

Public Opinion of Forestry 2017, UK and England

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Introduction

The Forestry Commission/ Forest Research has conducted biennial surveys of public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues since 1995. These surveys are used to inform and monitor policy development.

The UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2017 was commissioned by Forest Research on behalf of Forestry Commission England, Forest Enterprise England and Forest Research. This publication presents results from that survey for the UK and for England on:

- Woodland recreation;
- Engagement with forest issues;
- Importance of forestry;
- Urban trees;
- Climate change; and
- Tree health.

A copy of the questionnaire used in this survey, giving complete wording of questions and response options, is provided in the Annex at the end of this report.

Surveys have also been run in Wales and in Scotland. Separate reports, providing results from these surveys, are available at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5zyl9w.

Statistics on the proportion of adults who have been actively engaged in forestry have already been released, in Forestry Commission England's *Corporate Plan Performance Indicators 2017*. Other results from the 2017 survey are published for the first time in this release. Figures for earlier years have not been revised from those previously released. For further details, see the Revisions section of the Annex.

As the data are obtained from a sample survey, there is a range of uncertainty (confidence interval) associated with any results produced. Any differences referred to in the text are statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level unless otherwise stated. For further details, see the Data Sources and Methodology and the Quality sections of the Annex.

Key findings

In England, and in the UK as a whole:

- Around **three fifths** of respondents in 2017 have visited forests or woodlands in the last few years, a statistically significant increase from the 2015 figure. Of those, around **three quarters** reported that they had visited at least once a month in the previous Summer.
- **3%** of respondents in the UK and in England were involved in volunteer work, organised tree planting events, community-based woodland groups or consultations associated with woodlands in the past 12 months.
- More than **nine in ten** respondents see woodlands as places where they can relax and de-stress, and a similar proportion see them as places to have fun and enjoy themselves.
- On targeting public resources for looking after urban trees and woods, **one third** of respondents identified trees in public parks and gardens as a priority.

On **climate change**:

- **84%** agree or strongly agree that 'a lot more trees should be planted'; and
- **76%** agree or strongly agree that 'different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates'.

On **tree health**:

- Over **four fifths** agree or strongly agree that 'action should be taken by authorities and woodland managers to protect trees from damaging pests and diseases'.
- Around **three quarters** agree or strongly agree that 'everyone should take action when visiting woodlands to help prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases'.
- Around **one quarter** are 'aware that possible tree pests and diseases can be reported using the Tree Alert app or website'.
- Around **one quarter** agree or strongly agree that 'there is very little that anyone can do to prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases'.

Woodland recreation

The survey asked respondents a number of questions about visits to woodland. This included whether the respondent had visited woodland in the last few years, type of woodland visited, frequency of visits and three questions related to visits to Forestry Commission woodland.

Proportion visiting woodland

As in previous years, respondents to the 2017 survey were asked whether they had visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation in the last few years.

In 2017, around three fifths of respondents in the UK (61%) and in England (62%) said they had visited forests or woodlands in the last few years for walks, picnics or other recreation (Table 1). This represents a statistically significant increase over the result from 2015.

Table 1: Visits to woodland in last few years

Year	Percent of respondents	
	UK	England
2003	67	66
2005	65	65
2007	77	76
2009	77	77
2011	67	68
2013	66	65
2015	56	55
2017	61	62

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

- Figures are based on all respondents: weighted totals =
UK - 2003 (4,120), 2005 (3,892), 2007 (4,018), 2009 (2,011), 2011 (2,068), 2013 (1,927), 2015 (1,804), 2017 (2,113);
England - 2003 (3,412), 2005 (3,367), 2007 (3,339), 2009 (1,685), 2011 (1,733), 2013 (1,615), 2015 (1,512), 2017 (1,780).

Type of woodland visited

Table 2 shows that respondents who had visited woodlands and forests in the last few years were more likely to visit 'woodlands in the countryside' (86% in the UK and 85% in England) than 'woodlands in and around towns' (67% in both the UK and England). Around one half of respondents (53% in the UK and 52% in England) reported visiting woodlands and forests in both locations.

Table 2: Type of woodland visited

Type of woodland	Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands				
	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017
UK					
Woodlands in the countryside	86	84	85	80	86
Woodlands in and around towns	64	62	70	71	67
Both	48	47	55	51	53
England					
Woodlands in the countryside	84	84	85	81	85
Woodlands in and around towns	61	62	68	72	67
Both	45	46	53	53	52

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

- Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: weighted totals =
UK - 2009 (1,549), 2011 (1,393), 2013 (1,272), 2015 (1,015), 2017 (1,296);
England - 2009 (1,291), 2011 (1,170), 2013 (1,056), 2015 (826), 2017 (1,100).
- Responses for those who said they had been to 'both' types of woodlands have been included in the totals for 'woodlands in and around towns' and 'woodlands in the countryside'.

Frequency of woodland visits

Of the respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years, three quarters (77% in the UK and in England) said that they visited at least once a month during summer 2016 (between April and September 2016) (Table 3 and Figure 1), a statistically significant increase from 2015. Few respondents who had visited woodlands in the past few years said that they did not visit during summer 2016 (4% in both the UK and in England).

Table 3: Frequency of woodland visits in Summer (April to September)

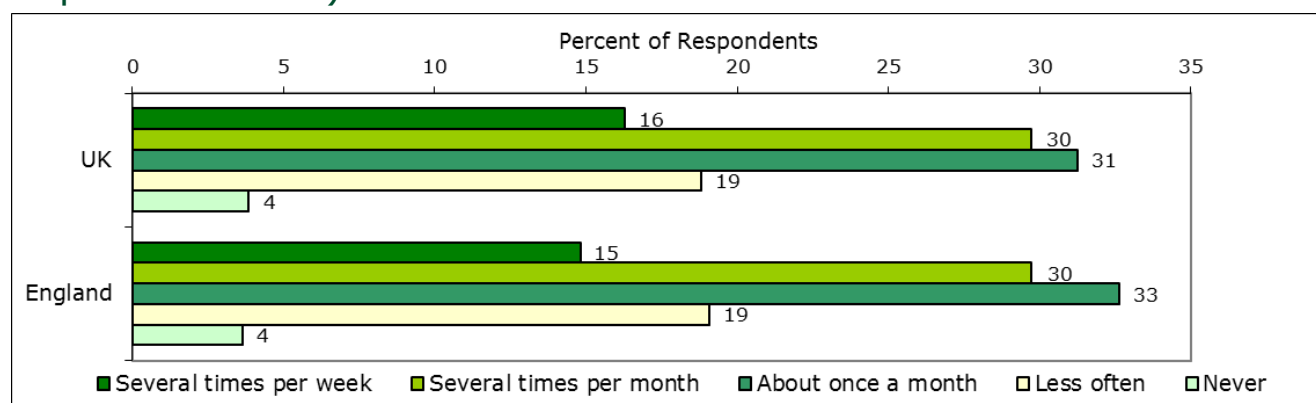
		Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands				
Frequency		2009	2011	2013	2015	2017
UK	Several times per week	12	15	16	18	16
	Several times per month	24	29	31	26	30
	About once a month	26	26	26	25	31
	Less often	34	27	24	28	19
	Never	5	3	3	3	4
England	Several times per week	12	15	15	16	15
	Several times per month	24	29	30	25	30
	About once a month	26	25	26	26	33
	Less often	34	28	26	30	19
	Never	5	4	3	3	4

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

- Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: weighted totals = UK - 2009 (1,549), 2011 (1,393), 2013 (1,272), 2015 (1,015), 2017 (1,296); England - 2009 (1,291), 2011 (1,170), 2013 (1,056), 2015 (826), 2017 (1,100).

Figure 1: Frequency of woodland visits in Summer (April to September 2016)



Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2017.

Note:

- Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: weighted totals = UK (1,296); England (1,100).

Public Opinion of Forestry - UK/ England

Of the respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years, around two fifths (44% in the UK and 43% in England) said they visited at least once a month during winter 2016/17 (between October 2016 and March 2017) (Table 4 and Figure 2). Around one quarter (26% in the UK and in England) said they did not visit during the winter.

Table 4: Frequency of woodland visits in Winter (October to March)

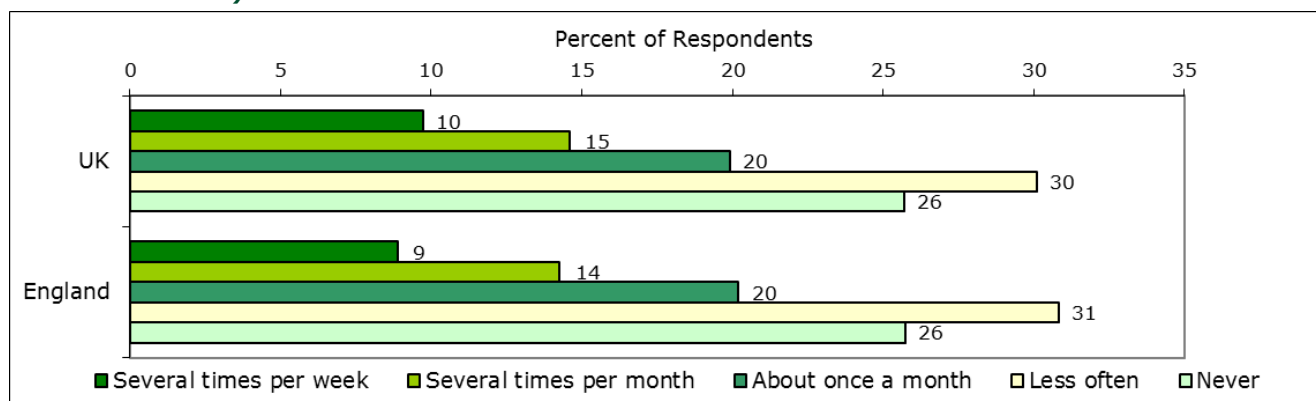
		Percent of respondents who had visited woodlands				
Frequency		2009	2011	2013	2015	2017
UK	Several times per week	7	9	11	11	10
	Several times per month	11	12	13	13	15
	About once a month	16	17	17	17	20
	Less often	36	32	36	38	30
	Never	31	29	23	20	26
England	Several times per week	7	9	10	9	9
	Several times per month	11	13	12	14	14
	About once a month	16	17	17	18	20
	Less often	36	32	36	39	31
	Never	31	29	23	21	26

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

- Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: weighted totals = UK - 2009 (1,549), 2011 (1,393), 2013 (1,272), 2015 (1,015), 2017 (1,296); England - 2009 (1,291), 2011 (1,170), 2013 (1,056), 2015 (826), 2017 (1,100).

Figure 2: Frequency of woodland visits in Winter (October 2016 to March 2017)



Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2017.

Note:

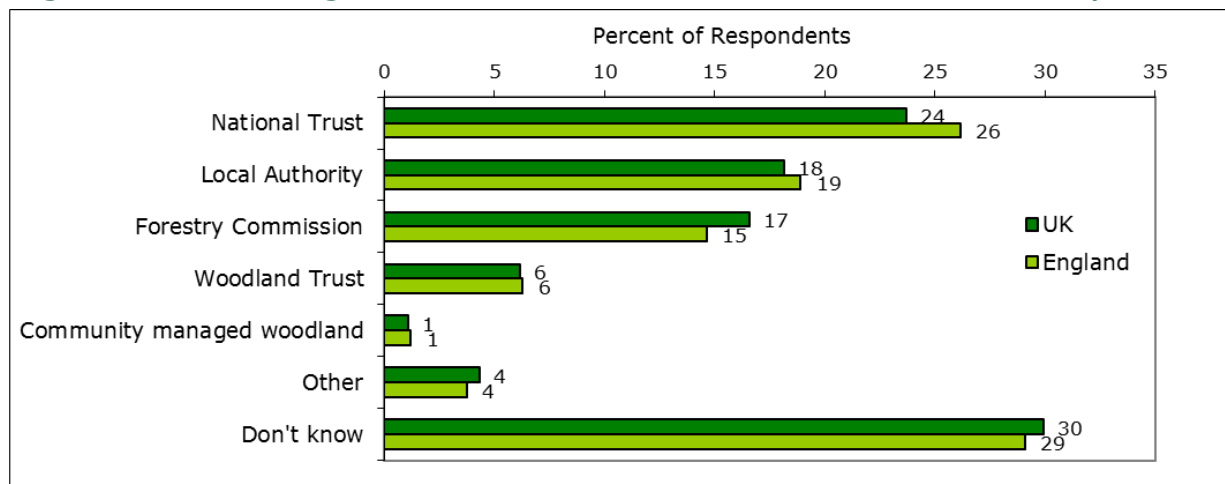
- Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: weighted totals = UK (1,296); England (1,100).

Visits to Forestry Commission woodland

Three questions related to visits to woodland managed by the Forestry Commission, first included in the 2015 survey, were continued in 2017.

The first question asked respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years to identify the manager of the woodland they had visited most recently. In 2017, nearly one third (30% in the UK, 29% in England) reported that they did not know who managed the woodlands they had visited most recently. The National Trust was identified as the manager by around one quarter of those asked (24% in the UK, 26% in England), local authorities by 18% in the UK and 19% in England, and the Forestry Commission by 17% in the UK and 15% in England. (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Management of woodland visited most recently



Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2017.

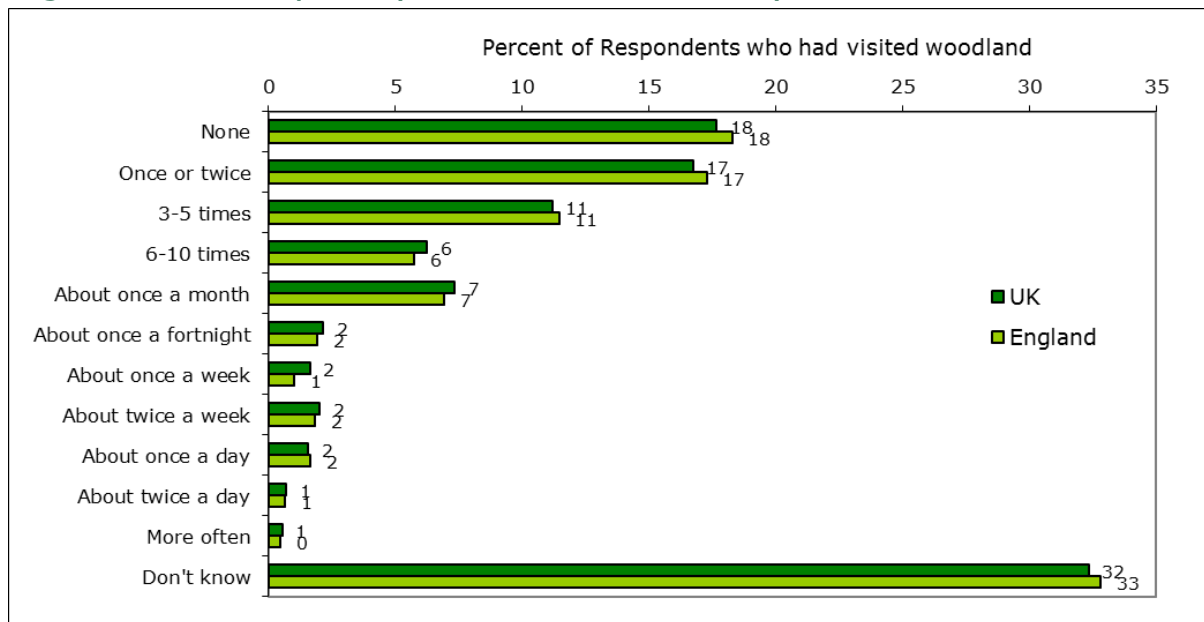
Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: weighted totals = UK (1,296); England (1,100).

Respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years were then asked to report how often they had visited woodland managed by the Forestry Commission in the previous 12 months.

Around one third (32% in the UK, 33% in England) reported that they did not know how often they had visited Forestry Commission woodland and a further 18% (in both the UK and England) reported that they had not visited Forestry Commission woodland in the previous 12 months. 16% in the UK and 14% in England reported visiting Forestry Commission woodlands at least once a month (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Frequency of visits to Forestry Commission woodland



Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2017.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: weighted totals = UK (1,296); England (1,100).

Respondents were then asked about their membership of various organisations. The majority (87% in the UK, 86% in England) stated that they were not members of any of the organisations listed (Table 5).

Table 5: Membership of organisations

	Percent of respondents			
	UK		England	
	2015	2017	2015	2017
Member of the National Trust or National Trust for Scotland	8	8	8	9
Member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	2	2	2	3
Member of a wildlife trust	2	2	2	3
Member of English Heritage/ Historic Scotland/ Cadw (Wales)	2	2	2	2
Member of the Woodland Trust	1	2	1	2
Holder of a Forestry Commission England 'Discovery Pass'	1	0	1	0
None of the above	87	87	87	86

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents: weighted totals = UK 2015 (1,804), 2017 (2,113); England 2015 (1,512), 2017 (1,780).

2. Respondents could select more than one option.

Engagement with forest issues

Respondents were asked whether they had been involved in woodland consultations or any volunteer groups and organised events associated with woodlands. 3% of respondents to the 2017 survey (in the UK and in England) said that they had been engaged with forest issues in the previous 12 months. This represents a statistically significant decrease in both the UK and England figures from the 2013 level of 10% (Table 6).

In terms of the specific types of engagement covered, the results for UK and England in 2017 showed that:

- 1% of respondents had been involved in voluntary work in connection with a woodland (e.g. physical work in a wood, administration, fund raising, running a group);
- 1% had been involved in an organised tree planting event;
- 1% were or had become a member of a community based woodland group (e.g. a 'Community Trust' or 'Friends of Group'); and
- 1% had been involved or consulted about plans for creating/managing or using woodlands in their area.

Table 6: Engagement with forest issues in the last 12 months

Type of engagement	Percent of respondents				
	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017
UK					
Voluntary work in connection with a woodland	3	4	4	1	1
Organised tree planting event	3	3	3	2	1
Member of a community based woodland group	3	2	3	0	1
Involved or consulted about plans for creating/managing or using woodlands in your area	3	2	2	0	1
None of these	91	92	90	96	97
England					
Voluntary work in connection with a woodland	3	4	4	2	1
Organised tree planting event	2	3	3	2	1
Member of a community based woodland group	2	2	3	0	1
Involved or consulted about plans for creating/managing or using woodlands in your area	3	2	2	0	1
None of these	91	92	90	95	97

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents: weighted totals =
 UK - 2009 (2,011), 2011 (2,068), 2013 (1,927), 2015 (1,804), 2017 (2,113);
 England - 2009 (1,685), 2011 (1,733), 2013 (1,615), 2015 (1,512), 2017 (1,780).
2. See questionnaire in Annex for full text of response options.

Importance of forestry

Respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years (Table 1) were asked to state their level of agreement with a list of statements as to why woodlands and forests are important to them.

As shown in Table 7, the majority of respondents who had visited woodlands in the last few years agreed (selected 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree') with most of the statements, but the highest level of agreement was with the statements that 'They are places where ...':

- '... I can relax and de-stress' (93% in the UK and in England agreed); and
- '... I can have fun and enjoy myself' (92% in the UK; 91% in England).

The lowest levels of agreements were with the following statements:

- 'They get me involved in local issues' (29% in the UK; 31% in England)
- 'They are good places for me to socialise' (54% in the UK; 55% in England).

Table 7: Importance of woodlands and forests to individuals

Reason	Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree				
	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017
UK					
... I can relax and de-stress	94	95	92	93	93
... I can have fun and enjoy myself	91	94	91	91	92
... I can exercise and keep fit	84	90	87	85	86
... I can learn about the environment	80	80	77	79	79
... I feel at home	69	75	74	75	75
... I can learn about local culture or history	..	64	66	66	63
They are good places for me to socialise	50	59	60	59	54
They get me involved in local issues	33	34	37	36	29
England					
... I can relax and de-stress	94	94	92	92	93
... I can have fun and enjoy myself	90	93	90	91	91
... I can exercise and keep fit	84	89	86	85	86
... I can learn about the environment	81	79	76	78	78
... I feel at home	69	75	73	74	74
... I can learn about local culture or history	..	64	65	66	63
They are good places for me to socialise	51	58	61	60	55
They get me involved in local issues	34	35	37	38	31

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents who had visited woodland in the last few years: weighted totals = UK - 2009 (1,549), 2011 (1,393), 2013 (1,272), 2015 (1,015), 2017 (1,296); England - 2009 (1,291), 2011 (1,170), 2013 (1,056), 2015 (826), 2017 (1,100).
2. .. denotes data not available (statement not included in 2009 survey).
3. See questionnaire in Annex for full text of response options.

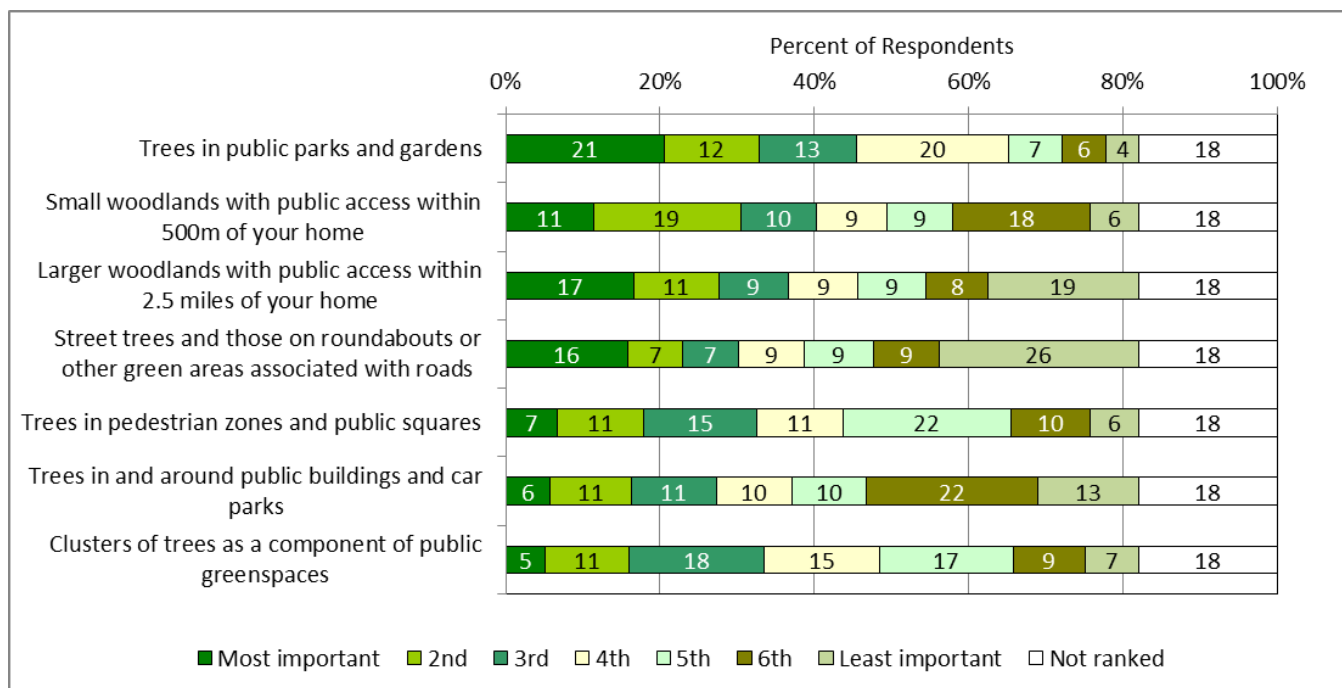
Urban trees

A question relating to urban trees and woods was included for the first time in 2017, with respondents to the survey asked about priorities for targeting public resources for looking after urban trees and woods.

Around one third of respondents in both the UK (33%) and in England (32%) considered trees in and around public parks and gardens as a priority (either most or second most important), with accessible small woodlands near home reported as a priority by 30% of respondents in the UK and 31% in England (Figures 5a and 5b).

18% of respondents in the UK and 17% in England did not want public money used on urban trees or woods.

Figure 5a: Priorities for spending of public resources on urban trees: UK

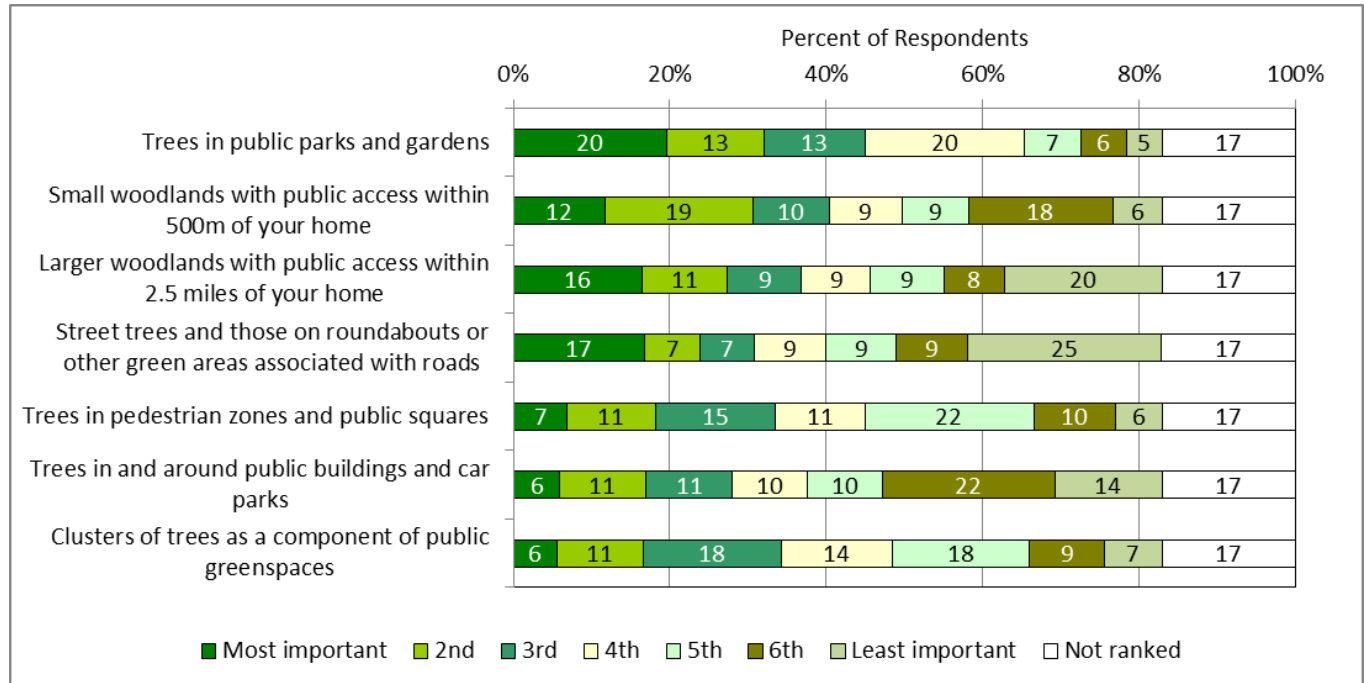


Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2017.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents: weighted total = UK (2,113).

Figure 5b: Priorities for spending of public resources on urban trees: England



Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2017.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents: weighted total = England (1,780).

Climate change

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements regarding the way in which UK forests and woodlands should be managed in response to the threat of climate change.

Table 8 shows that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- 'A lot more trees should be planted' (84% in both the UK and England); and
- 'Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates' (76% in both the UK and in England).

Conversely, few respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- 'No action is needed; let nature take its course' (24% in both the UK and England); and
- 'Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced' (26% in the UK; 27% in England).

Table 8: Management of UK forests in response to the threat of climate change

	Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree				
	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017
UK					
A lot more trees should be planted	92	90	86	80	84
Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates	70	74	71	67	76
Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced	17	21	22	25	26
No action is needed, let nature take its course	16	21	18	22	24
England					
A lot more trees should be planted	92	90	85	78	84
Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates	70	74	71	67	76
Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced	17	21	23	26	27
No action is needed, let nature take its course	16	20	18	23	24

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents: weighted totals =
 UK - 2009 (2,011), 2011 (2,068), 2013 (1,927), 2015 (1,804), 2017 (2,113);
 England - 2009 (1,685), 2011 (1,733), 2013 (1,615), 2015 (1,512), 2017 (1,780).

Tree health

Respondents were presented with a series of statements relating to tree health and asked to indicate their level of agreement.

Table 9 shows that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- 'Action should be taken by authorities and woodland managers to protect trees from damaging pests and diseases' (85% in the UK and 84% in England); and that
- 'Everyone should take action when visiting woodlands to help prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases' (74% in the UK and in England).

Conversely, few respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- 'There is very little that anyone can do to prevent the spread of damaging pests and diseases' (23% in the UK and in England); and that
- 'I am aware that possible tree pests and diseases can be reported using the Tree Alert app or website' (23% in the UK and 24% in England).

Table 9: Tree health

Percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree

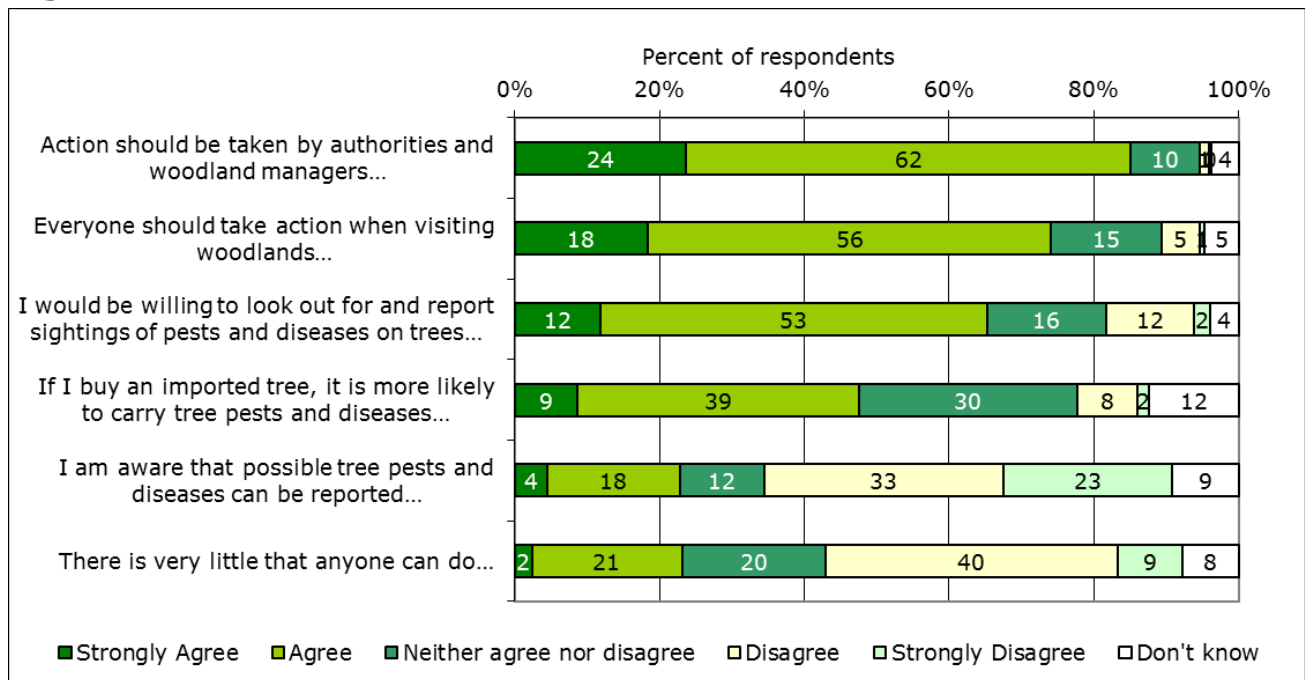
	UK			England		
	2013	2015	2017	2013	2015	2017
Action should be taken by authorities and woodland managers to protect trees from damaging pests and diseases	80	75	85	80	74	84
Everyone should take action when visiting woodlands to help prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases	63	57	74	64	57	74
I would be willing to look out for and report sightings of pests and diseases on trees, if appropriate information and advice was available to me	64	55	65	63	55	65
If I buy an imported tree, it is more likely to carry tree pests and diseases than a tree grown in the UK	..	42	48	..	42	48
I am aware that possible tree pests and diseases can be reported using the Tree Alert app or website	..	22	23	..	22	24
There is very little that anyone can do to prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases	22	21	23	23	22	23

Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Surveys.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents: weighted response rates =
UK - 2013 (1,927), 2015 (1,804), 2017 (2,113);
England - 2013 (1,615), (1,512), 2017 (1,780).
2. .. denotes data not available (statement not included in 2013 survey).

Figure 6a: Tree health, UK

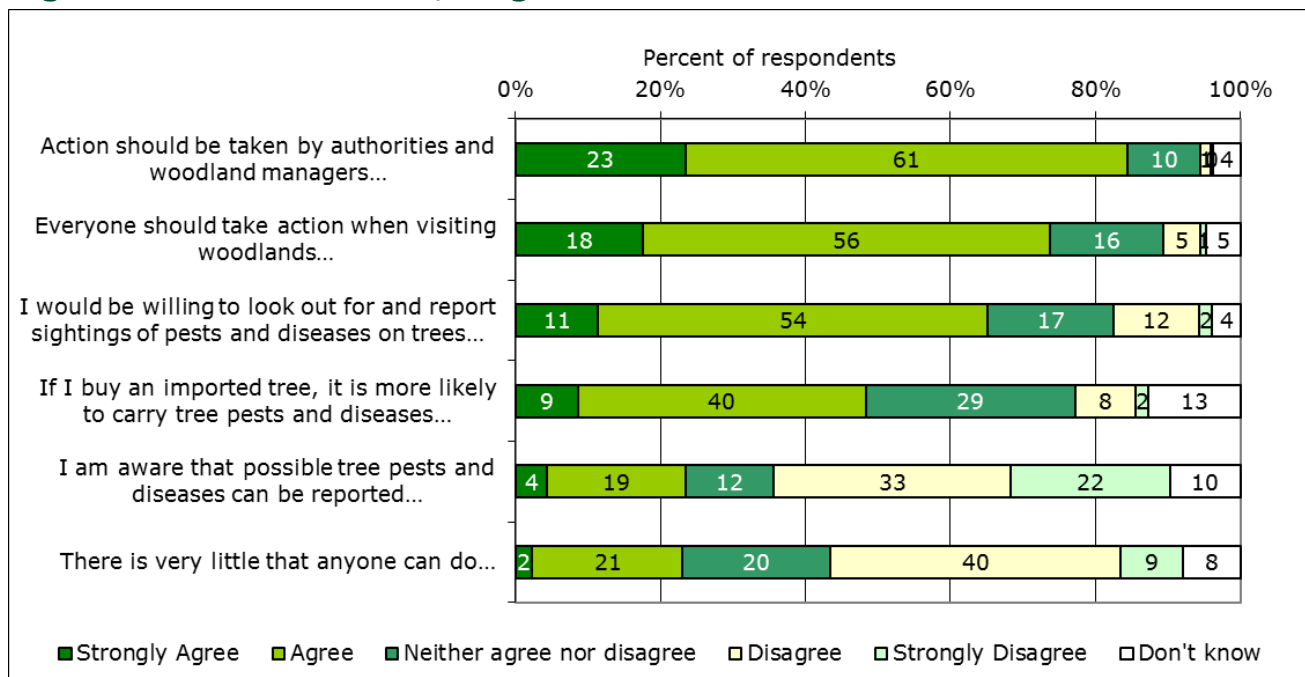


Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2017.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents in the UK (weighted total = 2,113).
2. See Table 9 or Questionnaire in Annex for full text of response options.

Figure 6b: Tree health, England



Source: UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2017.

Note:

1. Figures are based on all respondents in England (weighted total = 1,780).
2. See Table 9 or Questionnaire in Annex for full text of response options.

Annex

Introduction

This annex provides background information on the statistics presented in this release. It covers the data sources and methodology used to produce the statistics, information on quality measures and on any revisions to historic data and links to further information.

Glossary

Biosecurity A set of precautions that aim to prevent the introduction and spread of harmful organisms. These may be pests, pathogens or invasive species.

Clustering A sampling technique where the entire population is divided into groups, or clusters, and a random sample of these clusters are selected. All (or a selection of) observations in the selected clusters are included in the sample. Cluster sampling is often used when a random sample would produce a list of subjects so widely scattered that surveying them would prove to be far too expensive.

Confidence interval An estimated range of values that is likely to include an unknown population parameter (i.e. a fixed value for the population as a whole). The confidence interval around an estimate is derived from the sample data, and is used to indicate the reliability of the estimate.

Design factor A factor applied in the calculation of confidence intervals to take account of the survey design (clustering, weighting, stratification) used in selecting the sample. A design factor of 1.5 is commonly assumed by Market Research companies for omnibus surveys of the population.

Forest In the United Kingdom, there is no formal definition of “forest”; the term is often used for large woodland areas (especially conifers) or for old Royal hunting preserves such as the New Forest or the Forest of Dean.

Forestry Commission (FC) The government department responsible for forestry matters in England, Scotland and (until March 2013) Wales. The Forestry Commission’s functions in Wales transferred to a new organisation, Natural Resources Wales, on 1 April 2013. The responsibility for forestry is devolved.

Great Britain (GB) England, Wales and Scotland.

Quota sampling A method of sampling where interviewers are each given a fixed number of subjects of specified type to interview.

Statistical significance A statistical assessment of whether observations reflect an actual pattern rather than just chance.

Stratification A sampling technique where the entire population is divided into groups, or strata, and a random sample is selected within each group. Stratified sampling is often used to ensure that sufficient numbers from each group are included in the overall sample, particularly where results are required for each group.

United Kingdom (UK) Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Urban trees Trees and woodland located in towns or cities. Includes trees in urban woods, parks, gardens, streets and other urban areas.

Weighting A set of factors assigned to survey responses to ensure that the resulting weighted results are representative of the population as a whole.

Woodland Land under stands of trees with a canopy cover of at least 20% (25% in Northern Ireland), or having the potential to achieve this, including integral open space, and including felled areas that are awaiting restocking. Can exist in rural or urban settings.

Data Sources and Methodology

Background

The Forestry Commission/Forest Research has conducted biennial surveys of public attitudes to forestry and forestry-related issues since 1995. The surveys have evolved since then as follows:

- In the initial surveys, a representative sample of 2,000 adults across Great Britain (GB) was surveyed;
- In 2001, with more interest in country-level results within GB, additional questions were asked of representative samples of 1,000 adults in each of Scotland and Wales;
- Information has also been collected for Northern Ireland in the past through UK wide surveys in 2003 and the separate Northern Ireland surveys (1,000 adults) carried out in 2005, 2007, 2010 and 2014;
- In 2017 three separate surveys were carried out for the UK, for Scotland and for Wales. Some questions were asked in all three of the surveys conducted in 2017, but a number of questions have become survey-specific.

The table below is a summary of the previous surveys and presents the approximate number of adults interviewed for each country. England results are a subset of the UK survey.

Table A1: Sample sizes for Public Opinion of Forestry surveys since 2001

Approximate number of adults interviewed

Year	UK¹	England²	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
2001	2,000		1,000	1,000	
2003	4,000	3,400	1,000	1,000	
2005	4,000	3,400	1,000	1,000	1,000
2007	4,000	3,300	1,000	1,000	1,000
2009	2,000	1,700	1,000	1,000	
2010					1,000
2011	2,000	1,700	1,000	1,000	
2013	2,000	1,600	1,000	1,000	
2014					1,000
2015	2,000	1,500	1,000	1,000	
2017	2,000	1,800	1,000	1,000	

Note:

1. 2001 and 2005 surveys covered Great Britain only (i.e. excluding Northern Ireland).
2. Results for England are derived from UK surveys.

Survey Design

The 2017 survey results presented in this report are taken from the Kantar TNS CAPI Omnibus survey carried out from the 1st to 5th March 2017. The survey was based on a representative sample of 2,113 adults (aged 16 or over) across the UK, of whom 1,756 adults were in England.

The 2009 - 2015 surveys were obtained from the GfK NOP Random Location Omnibus survey.

The UK 2007 survey data were also obtained from the Kantar TNS CAPI Omnibus survey while the 2003 and 2005 survey data were obtained from the TNS RSGB General Omnibus. These surveys had a higher sample size of 4,000 adults for UK/GB.

Note that surveys undertaken by different Market Research companies employ different survey designs, so comparisons should be taken with care.

Methodology

The Kantar TNS Omnibuses employ a random location methodology each week. A varying number of sampling points are issued depending upon the length of the questionnaire. The number of Great Britain sampling points issued can be 208, 192, 176, 151 or 143 and corresponding sampling points in Northern Ireland are 7, 5, 5, 4 or 4. The points used are

sub samples of those determined in a sampling system developed by Kantar TNS for its internal use.

Sampling Frame

2001 Census small area statistics and the Postcode Address File (PAF) were used to define sample points. These are areas of similar population sizes formed by the combination of wards with the constraint that each point must be contained within a single Government Office Region [GOR]. In addition, geographic systems were employed to minimise the drive time required to cover each area as optimally as possible.

600 points were defined south of the Caledonian Canal in Great Britain [GB]. Another 25 were defined in a similar fashion in Northern Ireland. Finally, 5 points were defined north of the Caledonian Canal. These latter differ in size from the other points and each other to meet the need to separately cover the different parts of the Highlands and Islands.

Stratification and Sample Point Selection

415 points were selected south of the Caledonian Canal for use by the Omnibuses after stratification by Government Office Region and Social Grade. They were also checked to ensure they are representative by an urban and rural classification. Those points are divided into two replicates. One set are used in one week. The other set are used in the next week. One of the points north of the Caledonian Canal is also used. 14 of the points in Northern Ireland are selected and divided into two replicates. Those replicates are used in rotation to give a wide spread across the Province over time. Similarly, the statistical accuracy of the GB sampling is maximised by issuing sequential waves of fieldwork systematically across the sampling frame to provide maximum geographical dispersion. This ensures that the sample point selection remains representative for any specific fieldwork wave.

Selection of Clusters within Sampling Points

All the sample points in the sampling frame have been divided into two geographically distinct segments each containing, as far as possible, equal populations. The segments comprise aggregations of complete wards. For the Omnibuses, alternate A and B halves are worked each wave of fieldwork. Each week different wards are selected in each required half and Census Output Areas selected within those wards. Then, groups of OAs containing a minimum of 200 addresses are sampled in those areas from the PAF (a maximum of 250 addresses are issued per assignment).

Interviewing

The addresses, selected as above, are issued to achieve an adult sample of 10, 11, 12, 14 or 16 interviews in provincial areas and 10, 10, 11, 14 or 15 in London depending upon the questionnaire length. Assignments are conducted over two days of fieldwork and are carried out weekday 2pm-8pm and at the weekend. Quotas are set by gender/housewife. Within female presence of children and working status is set, within men working status is set to ensure a balanced sample of adults within effective contacted addresses. All interviewers must leave 3 doors between each successful interview.

Questionnaire

A copy of the 2017 questionnaire is provided at the end of this release. This covers the questions requested by the Forestry Commission. In addition, a small number of additional questions are included as standard in the omnibus surveys run by Market Research companies (e.g. gender, age, country/ region) and some of these are also used in analysing the results from the survey.

Most questions are retained from one survey to the next, to enable comparisons over time. However, changes are sometimes made to reflect changing circumstances or priorities, or to improve the wording of questions. The following changes were made for the 2017 questionnaire:

- A question that asked about reasons for not visiting woodlands/ forests has been dropped;
- Additional response options have been included in the question on frequency of visits to woodland managed by the Forestry Commission (Q4) to provide more detail on frequent visits;
- A question that asked about the importance of woodlands and forests to the public has been dropped;
- A new question has been added to provide information on urban trees (Q8);
- A question that asked about the ways in which forests and woodlands can impact on climate change has been dropped;
- Two response options have been dropped from the question on management of forests and woodlands in response to the threat of climate change (Q9);
- All questions on woodfuel have been dropped.
- There has been some minor rewording to two of the response options in the question on tree health (Q10).
- The wording of the questions on long-term health conditions or illnesses (Q11) has been reworded to provide consistency with the harmonised questions used across Government, and the question on ways in which long-term health conditions or illnesses affect use of woodlands/ forests or other greenspaces has been dropped.

Quality

The data collected in the survey are weighted, to correct for imbalances between the profiles of the sample and the population and therefore ensure that the weighted results are representative of the UK adult population. For the 2017 survey, this weighting has resulted in an increase in the apparent number of respondents in England, from a total 1,756 adults who were interviewed to a weighted total of 1,780. The results quoted in this report are based on weighted data.

All results are subject to the effects of chance in sampling, so a range of uncertainty (confidence interval) should be associated with any result from the survey. The confidence intervals take into account the effect of clustering, weighting and stratification in the survey design (see methodology, above, for more details) – this is known as a design factor and is commonly assumed to be around 1.5 for surveys of this type.

Confidence intervals are most commonly reported at the 95% level. This means that there is a 95% chance that the true population value lies within the confidence interval. The following provides a guide to interpreting the results in this report on the basis of a 95% confidence interval and includes an assumed design factor of 1.5:

- For questions asked in 2017 to the whole UK sample of 2,113, the range of uncertainty around any figure should be no more than $\pm 3.2\%$ ($\pm 3.5\%$ for the 1,780 respondents in England).
- For responses of subgroups, i.e. questions not posed to the whole sample of respondents, the range of uncertainty is correspondingly higher. For example the uncertainty for statistics asked only to those who visited woodland (1,296 respondents in the UK and 1,100 in England) should be no more than $\pm 4.1\%$ for the UK and no more than $\pm 4.4\%$ for England.
- For questions asked to whole samples, differences of more than 4.7% (UK) or 5.1% (England) between the 2017 results and 2015 results are statistically significant.
- For questions asked only to those who had visited woodland, differences of more than 6.2% (UK) or 6.8% (England) between the 2017 results and 2015 results are statistically significant.

Given the small sample sizes within the UK survey for respondents living in other parts of the UK, it is not recommended that the UK survey be used to provide results for Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. Please refer to the separate survey reports for these countries, available at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-5zyl9w, for relevant results.

Further quality information on FC Official Statistics is available at: www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-7zhk85

Revisions

Statistics on the proportion of adults who have been actively engaged in forestry have already been released, in Forestry Commission England's Corporate Plan Performance Indicators 2017. Other results from the 2017 survey are published for the first time in this release.

All figures are final. Figures for earlier years have not been revised from those previously released.

The Forestry Commission's revisions policy sets out how revisions and errors to these statistics are dealt with, and can be found at:

[www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCrevisions.pdf/\\$FILE/FCrevisions.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCrevisions.pdf/$FILE/FCrevisions.pdf).

Further information

Accompanying tables to this release, available at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5zyl9w, provide more detailed figures, showing standard breakdowns.

Figures in tables have been independently rounded, so may not add to the totals shown.

Release schedule

The UK Public Opinion of Forestry is a biennial survey, next due to run in early 2019 with results likely to be available in summer 2019.

Official Statistics

This is an Official Statistics publication. For more information about Official Statistics and the UK Statistics Authority visit www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk.

UK Public Opinion of Forestry Survey 2017: Questionnaire

Q1 [All]

a. In the last few years have you visited forests or woodlands for walks, picnics or other recreation?

(Single answer)

- Yes
- No

[Ask if answered yes to Q1a. Others to Q5]

b. Did you visit woodlands in the countryside or woodlands in and around towns or both?

(Single answer)

- Woodlands in the countryside
- Woodlands in and around towns
- Both

Q2 [If answered yes to Q1a]

How frequently did you visit forests and woodlands last summer, i.e. between April and September 2016?

(Single answer)

- Several times per week
- Several times per month
- About once a month
- Less often
- Never

[If answered yes to Q1a]

And how often this winter, i.e. since October 2016?

(Single answer)

- Several times per week
- Several times per month
- About once a month
- Less often
- Never

Q3 [If answered yes to Q1a]

Who managed the woodland you visited most recently?

(Single answer)

- Community Managed Woodland
- Forestry Commission
- Local Authority
- National Trust
- Woodland Trust
- Other (specify)
- Don't know

Q4 [If answered yes to Q1a]

Thinking back about all your visits to woodland over the last 12 months, what is your best estimate of how many times you visited a woodland managed by the Forestry Commission?

(Single answer)

- None
- Once or twice
- 3-5 times
- 6-10 times
- About once a month
- About once a fortnight
- About once a week
- About twice a week
- About once a day
- About twice a day
- More often
- Don't know

Q5 [All]

Are you a ...?

(Multi answer)

- Member of English Heritage, Historic Scotland or Cadw in Wales
- Holder of a Forestry Commission England 'Discovery Pass'
- Member of the National Trust or National Trust for Scotland
- Member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Member of a wildlife trust
- Member of the Woodland Trust
- None of the above

Q6 [All]

Have you in the past 12 months...

(Multi answer)

- Been involved or consulted about plans for creating/ managing or using woodlands in your area.
- Been involved in an organised tree planting event
- Been involved in voluntary work in connection with a woodland (e.g. physical work in a wood, admin, fund raising, running a group)
- Become or are a member of a community based woodland group such as a 'Community Trust' or 'Friends of' group
- None of these

Q7 [If answered yes to Q1a. Others to Q8]

Now thinking specifically about woodlands and forests you have visited and why they are important TO YOU PERSONALLY please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements.

Woodlands and forests are important to me because:

(1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree or disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree, and (6) don't know

- They are places where I can relax and de-stress
- They are places where I can exercise and keep fit
- They are places where I can have fun and enjoy myself
- They are good places for me to socialise
- They are places where I can learn about the environment
- They are places where I can learn about local culture or history
- They get me involved in local issues
- They are places where I feel at home

Q8 [All]

Thinking about the nearest urban area (town or city), where would you prefer public resources to be targeted?

Please rank each of the following in order of importance, with '1' denoting most important, and '7' denoting least important

In the maintenance and enhancement of:

- street trees and those on roundabouts or other green areas associated with roads
- trees in and around public buildings and car parks
- trees in pedestrian zones and public squares
- trees in public parks and gardens
- clusters of trees as a component of public greenspaces
- small woodlands with public access within 500m of your home
- larger woodlands with public access within 2.5 miles of your home

- I don't want public money spent on urban trees or woods [unscripted option]

Q9 [All]

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding how UK forests and woodlands should be managed in response to the threat of climate change?

(1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree or disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree, and (6) don't know

- No action is needed; let nature take its course
- A lot more trees should be planted
- Trees should not be felled in any circumstances, even if they are replaced
- Different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates

Q10 [All]

Would you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to tree health?

(1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree or disagree, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree, and(6) don't know

- Everyone should take action when visiting woodlands to help prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases (e.g. by brushing the soil from their bikes, boots, buggies and clothing between visits to parks, woodlands and gardens).
- I would be willing to look out for and report sightings of pests and diseases on trees, if appropriate information and advice was available to me.
- There is very little that anyone can do to prevent the spread of damaging tree pests and diseases.
- Action should be taken by authorities and woodland managers to protect trees from damaging pests and diseases.
- If I buy an imported tree, it is more likely to carry tree pests and diseases than a tree grown in the UK.
- I am aware that possible tree pests and diseases can be reported using the Tree Alert website.

Q11 [All]

a. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?

(Single answer)

- Yes
- No (Go to END)

[Ask if answered yes to Q11a. Others to END]

b. Do any of these conditions or illnesses affect your use of woodlands/ forests or other greenspaces?

(Single answer)

- Yes
- No