has been claimed, or already paid, it will reduce the amount of UTP payable on that land.

If **you** enter **any** parcel of land into Uplands OELS, the **rest of your land** (or the land you manage) becomes ineligible for **you** to claim UTP. No one else can claim UTP on a parcel where you are receiving Uplands OELS

If you claim UTP and enter Uplands OELS before your UTP has been made, the RPA will calculate the proportion of UTP you are eligible for and pay the reduced amount.

If you have claimed UTP and enter Uplands OELS after UTP has been paid, the RPA will ask you to repay the difference between the amount you were paid and the amount to which you are now entitled.

If another person claims the UTP and you enter Uplands OELS before UTP has been paid, the RPA will recalculate their eligible payment and pay the reduced amount

If another person claims the UTP and you enter Uplands OELS after UTP has been paid, the RPA will ask the UTP claimant to repay the difference between the amount they were paid and the amount to which they are now entitled.

UTP and OELS (without Uplands OELS)
Land on which you are claiming UTP is eligible to count towards your OELS points target and you may put OELS options on UTP land.

The *Uplands Transitional Payment 2012 to 2014* booklet contains more information concerning the periods covered by the UTP and is available from the RPA's Customer Service Centre by telephoning 0845 603 7777.

Please refer to Section 5.4.4 for further details about early transfer from CSS or ESA agreements and part farm entry into Uplands OELS.

5.4.19 Woodland schemes

Woodlands under Farm Woodland Premium Scheme, Farm Woodland Scheme, Woodland Grant Scheme and the English Woodland Grant Scheme agreements can count towards your eligible land area. However, OELS options may not be co-located with any land, including open space, funded under those schemes. The exceptions are the Uplands OELS compulsory requirements (UOX2 and UOX3). For more details about these options, please see Section 3. Where a hedge or ditch forms the boundary between land under a woodland scheme and land under OELS, then single-sided boundary options can be used.

(OELS only) To be eligible for inclusion in an OELS agreement, woodland must be listed on your certificate of organic registration and accompanying schedules provided by your Organic Inspection Body.

5.5 What additional requirements will apply to your agreement?

5.5.1 Cross compliance

The term 'cross compliance' refers to the requirement for farmers to comply with a set of Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) and to keep their land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) as a condition of claiming EU land-based grants and subsidies. SMRs are a baseline to Stewardship scheme options and failure to observe the rules could result in reduction or loss of scheme payments depending on the severity of the breach.

The cross compliance rules 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 water; 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 cross compliance requirements across all of the agricultural land that you farm, including land on your SPS claim form (whether it is claimed or not) and common land over which you exercise or hold rights of common.

A proportion of agreement holders will be inspected each year to check that they meet 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 SPS); any reductions due as a result of non-compliance will therefore be applied to all area 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 *Guidance for Cross Compliance in England: Management of Habitats and Landscape Features*. Copies of these are available on the RPA website, details in Appendix 2. Further information and advice about cross compliance can be obtained from Defra's Farming Advice Service, details in Appendix 2.

For details of how O/ELS and Uplands O/ELS boundary management options and buffer strip options fit with cross compliance boundary protection zones, please see the relevant option details in Section 3.

5.5.2 Avoidance of under-utilisation and overgrazing

As a condition of your OELS agreement, you will be required to avoid under-utilisation and overgrazing on the whole of your farmed area. You must distribute stock across your farm to ensure this is the case.

Under-utilisation means 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.

We will investigate cases of suspected under-utilisation and overgrazing. You will be in breach of your agreement if you fail to follow subsequent professional advice.

5.5.3 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).

5.5.4 Protection of historic features

Your annotated Farm Environment Record (FER), includes information supplied by us on the Environmental Information Map (see Section 4.1.4 for more details). The FER will show the location of some of the historic features (including archaeological features and traditional farm buildings (TFBs)) on your land. For any of these features, and for any additional features of which you are subsequently advised in writing by us, you must not:

- cause ground disturbance, including poaching by livestock, on known archaeological features or areas of historic interest under grassland;
- sub-soil or de-stone on areas containing known archaeological features, unless these operations have been demonstrably undertaken as a routine in the past five years;
- deliberately plough more deeply or undertake additional groundworks or drainage on those areas already under cultivation that contain known archaeological features;
- run free-range pigs on archaeological features;
- remove any useable building stone, walling stone or traditional roofing material off the land, excluding materials produced from established quarries; or
- damage, demolish or remove building material from substantially complete ruined TFBs or parcel boundaries.

5.5.5 Archaeological fieldwork and metal detecting on your land

With certain exceptions (see below) metal detecting is allowed on land within an OELS agreement, provided that it is undertaken in accordance with best practice laid down in the current 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**.

Metal detecting is not allowed on Scheduled Monuments, SSSIs and known archaeological sites under grassland. 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 us.

You must also ensure that the metal detecting does not conflict with the requirements of your OELS agreement, ie where the proposed detecting will affect your ability to meet any option prescriptions. In such a case, you will need a derogation. Section 5.6.6 explains how to apply for a derogation.

As part of your OELS agreement, we require you 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 us, 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 us.

You must inform us of large-scale metal detecting events, including metal detecting rallies, on any OELS 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. We will provide you with advice to ensure that the event does not conflict with the requirements and objectives of the OELS agreement.

On Scheduled Monuments, you must obtain a licence 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, you must give written notice to us of these operations. Detecting can only proceed with written consent.

You need to apply for a derogation 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 5.6.6 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. You must obtain written consent from us for any archaeological fieldwork (including the use of ground-penetrating radar or remote sensing) on SSSIs before fieldwork can commence.

5.5.6 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.

(OELS only) Before allowing any non-farming activities to be carried out on your organic land (for example caravan parks), you must contact your Organic Inspection Body to ensure that the status of your organic land will not be compromised.

5.5.7 Inspecting and monitoring your agreement

Authorised Defra staff or their agents may visit you to inspect your land during the course of your agreement. The RPA will visit a percentage of agreements every year to assess compliance with the scheme requirements. 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.

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.

5.5.8 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.

5.5.9 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.

5.5.10 Keep necessary records

You must retain all scheme documentation. Defra staff or their agents may ask to see them during inspections.

If an option requires you to:

- graze a field at a particular stocking density, or
- not increase your stocking above the existing level, or
- graze or exclude stock at specific times of the year,

you must be able to demonstrate compliance with the scheme requirements by keeping adequate records which identify the livestock type and stocking level on each parcel where the option is located.

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.

(OELS only) You are required to keep comprehensive records as evidence of your organic farming practices. This means that you will be expected to renew the registration of your organic land each year to ensure that you are registered with an Organic Inspection Body for the full duration of your OELS agreement. Copies of these certificates and schedules must also be retained for the full duration of your agreement. You will be in breach of your agreement if you fail to comply with this requirement.

5.5.11 State Aid payments

State Aid payments are typically made under specific State Aid cover granted by the European Commission.

Most OELS payments have State Aid cover under the RDPE. However, some funds available through OELS are offered under non-agricultural de minimis State Aid rules.

The European rules require that any beneficiary (whether an individual, business or organisation) does not receive more than €200,000 of non-agricultural de minimis State Aid over any three fiscal years. This figure applies to all non-agricultural de minimis aid received from all sources during the three-year period.

In OELS and Uplands OELS, this applies to building maintenance options (ie OD1 and UOD12).

5.5.12 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 OELS agreement without our written consent. EU regulations do not permit more than one source of EU funding for the same activity.

5.5.13 Publicity
For any publicity, events, information or interpretative material on or about agreement land, you must acknowledge the support of Environmental Stewardship, as part of the RDPE.

5.5.14 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 TFB.

Each photograph must 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. You can submit the photographs in either digital format (on a CD) or as colour prints (at least 6"x4").

5.5.15 (OELS only) Organic standards
The production of organic food is strictly regulated by EU law (Council Regulation 834/2007). The standards prescribed by these regulations set out the inputs and practices that can only be used in organic farming and growing and the processing of organic food and feed, as well as the inspection system to be used to ensure that the standards are met. In the UK, private Organic Inspection Bodies are licensed by Defra to ensure that these standards are met. All food and feed sold as organic must therefore originate from growers, processors and importers who are registered with an approved Organic Inspection Body and subject to regular inspection.

You must comply with the organic standards on all your organic land. Should the EU standards be revised, you will also need to meet any additional requirements that are introduced for the duration of your OELS agreement.

You should also be aware that organic seeds must be used on OELS land. Where this is not possible, you must contact your Organic Inspection Body for a derogation. This does not apply to any agreed derogation allowing the use of grass seed mixtures that have a minimum organic content.

Inspectors from your Organic Inspection Body will visit your farm at least once a year in order to check that you are meeting the necessary organic farming standards. We may need to obtain a copy of these inspection reports for administrative purposes, and in applying to enter OELS, you authorise the release of these reports to us.

5.6 Making changes to your agreement

5.6.1 Can you make changes to your agreement?
You should be able to carry out the options and management under your agreement without difficulty. However, should an exceptional situation arise where you need to change the choice or location of your management options, subject to our approval, we can amend your agreement.

Continuity of management is important during your agreement if we are to achieve the environmental benefits sought. We will therefore only agree to changes that are absolutely necessary.

If you wish to improve the environmental performance of your existing OELS agreement by amending your option selection, you can do so without impacting on your ability to make further changes to your agreement in the future. However, this type of change will only be permitted if the following criteria are met:

- **The change should reduce the presence of low-priority options in the agreement (see below)**. The O/ELS points released by the removal of low-priority options should be replaced by the addition of an equivalent value of high-priority options. Requests that seek to maintain the existing (or increase) the presence of low-priority options will be rejected.

- **Your OELS agreement should have at least two years left before it expires**. This will allow time for the new options to establish and have a positive impact on the environment.
- **Additional options must be taken from the same version of the handbook that was used when the agreement was drawn up**. For example, agreements drawn up under this version of the handbook (version 4) cannot contain options taken from version 2 or 3 of the scheme handbook.
- **All other eligibly criteria must continue to be met – including the 60 points/ha target**.

Input from a Natural England funded adviser is recommended but not essential. To request a free on-farm visit, call 0300 060 1695.

Table 11 Low-priority options that must be reduced in the agreement as a result of the change

Option	Option description
OB1/EB1	Hedgerow management for landscape (on both sides of a hedge)
OB2/EB2	Hedgerow management for landscape (on one side of a hedge)
OB4/EB4	Stone-faced hedgebank management on both sides
OB5/EB5	Stone-faced hedgebank management on one side
OB8/EB8	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating OB1/EB1)
OB9/EB9	Combined hedge and ditch management (incorporating OB2/EB2)
OB12/EB12	Earth bank management on both sides
OB13/EB13	Earth bank management on one side
OC1	Protection of in-field trees on rotational land
EC1	Protection of in-field trees on arable land
OE1	2m buffer strips on rotational land
EE1	2m buffer strips on cultivated land
OE2	4m buffer strips on rotational land
EE2	4m buffer strips on cultivated land
OE3	6m buffer strips on rotational land
EE3	6m buffer strips on cultivated land
OE4	2m buffer strips on organic grassland
EE4	2m buffer strips on intensive grassland
OE5	4m buffer strips on organic grassland
EE5	4m buffer strips on intensive grassland
OK5/EK5	Mixed stocking
OL2/EL2	Permanent grassland with low inputs in SDA land

You must tell us about any proposed amendments and we must agree to them before you make any changes to your options. We will send you a Land Transfer and Amendment request form (ERDP/LTA1), to complete and return. Your amendment will not be valid until you have received a letter from us agreeing to the amendment and advising you of the date from which it will take effect. If your request is successful, we will provide you with confirmation within three months of receipt of a valid request form. You may also need to contact the RPA to notify them of changes to your holding.

We do not expect to amend an agreement more than once during its five-year term unless it is to achieve environmental benefits, as detailed above.

5.6.2 What if you let, sell or transfer your land to another party?

Please notify us 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 you do not notify us in advance (to include your confirmation in writing for a whole farm transfer or the return of your Land Transfer and Amendment form [LTA1] for a part farm transfer) we may not be able to process your transfer to the dates specified in Section 5.6.4.

If advance notification is not possible, you must inform us (to include your confirmation in writing for a whole farm transfer or the return of your Land Transfer and Amendment form [LTA1] for a part farm transfer) within three months of the land being transferred. If you do not, you will be in breach of your agreement and you will have to repay the grant you have received, unless force majeure or other exceptional circumstances apply (see Section 5.6.9).

You must tell the prospective owner or occupier about your agreement with us, 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 we do not receive their new application within four months of the actual date of transfer, you (not the new owner or occupier) will be in breach of your agreement and you will have to repay all or a part of the grant you have received.

If you transfer **all** of your agreement land, you must contact us in writing no later than three months after the commencement date of lease, the completion date of sale or the actual date of transfer to confirm the transfer, identifying the new owner or occupier. In these circumstances, 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, otherwise we will be required to recover all payments made to you. (OELS only) This includes ensuring that there is no break in organic registration and management across the entire OELS agreement area.

If you transfer **part** of your agreement land, you should contact us for a Land Transfer and Amendment request form (ERDP/LTA1). You then need to complete and return the form no later than three months after the commencement date of lease, the completion date of sale or the actual date of transfer, to amend your agreement.

We will expect you 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 no longer meet the OELS entry criteria (for example, the Organic Inspection Body no longer considers the land comprising your organic unit to constitute a viable organic unit), the agreement may need to be closed early. In this case, unless force majeure or other exceptional circumstances apply (see Section 5.6.9), 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.

(OELS only) Where the land to be transferred is registered with an Organic Inspection Body, you must also inform them of the change in ownership or occupancy and arrange for the parcels to be removed from your certificate of organic registration and accompanying schedules. You need to submit a copy of your amended certificate of organic registration and accompanying schedules to us along with your amendment request form before your agreement can be amended and a replacement one issued. You must also check that your Organic Inspection Body still considers the land comprising your organic unit to constitute a viable organic unit; if it does not, you will be in breach of your OELS agreement and it will either be downgraded or terminated.

5.6.3 What if you acquire land?

If you acquire additional land, it will be in your interests to notify Natural England of the acquisition, to avoid a delay or break in payment. If you acquire land from another ES customer, you need to submit your application within four months if you are remaining in OELS, or six months if you are upgrading to HLS. 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 OELS to OELS/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, you can either amend or continue your existing agreement to add the land as follows:
  - amend your existing agreement for its remaining term and keep the same agreement number. The option can only be used if your transfer date aligns with the partial or end of year payment date applicable to your agreement (and/or the payment date applicable to another agreement holder's agreement where you have acquired only part of their land); or
  - continue with your existing agreement for its remaining term, but with a new agreement number.

  This is subject to the following conditions:
  - Land cannot be added to an agreement during the final two 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 as your existing agreement (ie if your agreement starts on 1 February 2010, you can only add land that entered Environmental Stewardship on or before 1 February 2010). This is to ensure that the normal five years management is achieved. The entry criteria for both agreements must also be the same.

5.6.4 When will agreement transfers take effect?

Subject to receiving advance notification of the transfer of ownership, we will carry out transfers on the dates specified below. If we don't receive advance notification, 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.

We can only carry out transfers on the 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, we 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 we effect 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 we have effected the agreement transfer. We recommend 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 you are **amending** your agreement in order to add the land and the transfer in date is restricted to the agreement's payment dates (see Section 5.6.3). In these cases, we 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 one or more of the following apply:
  - where notification of the transfer is received more than three months after the date of transfer (see Section 5.6.2);

- where the new agreement holder's application is not received within the four month deadline (see Section 5.6.2);
- where the written confirmation and/or Land Transfer and Amendment form(s) (LTA1) are not returned to Natural England by one or all parties involved in the transfer until after the date of transfer (see Section 5.6.2) **and** the circumstances of the transfer require a new or restarted agreement to be set up or include an additional requirement, eg to upgrade an agreement to Uplands OELS or bring in non-agreement land at the same time as bringing in the transferred land;
- where a transfer is being made between different schemes;
- where transferred land is not continued at the same level of management by the new agreement holder.

In these cases, we will advise you of the dates depending on the circumstances of the transfer.

5.6.5 What if you want to upgrade your agreement?

If you wish to upgrade your agreement, for example, from OELS to OELS/HLS, or from OELS to Uplands OELS, you should contact us first to discuss your plans.

5.6.6 Derogations

You need to notify us when you want to make a minor and temporary change from the agreed management prescriptions. Examples include permission to control serious weed infestations using herbicides (ELS only); 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 us, and can also be downloaded from our website at www.naturalengland.org.uk. You must complete this form and return it to us. You need to:

- tell us why the derogation is needed;
- state the exact proposed course of action (including precise location details, choice of pesticide (on conventional land) and application rate, where relevant);
- provide confirmation that the situation was unforeseen and that other solutions that are within the allowed management prescriptions have been considered;
- where the derogation concerns land registered with an Organic Inspection Body, you must obtain your Organic Inspection Body's prior approval to the derogation before the proposed change can be made. Your Organic Inspection Body will be required to confirm, by countersigning your derogation request form, that your request is compatible with organic standards; and
- provide a 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.

You must inform us 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 us. 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 us before carrying out the operation; and
- where a derogation is required for an activity that would affect an archaeological site, in which case we may request additional information, including the proposed methodology and research aims of any planned activity and we may consult with local authority archaeologists and, where relevant, English Heritage. The work may not go ahead until you have received written approval from us.

As a guide, we would not expect to see more than three derogations during the course of a five-year agreement.

We will keep the derogation notice form, 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 British Agrochemical Standards Inspection Scheme (BASIS) agronomist, who is independent and trained in environmental management.

5.6.7 Variation of your agreement by us
Very rarely, it may be necessary for us 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. We make such changes available on our website in a **List of Changes** document. Where the changes are significant in affecting the land management required or affect financial aspects of the agreement, we will give you notice of this by writing to you.

During 2014, we will be moving into the next Rural Development Programme and we may have to adjust any OELS agreement (including Uplands OELS) that starts from 1st January 2012. If the changes we have to make to your agreement as a result of the new Rural Development Programme are unacceptable you can terminate your agreement without penalty.

5.6.8 Certainty of payment
The European Commission are reviewing the continuation of, and provision for, agreements that run beyond 2015 in the context of the current CAP reform negotiations. Natural England does not have legal authority to make payment commitments beyond 2015, but there is a clear precedent in the current programme (RDPE 2007–2013) for continuing to make payments on agreements carried over from the previous programming period.

5.6.9 Exceptional circumstances (force majeure)
Where you are unable to continue with any part or all of the agreement, due to circumstances beyond your control that could not have been avoided by reasonable action, we have discretion not to take action to recover or withhold payments.

The EU Commission Regulations, governing the administration of OELS, require that for force majeure to be taken into account, you must have notified us 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 us immediately after the force majeure event, you will need to state the date on which you were first in a position to notify us and explain the delay.

Please note that force majeure covers only the most exceptional circumstances, such as:
- death of the agreement holder;
- long-term professional incapacity of the agreement holder;
- expropriation by a government agency of a large part of the land, where 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 disease (such as Foot and Mouth disease) affecting part or all of the agreement holder's livestock.

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;
- where you cease to have management control as a result of the changing circumstances of your landlord (eg their death, incapacity, their decision to sell the land and/or terminate your tenancy); and
- flooding of low-lying farmland that is regularly flooded during predictable weather conditions.

5.6.10 (OELS only) Can you change your Organic Inspection Body?

Yes, but if you change Organic Inspection Body, you must ensure your land is registered with the new inspection body prior to de-registering from your existing one. This ensures continuity of registration is maintained for the full duration of your agreement.

5.6.11 (OELS only) Are phased conversions possible under OELS?

With the agreement of your Organic Inspection Body and as part of your conversion plan, you may choose to convert different parcels of land in your organic unit over a number of years. In order to obtain conversion aid payments on additional parcels of land after your OELS agreement has started, the following options are available to you:

- Option 1 – You can apply to have your existing OELS agreement replaced with a new agreement including:
  - the new parcels to be converted;
  - any parcels that may already be undergoing conversion as part of the existing OELS agreement (you will continue to receive the aid that was due to you under your original OELS agreement under the new one, where applicable);
  - any fully organic land; and
  - any conventional land.

A new application form and set of maps will be sent to you for a replacement agreement. A copy of your current valid certificates of registration and accompanying schedules, including details of the additional new parcels of land to be converted, will also need to be submitted in support of your replacement OELS application.

The replacement agreement will constitute a new 5-year undertaking, and you will be expected to complete the conversion of any new parcels attracting conversion aid payments and included in the new agreement by the fifth anniversary of the replacement agreement's start date. You will also be required to complete the conversion of any transferring parcels covered by the original agreement, in accordance with the dates set out in your original conversion plan for that land.

- Option 2 – You can apply for a second separate OELS agreement on the land in question for each new phase of conversion. Copies of your current valid certificates of registration and accompanying schedules covering all the land you wish to enter into this separate agreement – including the new parcels of land to be converted – will need to be submitted in support of your new OELS application. The new agreement will constitute a separate 5-year undertaking, and you will be expected to complete the conversion of the land attracting conversion payments by the fifth anniversary of the new agreement's start date.
- Option 3 (for OELS/HLS agreements only) – Request an amendment, using the Land Transfer and Amendment request form (ERDP/LTA1) to include each new phase of conversion. Copies of your current valid certificates of registration and accompanying schedules covering all the land you wish to enter – including the new parcels of land to be converted – will need to be submitted in support of your amendment. All parcels entered for conversion aid payments must be entered into conversion by year five of your agreement, and all parcels must have completed conversion by the end of your agreement term.

If you are phasing conversion, you may add parcels to your agreement and claim conversion aid payments on improved land, where appropriate, but all parcels must have completed conversion by the end of your agreement term.

5.7 What happens if you fail to keep to the terms of your agreement, have a dispute or wish to make a complaint?

5.7.1 What is a breach of agreement?

You will be in breach of your agreement if you:

- fail to comply with any agreement conditions;
- are in breach of any requirement which you are subject to under Council Regulation 1698/2005, Commission Regulations 1974/2006 or 65/2011, 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 somebody 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.

5.7.2 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, in addition to reducing your payment to what you should actually be due based on the findings:

- we may withhold part or all of any future payments due under your agreement;
- we may recover (with interest charged) part or all of the payments already made to you under the agreement;
- we may terminate your agreement;
- we may apply any penalties set out in the relevant EU legislation; or
- we may prohibit you from entering into a new agreement under this scheme or any other EU agri-environment scheme for up to two years.

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

When we seek 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 us, 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 we have agreed with you in writing that exceptional circumstances have occurred in relation to any breach (see Section 5.6.9).

The legislation which governs enforcement of breaches of your agreement is the Rural Development (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2007 and Commission Regulation (EU) No 65/2011.

Penalties will be applied to the following types of breaches, although we retain discretion to apply penalties in any circumstance specified in Section 5.7.1:

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).
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).
3. Where your FER features have been removed or damaged.
4. Where the rules of cross compliance are not being followed.
5. Other breaches of the additional requirements set out in Section 5.5.

6. Failure to notify us 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 5.6.2).
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 us 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 us to be reckless or intentional, you can be excluded for the following year as well (ie 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 where they are identified by the inspector and where you already have that option on your land (ie £60/ha in OELS or £92/ha in Uplands OELS).

Where the deductions relating to a shortfall reduces your OELS total points below your target points, your annual payment for all years where the discrepancy applies will be reduced and penalties applied on a sliding scale, as follows.

Table 12 Penalties for difference between target points claimed and points found

Difference between target points and points found (as a percentage of points found)	Sanction	Example Agreement covers 30ha all paid at £30/ha. Points target = 900 points Annual Payment = £900
Points found are less than your points target, but the difference is not more than 3%	We will reduce (or recover) payment, based on the points found. No additional penalty.	Actual points found = 880 Payment = £880
The difference is more than 3%, but not more than 20%	We will reduce (or recover) payment, based on the points found. An additional penalty of twice the difference will be applied.	Actual points found = 800 Payment = 800 – 2x(900-800) = £600 (Reduction of £100, plus penalty of £200.)
Difference is more than 20%, but not more than 50%	We will reduce (or recover) payment, based on the points found. In addition the whole of the remainder of the payment will be deducted as a penalty. Effectively all payment for the whole agreement concerned is withheld (or recovered) for the year(s) concerned.	Actual points found = 700 Payment = £0 (Reduction of £200, plus penalty of £700.)
Difference is more than 50%	All payment for the whole agreement concerned is withheld (or recovered) for the year(s) concerned (as above), plus an amount equal to the difference will be deducted from the following year(s) payment(s)	Actual points found = 400 Payment = £0 Deduction from following year payment = 900-400 = £500 (Reduction of £500 and penalty of £400 for current and previous years. Additional penalty of £500 in following year.)

Damage or removal of FER features
If you damage or remove any of your FER features, we will reduce your annual payment. Any penalty will be proportionate to the severity, extent and permanence of the breach, and whether it is repeated. We will take into consideration 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
We will deal with breaches of cross compliance 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 (see rpa.defra.gov.uk/rpa/index.nsf/home) for more detail on cross compliance reductions.

5.7.3 What do you do if you 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.

5.7.4 What if you disagree with any of our decisions or proposed actions regarding your 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 Customer Service Team manager at your Natural England office, 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 Customer Service Team manager will ask a senior manager, 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 Customer Service Team manager with their view on the steps proposed to resolve the dispute.

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

5.7.5 (OELS only) What do you do if you have a dispute with an Organic Inspection Body over certification issues?
The question of the organic status of your land and the suitability of your farming practices is, in the first instance, a matter between you and the Organic Inspection Body with which you have registered. Disputes should normally be resolved with them. If this is not possible, the matter should be referred to **organic.standards@defra.gsi.gov.uk**.

5.7.6 How do you make a complaint?
If you are unhappy about the way a member of staff has dealt with you, or with the level of service you have received, you are very welcome to use our complaints procedure, details of which are available below, or via our website: www.naturalengland.org.uk.

Our complaints procedure:
- **Step 1:** Contact the Customer Service Team using the online Feedback facility at www.naturalengland.org.uk/feedback/default.aspx or email them at customer.feedback@naturalengland.org.uk. They will respond to you.
- **Step 2:** If you are not satisfied with our initial reply, please email the Customer Service Team again and they will escalate the complaint to the appropriate Team Manager.
- **Step 3:** If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, please email the team again and they will direct the complaint to the appropriate Director.

If you do not wish to use our online **Feedback** facility to register your complaint, you can:
- email the **Customer Service Team**;
- contact the person who provided the service to you, by whatever method is most convenient or

- contact the Customer Service Team at:
  Natural England
  Mail Hub Block B
  Whittington Road
  Worcester
  WR5 2LQ

Our commitment to you
We will investigate your complaint thoroughly and fairly.

If we are at fault, we will try to put things right as quickly as possible. If not, we will give you a full explanation.

If we cannot resolve your problem on the spot, we will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within five working days. The acknowledgement will say who is dealing with the complaint and when you can expect a reply.

We will then write and tell you the outcome of our investigation within 20 working days. Difficult complaints sometimes take longer to sort out. If so, we will keep you informed of what is happening.

From time to time we will follow up with you to check if the way in which we handled your complaint was appropriate. We appreciate you may not always be happy with the outcome but it is important for us to monitor how our processes are working.

...and if you are still not satisfied
If you still feel that we have not resolved the issue satisfactorily, you can ask any Member of Parliament to refer complaints about administrative actions by us to the:

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Address: Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP
Helpline: **0345 015 4033**
Fax: **020 7217 4000**
Email: **phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk**
Website: **www.ombudsman.org.uk**

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).

East of England Bedfordshire Cambridgeshire Essex Hertfordshire Norfolk Suffolk	Natural England Customer Services PO Box 247, Cambridge CB2 2WW Tel: 0300 060 0011* Fax: 0300 060 1124 Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk
East Midlands Derbyshire Leicestershire Lincolnshire Northamptonshire Nottinghamshire Rutland	Natural England Customer Services PO Box 10276, Nottingham NG2 9PD Tel: 0300 060 0011* Fax: 0300 060 1121 Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk
North East Durham Northumberland Tyne and Wear Former county of Cleveland	Natural England Customer Services PO Box 578, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 8WW Tel: 0300 060 0011* Fax: 0300 060 1127 Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk
North West Cheshire Cumbria Greater Manchester Lancashire Merseyside	Natural England Customer Services PO Box 380, Crewe CW1 6YH Tel: 0300 060 0011* Fax: 0300 060 1123 Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk
South East Berkshire Buckinghamshire East Sussex West Sussex Greater London Hampshire Isle of Wight Kent Oxfordshire Surrey	Natural England Customer Services PO Box 2423, Reading RG1 6WY Tel: 0300 060 0011* Fax: 0300 060 1122 Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

South West Cornwall Devon Dorset Gloucestershire Somerset Wiltshire Former county of Avon	Natural England Customer Services PO Box 277, Bristol BS10 6WW Tel: 0300 060 0011* Fax: 0300 060 1128 Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk
West Midlands Herefordshire Shropshire Staffordshire Warwickshire West Midlands Worcestershire	Natural England Customer Services PO Box 530, Worcester WR5 2WZ Tel: 0300 060 0011* Fax: 0300 060 1125 Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk
Yorkshire and the Humber East Riding of Yorkshire North Yorkshire South Yorkshire West Yorkshire North Lincolnshire	Natural England Customer Services PO Box 798, Leeds LS1 9NA Tel: 0300 060 0011* Fax: 0300 060 1126 Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

Please note:
Calls to phone numbers marked * above will be answered initially by an external switchboard service working on Natural England's behalf. They will then connect callers to Natural England staff who can deal with your enquiry.

In order to help the switchboard operator to direct your call accurately:

- please give the name of the specific person or team you wish to speak to, if you know this;
- otherwise, please give as much detail of the nature of your enquiry and the geographical area that it relates to, as possible.

Appendix 2

Useful web addresses

Natural England application information:
Supplementary forms for Environmental Stewardship (agent authorisation, common land and shared grazing, derogation) can be found at:
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/forms/default.aspx

For details of ELS online go to:
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/es/els/online/default.aspx

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 OELS advice events can be obtained from:
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/landmanagementadvice/events/default.aspx

Advice about wildlife management and licensing is available at:
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/wildlife/default.aspx

A guidance note on Environmental Stewardship for heritage properties designated under the Inheritance Tax Act 1984 (Natural England 2011) is available at:
publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35042

Details of the Natural England complaints procedure 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, can be found at:
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/rightsofway/default.aspx

Advice on the management of hedgerows and hedgerow trees (including *The Hedgerow Management Cycle and Scale*) is available through the Natural England publications catalogue:
publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/39004?category=9006

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

Details about the Catchment Sensitive Farming programme can be found at:
www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/csf/default.aspx

External sources of information:
Information about NDPBs and other public bodies can be found at:
www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/resources/information-on-public-bodies

Information on Felling licences including the booklet *Tree Felling – getting permission* is available at:
www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6DFK86

Code of Good Agricultural Practice can be found at:
www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2011/06/16/pb13558-cogap

Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales can be found at:
finds.org.uk/getinvolved/guides/codeofpractice

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

Rural Payment Agency's (RPA'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

Full details about cross compliance can be found on the RPA website at:
www.rpa.gov.uk/crosscompliance

In addition, the Farming Advice Service provides advice on cross compliance and other subjects to help you improve the economic and environmental performance of your farm:
www.defra.gov.uk/farming-advice

Single Payment Scheme Handbook and supplements:
rpa.defra.gov.uk/rpa/index.nsf/home

Appendix 3

Guidance for calculating nitrogen content of fertilisers and manures

This section may help you to establish the appropriate application rates of fertilisers or manures applied under the low-input grassland and rush pasture options OK2, OK3, OK4, OL2, OL3, OL4 and 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 34.5 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 13 Typical total nitrogen content of livestock manures

Manure type	Total nitrogen content	Application rate to supply 100 kg/ha total nitrogen
Cattle farmyard manure	6.0 kg/tonne	16 tonnes/ha
Pig farmyard manure	7.0 kg/tonne	14 tonnes/ha
Dairy cattle slurry (6% dry matter)	3.0 kg/m^3	33 m^3/ha
Beef cattle slurry (6% dry matter)	2.3 kg/m^3	43 m^3/ha
Pig slurry (4% dry matter)	4.0 kg/m^3	25 m^3/ha

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.

For full details on the nutrient content of manures, see *Fertiliser Recommendations for Agricultural and Horticultural Crops* (RB209, MAFF, seventh edition, 2000), available from the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk under 'Fertilisers' in the A–Z index.

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)

Appendix 4

Table 14 Animal numbers converted into Livestock Units (LUs)

Animal numbers are converted into Livestock Units as follows:	LUs
Dairy cow	1.0
Beef cow	1.0
Cattle over two years old	0.7
Cattle six months to two years old	0.6
Lowland ewe and lamb	0.12
Hill ewe and lamb	0.08
Ram and teg over six months old	0.15
Ewe follower and/or store lamb	0.08
Horse	1.0
Pony	0.8

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 5

List of recognised hardy native breeds of sheep

Badger Face Welsh
Balwen
Beulah Speckled Face
Black Welsh Mountain
Border Leicester
Boreray
Castlemilk Moorit
Clun Forest
Cotswold
Derbyshire Gritstone
Devon and Cornwall Longwool
Devon Closewool
Dorset Down
Dorset Horn
Exmoor Horn
Greyface Dartmoor
Hampshire Down
Hebridean
Herdwick
Hill Radnor
Jacob
Kerry Hill
Leicester Longwool
Lincoln Longwool
Llandovery Whiteface Hill
Llanwenog
Lonk
Manx Loaghtan
Norfolk Horn
North Ronaldsay
Oxford Down
Portland
Romney
Ryeland (including Coloured)

Shetland

Shetland (Island[1])

Shropshire

Soay

South Wales Mountain (Nelson type)

Southdown

Teeswater

Welsh Hill Speckled Face

Wensleydale

Whiteface Dartmoor

Whitefaced Woodland

Wiltshire Horn

[1] 'Island' means pedigree-registered animals listed as being part of the 'Island' population of that breed, usually in a separate 'closed' sub-register within the relevant breed society's herdbook.

Appendix 6

Glossary and list of abbreviations and acronyms

Glossary

Agreement land
All land entered into a single Organic Entry Level Stewardship agreement.

Agri-environment schemes
Schemes under EC Regulation 1698/2005 and Commission Regulations 1974/2006 and 65/2011 (as amended or as may be amended) 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 five 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 (SSSIs) (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
The Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) (England) (No.2) Regulations 2006.

Environmental Information Map
The map that Natural England will send to you, with your personalised application form, showing designations on your land such as SSSIs and Scheduled Monuments.

Environmental Stewardship (ES)
Replaced Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Countryside Stewardship Schemes from 2005. It has three elements – Entry Level Stewardship, Organic Entry Level Stewardship and Higher Level Stewardship. Uplands Entry Level Stewardship and Uplands Organic Entry Level Stewardship options offer a higher level of payment in return for environmental management of land within the Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs).

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 OELS application, on which you entered your OELS or 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 five 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 hectares (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 Organic 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 Organic Entry Level Stewardship application to be accepted and is based on the total area of agreement land (for example, outside of the Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA) the points target = 60 x hectares 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 Organic Entry Level Stewardship, it must be registered on the Rural Land Register.

Rural Payments Agency (RPA)
An executive agency of Defra responsible for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 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.

Scrub
Any distinct area within a parcel (which may even amount to the entire parcel area) which is clearly capable of being grazed (ie is not too dense) is eligible for SPS, while any distinct area which is clearly incapable of being grazed (ie is too dense) should be excluded, even if such areas are adjoined. This will mean that, for example, within a grass parcel containing scrub (not thistle), those grass parts which do not have scrub growing on them are eligible for SPS, as are those parts where the scrub is short and animals can walk over them and graze on the scrub. Any area where the inspector is satisfied that animals cannot penetrate for grazing, should be deducted.

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.

Shared Grazing
Shared grazing(s) are communal pasture where graziers have a legal entitlement to graze (for example, a pasture used jointly by tenants) but where the land is not registered as common land.

Single Business Identifier (SBI)
A unique reference number for beneficiaries of rural development schemes, including SPS, to identify the owners/occupiers of land and to aid the co-ordination of inspections, implementation of cross compliance, and declaration of total EU funding received by each beneficiary.

Single Payment Scheme (SPS)
A decoupled subsidy payment replacing the 10 major Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payment schemes, one of the major reforms of the CAP 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 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 and acronyms

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BASIS	British Agrochemical Standards Inspection Scheme
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CPH	County Parish Holding
CSS	Countryside Stewardship Scheme
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
ECS	Energy Crops Scheme
ELS	Entry Level Stewardship
ERDP	England Rural Development Programme
ES	Environmental Stewardship
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
EU	European Union
FER	Farm Environment Record
FYM	Farm Yard Manure
GAEC	Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition
HER	Historic Environment Record
HLS	Higher Level Stewardship
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
LU	Livestock Unit
MESME	Making Environmental Stewardship More Effective
NDPB	Non-Departmental Public Body
NVZ	Nitrate Vulnerable Zone
OELS	Organic Entry Level Stewardship
RDPE	Rural Development Programme for England
RLR	Rural Land Register
RPA	Rural Payments Agency
SBI	Single Business Identifier
SDA	Severely Disadvantaged Area
SHINE	Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England

Contents

SMRs	Statutory Management Requirements
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPS	Single Payment Scheme
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TFB	Traditional Farm Building
UTP	Uplands Transitional Payment

Our promise to you

As the Government's adviser on the natural environment, Natural England are committed to provide practical advice, grounded in science, on how best to safeguard England's natural wealth for the benefit of everyone.

Our remit is to ensure sustainable stewardship of the land and sea so that people and nature can thrive. It is our responsibility to see that England's rich natural environment can adapt and survive intact for future generations to enjoy.

We work with farmers and land managers, business and industry, planners and developers, national and local government, interest groups and local communities to help them improve their local environment.

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You can see our full 'Promise to you' online at **www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/customer**

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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:
Clustered Bellflower on South Downs chalk grassland
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