



# NORTH PENNINES

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

## Farming is changing in the North Pennines

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for life  
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One of the  
AONB family

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# Farming is changing in the North Pennines

As you're aware, farming is changing as never before in our lifetime. In the North Pennines, as elsewhere, farmers are increasingly being asked to provide services or 'public goods' like clean water, clean air, healthy soils, carbon storage, biodiversity and access to the countryside, as well as producing food for the nation.

The new Environmental Land Management scheme will not be fully in place until 2024, but direct payments to farmers are being phased out starting this year. In the transition between the two systems there is a lot of room for confusion.

We welcome the principle of paying those looking after the land for the public goods and services they provide, and the opportunity it gives us to help restore nature and protect heritage in the North Pennines, but we need to make sure that the transition to a new system of public payments also underpins a strong local economy and thriving rural communities. So, we and others need to support farmers and other land managers through this period where we can, so that they can provide these public goods and have thriving businesses into the future.

**NORTH PENNINES**



Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

In this publication we focus on some opportunities in the transition period (including the new Countryside Stewardship scheme), what Environmental Land Management could look like in the North Pennines, and where you can go for advice and support.

We will provide more information on the new Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, outlined in the Agricultural Transition Plan, which we will be delivering locally.

We also want to hear what you have to say, so please take the opportunity to feed back on the pre-paid questionnaire or visit <https://www.northpennines.org.uk/farmingischanging> for more information.

**Farming is changing  
as never before in  
our lifetime**



## Paying farmers to improve the environment

# The transition period - what's available now?

In November 2020 the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) released information on how the country will start the seven-year change towards a system which pays farmers to improve the environment, improve animal health and welfare, and reduce carbon emissions.

The Defra booklet 'Farming is Changing' provides further details and is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-farming-changes-to-farming-in-england>. Paper copies are available from: [ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk).

During the seven years from 2021 to 2027, the support that farmers receive through the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) will be gradually phased out and the money that is freed-up will be made available to farmers to improve the environment, improve animal health and welfare, and reduce carbon emissions.



## Agricultural Transition Plan

Agricultural Transition Plan sets out what schemes will be active and when over the seven-year period. Schemes include:

- New Countryside Stewardship agreements and capital works (see page 7)
- Continuation of Environmental Land Management test and trials
- Environmental Land Management scheme national pilots
- Tree Health Pilot
- Roll out of components of Environmental Land Management (see page 10)
- Farming in Protected Landscapes – the North Pennines AONB Partnership is involved in the national working group developing this scheme.
- Animal Health and Welfare Pathway
- Farming Investment Funds (small and large)



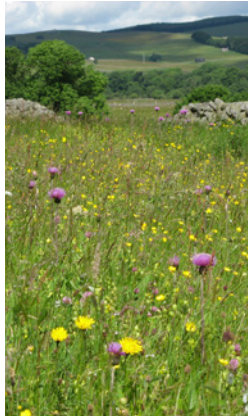


Countryside Stewardship  
will be replaced by a  
new scheme in 2024

# New Countryside Stewardship

Defra has already made some changes to the scheme for new agreements starting in January 2021 and will make the following changes to agreements from 2021 onwards:

- improving the capital grant offer, making 67 options; available which can sit alongside the Wildlife Offer
- creating new wood pasture options in the uplands, at payment rates suitable for upland application, providing a habitat mosaic of grassland, scrub, and trees;
- making the capital offer available to Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement holders, where the options are compatible;
- improving woodland options, including bringing bracken control and stone wall options into woodland management and combining Woodland Creation and Woodland Maintenance grants;
- increasing the number of capital items that farmers can apply for using the Rural Payments service, including hedgerows and boundaries; and
- expanding eligibility criteria for the upland option UP2 (management of rough grazing for birds), enabling more land managers to access this option and further improve the upland offer.



Following customer feedback penalties will be fairer and inspections less onerous.

Countryside Stewardship (CS) will eventually be replaced with the new Environmental Land Management scheme. By entering an agreement now, farmers will benefit from the new agricultural policy once it is fully rolled out in 2024.

Defra will provide a straightforward way for CS scheme agreement holders to transfer across to Environmental Land Management once it's ready, and without penalty. More information will be published later in 2021.

Farmers and land managers who are new to taking on environmental work or with expired or expiring Environmental Stewardship agreements can apply for Mid Tier, Higher Tier, capital grants and woodland support.

Further details on how to apply are at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-get-paid-for-environmental-land-management>. Paper copies of application packs can be requested at [ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk) or 03000 200 301.

## Key Dates

	Application pack request deadline
Higher Tier	31 March 2021 - paper & online
Mid Tier	28 May 2021 - paper 30 June 2021 - online
Wildlife Offers	28 May 2021 - paper Apply online up to 30 July 2021
New Capital Grants	Apply online up to 30 April 2021
Woodland Creation and Maintenance	From February 2021
Woodland Management Plan	From February 2021
Woodland Tree Health	From February 2021



Application submission deadline	Agreement duration and start date	Application scored/ranked
30 April (initial application)	Usually 5 years Start January 2022	Yes - competitive
30 July	5 years (capital items 2 years) Start January 2022	Yes - competitive
30 July	5 years (capital items 2 years) Start January 2022	No - guaranteed
30 April	2 years. Start first of month after RPA checks done	Yes - competitive
None - all year round	2 years (capital works) 10 years maintenance	Yes - competitive
None - all year round	10 years	Must be over 3 hectares Not competitive
None - all year round	One-off payments towards the cost of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• restocking woodland after a tree health problem</li> <li>• felling diseased trees or rhododendron control</li> </ul>	A Woodland Officer will assess your site Woodland management plan recommended

# Environmental Land Management and public goods

The new Environmental Land Management scheme will pay farmers and land managers to deliver public goods. Some examples of what this might look like in the North Pennines AONB are:

Benefits - public goods	North Pennines AONB examples
Climate change adaptation	Reducing downstream flood risk using natural flood management solutions on farmland
Climate change mitigation	Storing carbon and pulling it out of the atmosphere, by restoring healthy peatlands and enhancing permanent pasture
Clean air	Increasing tree and woodland cover
Clean water	Controlling diffuse pollution from historic mine waste and reducing sediment run-off
Protection of & mitigation from environmental hazards	Good nutrient management on farms to avoid pollution
Biodiversity (thriving plants and animals)	Adapting grazing management to increase soil health and species diversity
Health and well-being / recreation	Helping more people enjoy our countryside responsibly through improved access and visitor facilities
Beauty & heritage	Preserving the richness and character of our landscape through High Nature Value farming. Restoring heritage features on farms

## Environmental Land Management is still in development, but there will be three schemes:

- **Sustainable Farming Incentive** will pay for environmentally sustainable land management actions that all farmers can do. Available from 2022/23.
- **Local Nature Recovery** will pay for action that supports local nature recovery and delivers local environmental priorities. Available from 2024/25.
- **Landscape Recovery** will involve bespoke agreements to support long-term land use change projects. Available from 2024/25.



# Advice and support

The North Pennines AONB Partnership runs the following projects which include advice or support for farmers.

## ■ Fellfoot Forward

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Grants available to conserve, enhance and connect habitats for wildlife. Advice and funding for woodland creation & management, wetland creation and natural flood management.

Tim Jacobs ☎ 07920 028975

✉ tjacobs@northpenninesaonb.org.uk

## ■ Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected

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Supports action for nature recovery on farms and estates and the development of skills needed to sustain the High Nature Value farming systems (low intensity farming, with low grazing pressure, low inputs and high biodiversity). Funding available.

Patrick Oulton ☎ 07920 577321

✉ patrick@northpenninesaonb.org.uk

## ■ North Pennines Woodland Project

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Surveys, advice and access to funding for woodland creation and management of existing woodlands.

Ben Scotting ☎ 07920 577284

✉ ben@northpenninesaonb.org.uk

## ■ Peatland Programme

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Our Peatland Programme team can offer a variety of advice and services that can lead to securing grant funding to restore degraded peatlands, and have huge experience of planning and managing the restoration work itself.

Alistair Lockett ☎ 07584 264 780

✉ alistair@northpenninesaonb.org.uk

## ■ Allen Valleys Facilitation Group

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Open to all farmers in the Allen Valleys. Group training and advice.

Sarah Tooze ☎ 07766 785294

✉ sarah@northpenninesaonb.org.uk

## ■ Upper Tees Facilitation Fund

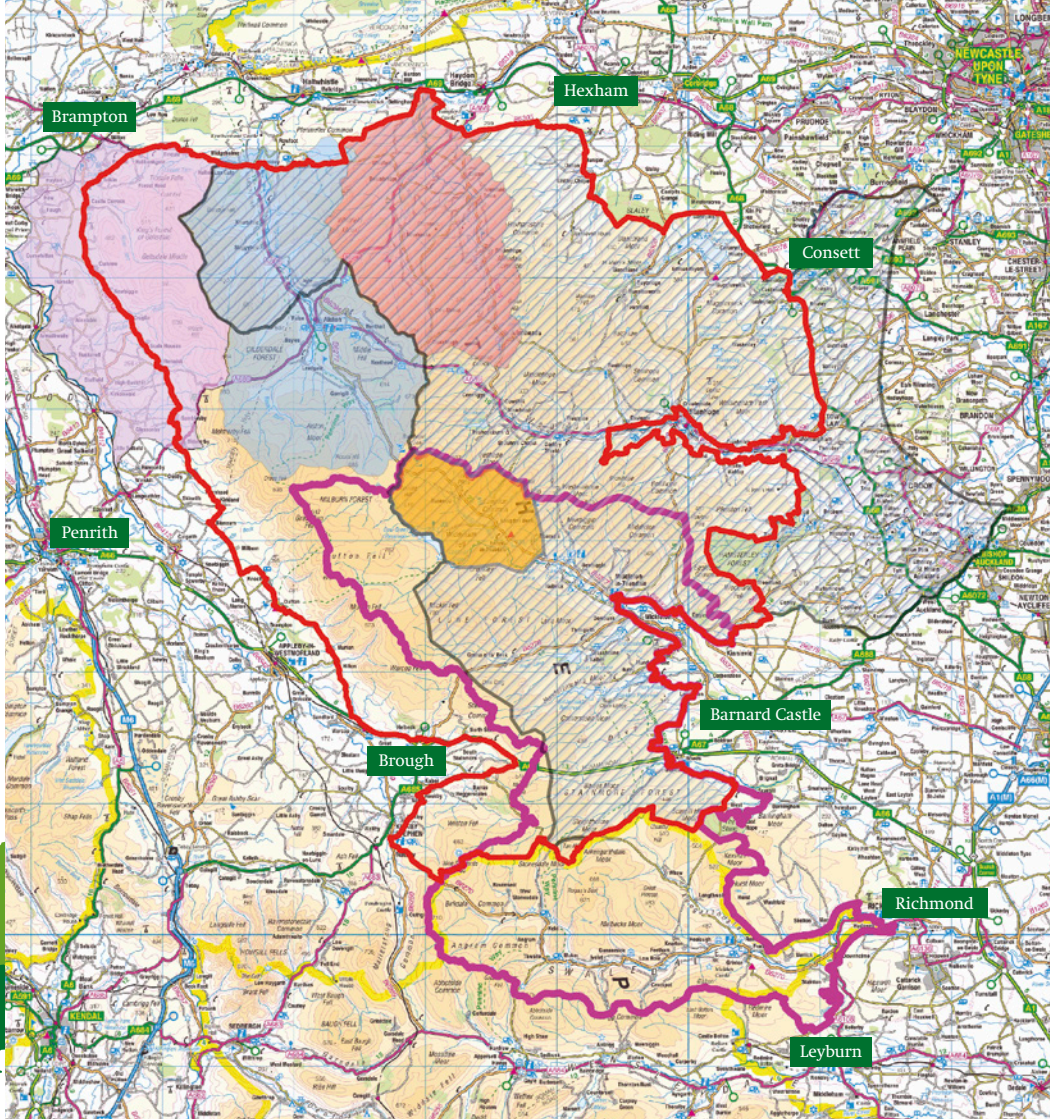
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Open to all farmers in Harwood-in-Teesdale and Forest-in-Teesdale. Group training and advice.

Ruth Starr-Kedde ☎ 07769 239677

✉ ruth@northpenninesaonb.org.uk





## Project boundaries in the North Pennines AONB

-  North Pennines AONB boundary
-  Upper Teesdale Facilitation Fund
-  North Pennines Woodland Project
-  Upper South Tyne Facilitation Fund\*
-  Allen Valleys Facilitation Fund
-  Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected
-  Fellfoot Forward

\*Run by Tyne Rivers Trust



# Advice and support from other organisations

The AONB Team works with many organisations who can also provide advice and support to farmers and land managers in the North Pennines AONB and beyond. There are also many private sector land agents who can provide support to the farming community.

## ■ The Farmer Network

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Run by farmers for farmers to help maintain and develop a viable and sustainable farming community.

Operating in Cumbria and Yorkshire Dales.

☎ 01768 868615

✉ info@thefarmernetwork.co.uk

## ■ Upper Teesdale Agricultural Advice Service (UTAAS)

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A support service run by and for the people of upper Teesdale

☎ 01833 641010 (office)

✉ inittogether@utass.org

## ■ Natural England

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Support and advice is available for those applying for a Countryside Stewardship (CS) Mid Tier agreement (starting 1 January 2022). This will include an invitation to on-line events, one-to-one clinics, and application option advice. Higher Tier agreements are mostly sought by Natural England by direct contact with existing agreement holders, or for larger-scale habitat restoration projects.

☎ 0300 060 3900

✉ enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

## ■ Rural Payments Agency (RPA)

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The Rural Payments Agency is the delegated authority for Countryside Stewardship  
[www.gov.uk/government/organisation/rural-payments-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisation/rural-payments-agency)

## ■ Woodland Trust

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Advice, support and in some cases small numbers of free trees or hedging plants.

For Cumbria:

Pete Leeson ☎ 01768 775060

✉ peterleeson@woodlandtrust.org.uk

For Durham and Northumberland:

Ben Scotting ☎ 07920 577284

✉ ben@northpenninesaonb.org.uk

### ■ The Rivers Trusts (Eden, Tees, Tyne, & Wear Rivers Trusts)

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Offer information on water-friendly farming and natural flood management.

Some trusts also have volunteer teams who can assist with works in these areas.

#### ■ Eden Rivers Trust

Andy Dyer ☎ 01768 866788

✉ andy.dyer@edenrt.org

#### ■ Tyne Rivers Trust

Also run a Facilitation Fund group for farmers in the upper South Tyne catchment (see map on page 13).

Danielle Anderson-Walker

☎ 07939 317760

✉ d.anderson-walker@tyneriverstrust.org

#### ■ Tees Rivers Trust

Richard Holmes ☎ 07879 648354

✉ Richard.holmes@teesriverstrust.org

#### ■ Wear Rivers Trust

☎ 07759 261884

✉ admin@wear-rivers-trust.org.uk

### ■ RSPB

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Free advice and support on High Nature Value farming. Help with all aspects of Higher Tier and Mid Tier CS, including advice about acquiring temporary adjustments to prescriptions where current management is not achieving required results.

Janet Fairclough ☎ 07866 554169

✉ janet.fairclough@rspb.org.uk

### ■ Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust

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Phil Warren ☎ 01833 651936

✉ pwarren@gwct.org.uk

### ■ Forestry Commission

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The Forestry Commission offers several schemes for increasing, protecting, and managing trees, forests, and woodlands.

Yorkshire and North East area

☎ 0300 067 4900

✉ yne@forestrycommission.gov.uk

North West and West Midlands

☎ 0300 067 4190

✉ nwwm@forestrycommission.gov.uk



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