

# Sustainable Management of Forests – Public Access – Rural Woods

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To see recent changes to this guidance, [check the bottom of this page](#).

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## Aim

This option aims to provide support for the management of rural woodlands for public access.

Support is provided to assist with the ongoing maintenance of paths that promote the use of woodlands for health benefits.

## Grant support

This is an annual grant to support the costs of maintenance of public access in woodlands.

The grant supports the ongoing activities of:

- carrying out annual tree and path safety inspections
- keeping access routes free of litter and tree debris
- keeping paths and signs and recreational facilities up to an acceptable standard

The rate is £100 per eligible hectare per year for up to a maximum of five years.

We have calculated payment rate using the length of path with a 25 metre buffer on either side to allow for management activities. Therefore 200m x 50m = 1 hectare of grant aidable area.

If the area of the path (including the buffer area) exceeds the area of the woodland we will only pay grant up to the area of the woodland.

Grant support will be capped at £10,000 per management unit per year.

## Application eligibility criteria

Please check that you are eligible to apply for Forestry Grant Scheme funding before you begin your application.

## Sustainable Management of Forests

You must have an approved Forest Plan for woodland areas of 100 hectares or more. For woodland areas less than 100 hectares you must have an approved Management Plan or Forest Plan.

### Long-Term Forest Plan technical guidance

#### Management Plan

Please see the 'Supporting information' section below for the information you need to supply us when applying for this option. You must use the appropriate standard template to give this information.

Forest roads are not eligible.

You must carry out and retain annual tree safety surveys and keep an annual monitoring form of time inputs as required. This must include days spent litter picking and undertaking path, sign and furniture maintenance.

You must comply with the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#) over your entire property.

## Supporting information

To help us assess your application you must provide us with supporting information.



[Sustainable Management of Forests – Public Access – Rural Woods supporting information template \(MS Word, Size: 394.8 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/smf-pub-access-rural-woods-supp-info-template.doc>

You must give the details as listed below using the template provided.

Provide information on the current level of public access in the woodland, for example information on visitor numbers, community use and so on. This can be an estimate but must be supported by your local access officer.

Please outline the current and past management of the woodland including any grant support.

Provide details about the path network, construction material and condition of the paths that you wish to include for annual payments.

You must provide a map that shows the perimeter of the woodland and the network of paths within that woodland.



[Example map – Sustainable Management of Forests – Public Access – Rural Woods \(PDF, Size: 660.9 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/FGS-SMF---Public-Access---Rural-Woods.pdf>

### General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme

## Scoring criteria

We have set agreed financial budgets for each of the options under the Forestry Grant Scheme.

To ensure that we make the most cost effective use of funding available and to meet Scottish Government objectives, we will assess each application using scoring criteria.

The criteria will be written as appropriate to each Forestry Grant Scheme option; please refer to [Scoring criteria and clearing process](#) for details.

Each option within your application must meet the threshold score to be considered for approval. In achieving the threshold score, your option must score against each criterion except for additional benefit.

The scores will then be used as the basis for allocating funding on a competitive basis through the Forestry Grant Scheme clearing process.

### Delivery of option benefits

1 POINT – for applications that meet the eligibility requirements but do not deliver any of the benefits detailed below.

3 POINTS – for applications that provide one or more of the following in addition to meeting the eligibility requirements:

- applications that support the maintenance of established waymarked or publicised routes

5 POINTS – for applications that meet one of the three-point criteria above and the criteria below:

- applications which are community owned, led, or supported, and clearly demonstrate the delivery of significant benefits to the local community

### Supplementary point – additional benefit

1 POINT – will be awarded, as an additional point, where:

- applications can clearly demonstrate the aim is to improve connectivity and physical linkages between communities and recognised destinations

## How to claim

We will pay grants for up to five years for each year that your contract is covered by a Forest Plan or Management Plan. If your Forest Plan or Management Plan expires during the five years of your contract you must ensure that it is renewed in time to be able to continue making annual claims. We cannot pay your claim for any claim year that is not covered by a Forest Plan or Management Plan.

You must claim this grant on your Single Application Form.

You will be required to keep an annual monitoring form of the activities carried out. This will include days spent litter picking, and undertaking path, sign and furniture maintenance. You must also undertake annual tree safety surveys.

The annual monitoring form template will be sent out with the contract and is available here. One form must be completed for each year of the contract. Please retain the annual monitoring form and survey for checking by our woodland officers.



[Sustainable Management of Forests – Public Access – Rural Woods annual monitoring form \(MS Word, Size: 550.9 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpaymentsandservices.org/media/resources/smf-pub-access-rural-woods-annual-monitoring-form.doc>

## Technical guidance

- [Long-term Forest Plan technical guidance](#)
- [Management Plan](#)
- [General mapping guidance for the Forestry Grant Scheme](#)
- [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#)
- [UK Forestry Standard](#)

## Recent changes

Section	Change	Previous text	New text
<a href="#">Scoring criteria</a>	Guidance amended.	To make sure we achieve the best value for money and to ensure we meet the scheme's objectives, we assess each	

		<p>application using a scoring criteria.</p> <p>These criteria differ depending on the option.</p> <p>We will set a minimum score that an application for any particular option must achieve to be considered for approval. We will make details available before the start of the scheme.</p>	
	Specific threshold score removed.	Threshold score = 2 points	-

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