

Guidance for the Forestry Workforce Census, Great Britain

October 2026



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1 Introduction

Thank you for taking time to complete the Forestry Workforce Census.

This document provides additional guidance to support completion of the questionnaire (Section 2), information on data protection (Section 3) and a glossary (Section 4).

Forest Research is carrying out the Census on behalf of the Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry, and Welsh Government. The Census will capture the size of the workforce and the scale of forestry operations taking place, providing vital evidence to support the future of the sector.

Organisations across the forestry sector in Great Britain are being asked to submit information about their workforce on two separate dates to capture a comprehensive picture of forestry operations – **1 October 2026** and **1 March 2027**. This is due to the seasonal nature of roles where some roles are only active at certain times of year.

The Census will capture information about people that work (employed, contracted or other) on the following activities for forestry operations:

- planning
- tree production/nursery operations
- ground preparation, planting, establishment or maintenance
- managing woodland and/or managing people working on woodland
- harvesting
- extracting timber and haulage
- surveying and inventory work.

Your response is greatly appreciated, as it will help ensure that the Forestry Workforce Census is as accurate as possible and delivers maximum value to the industry and your organisation.

All data provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be aggregated with data from other organisations so that it will not be possible to identify an individual organisation in any publication or other report. See Section 3 for more information on how any data you supply will be protected.

The Census will take place every five years. Results will be made publicly available.

If you have any questions about the Forestry Workforce Census or require support completing it, please email statistics@forestresearch.gov.uk or call us at 0300 067 5238.

2 Completing the questionnaire

Please complete the questions using data that covers your entire organisation. If this is not possible, please also provide information on your organisation department or area in Question 1.

Who should complete:

Companies with just one individual, like sole traders and single-person organisations, right through to larger organisations.

Who should not complete:

Individuals employed by an organisation. The survey is aimed at employers rather than employees. Senior decision makers, like CEOs and HR directors should complete the survey on an employee's behalf.

Please answer as many questions as you can, we appreciate any input that you can provide. We understand that you might not be able to complete every question fully.

2.1 Forestry workforce census roles

Please see the table below for all the roles that are being captured by the Census. See Section 4.2 for examples of activities that we expect these roles to typically carry out.

Forest nursery	
Crop technician or manager	
Nursery operative or agency	
Planning	
Agent, manager, consultant or forester	
Surveyor	
Forest management	
Forest operative or craftsperson	Coppicing
	Establishment and maintenance
	Fencing
	Planting
Ground preparation operator	
Forest works manager	
Supervisor	
Agent, manager, consultant or forester	
Wildlife manager, pest controller or stalker	
Harvesting (including thinning), extraction and haulage	

Forest operative or craftsperson	Chainsaw operator (felling)
Forest works manager	
Supervisor	
Machinery operator	Harvester
	Forwarder
	Other
Wagon driver	
Other	
Civil engineer	
Community forester	
Drone operator	
Ecologist	
GIS technician	
Historic environment advisor	
Local authority tree officer	
Machinery operators (civil engineering)	

2.2 Full-time equivalents (FTEs)

The questionnaire requests the number of workers on census day as full-time equivalents (FTEs). FTE is usually calculated on a weekly basis, like the following example.

Please **use the full-time hours that your organisation uses** (for example, 37 hours or 42 hours per week) to calculate FTEs.

- If a worker is **full-time**, submit as 1 FTE.

- If a worker is **part-time**, submit their FTE as the proportion of full-time working hours (see example below).

Example:

Full-time weekly hours at an example organisation are 40 hours. The organisation had 10 workers active on census day, where eight were full-time and two were part-time.

- **8 full-time** workers = 8 FTE
- **2 part-time** workers (one worker works 30 hours a week and the other works 20 hours) = 0.75 FTE + 0.5 FTE = 1.25 FTE

Total FTE of workers = 8 + 1.25 = **9.25 FTE**

The total (weekly) FTE should be entered in the questionnaire for census day. It is equivalent to the day total.

If a worker divides their time between forestry and non-forestry operations, record the proportion of time spent on forestry operations as FTE, where this can be reasonably estimated. For example, a worker who spends 50% of their working time on forestry operations should be recorded as **0.5 FTE**.

If you are unable to provide actual figures in the questionnaire, then please provide your best estimates of FTEs or number of workers and mark with an 'E'.

2.3 Individuals that own woodland

If you own woodland in a personal capacity (rather than through a company or other organisation) and manage or maintain it yourself, please include yourself and any family members who provide unpaid support under '**Other**' in Section 2 of the questionnaire.

FTEs employed	FTEs contracted	FTEs other	FTEs total

If other workers (excluding you and your family members) help to manage or maintain the woodland, please refer to Section 2.4 for guidance on how to include them.

2.4 Employed, contracted (including sub-contractors) or other?

The following flow charts provide guidance on how to complete Section 2 of the questionnaire, where the number of FTEs is requested by employment type (employed, contracted, or other). The questions in this section are structured like the following table:

FTEs employed	FTEs contracted	FTEs other	FTEs total

'Contracted' should include sub-contractors and agency workers.

See Section 4.1 for definitions of employment types.

For any other workers, please use 'Other'. This includes unpaid workers, volunteers and any other workers that weren't employed, contracted or sub-contracted. If you need further guidance, please

contact us at statistics@forestresearch.gov.uk or call us at 0300 067 5238.

If you have provided the FTEs by employed, contracted and other, where applicable, you do not need to complete the 'FTEs total' column.

Chart A

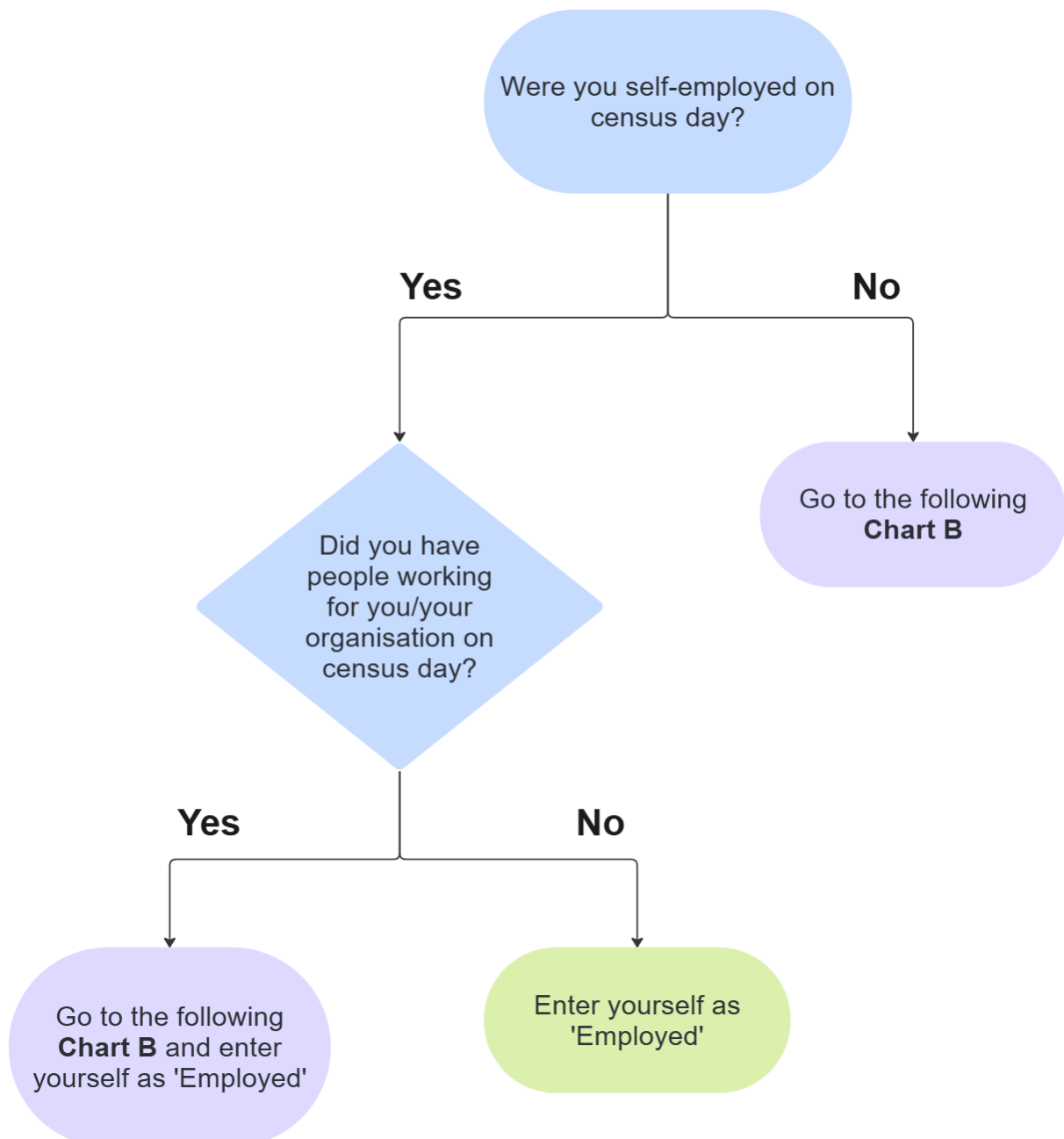
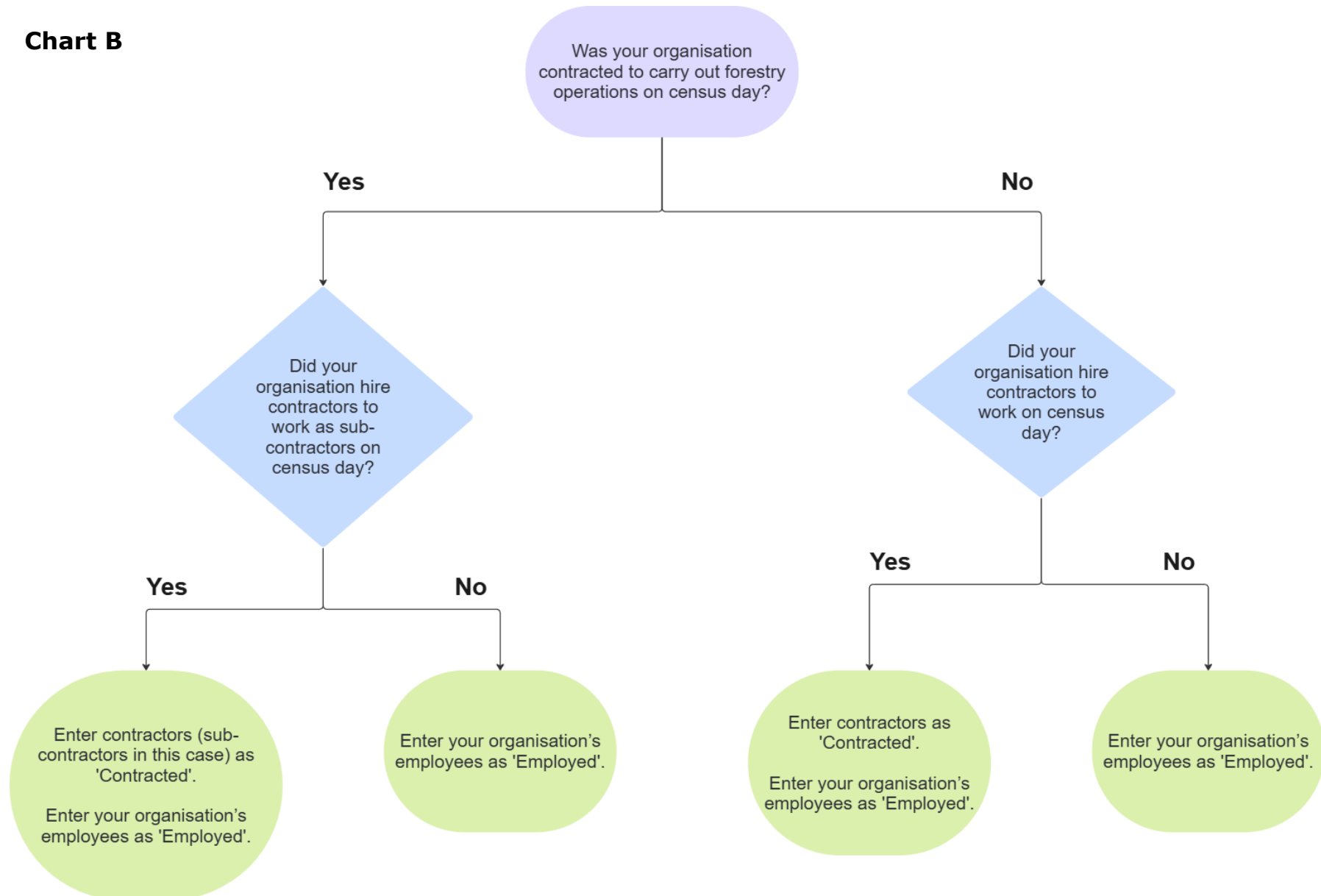


Chart B



2.5 Amount of forestry operations carried out by your organisation

Section 3 of the questionnaire has a question that asks about the amount of forestry operations carried out by your organisation.

These questions have been included as they will help us estimate the size of workforce required to meet woodland creation targets, alongside your answers to Section 2 questions. We understand that they might be difficult to answer and the data you provide will be sensitive. If you are unable to provide actual figures in the questionnaire, then please provide your best estimates and mark with an 'E'.

All data provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be aggregated with data from other organisations so that it will not be possible to identify an individual organisation in any publication or other report. See Section 3 for more information on how any data you supply will be securely stored.

Example

Your organisation produced X tonnes of timber, of which Y tonnes total was hauled in the last year or a typical year of operation within the last five years. Enter Y tonnes into Question 10, regardless of how many individuals carried this out or their working status.

Activity	Annual amount	
Haulage	Y	Tonnes

2.6 Supplementary questionnaire tables

These tables have been included to support the collection of questionnaire data within your organisation. They are designed to be used when you need to collect data from different parts of your organisation before providing an aggregate response for your organisation. The sheets have been set up so that they can be printed and filled in, if required.

3 Data protection

We will keep your information secure and confidential, and adhere to the UK GDPR principles.

This means that we will:

- recognise that you are sharing personal information with us and treat it as confidential, as directed by the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#)
- only use your information for statistical purposes, or to help us run our surveys, and not publish anything that identifies an individual, household or business
- only hold your information for as long as it is being used for producing statistics
- ensure our staff are aware of their obligations to protect your confidential information
- maintain the security of our systems and our buildings

Who can access the information?

Forest Research, Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry and Welsh Government.

Anonymised data will also be shared with BioSS (James Hutton Ltd) who are our contracted third party supplier for analysis purposes.

Aggregate results from the census, where it will not be possible to identify individual organisations, will be published by Forest Research.

Where can I find out more about how my information will be treated?

If you have a question about how we process your personal or organisational data or want to find out more about your rights under data protection legislation, please contact the Forest Research Statistics Team at statistics@forestresearch.gov.uk.

4 Glossary

4.1 Employment status or type

Employment status or type	Definition
Employed	All workers paid directly from your organisation's payroll(s).
Contractor or sub-contractor	Individuals or businesses contracted to provide services who are responsible for managing their own taxes and insurance. A sub-contractor is a contractor engaged to work on a contract that your organisation has been hired to deliver.
Agency worker	Workers supplied by an employment agency and paid through the agency's payroll, with the agency responsible for managing taxes and other payroll deductions.
Volunteer	Individuals who provide their services voluntarily, without being paid.
Trainee or apprentice	Individuals receiving training for a job and/or working under the supervision of a skilled worker.
Part-time	Workers who work fewer hours than a full-time worker, typically less than 30 hours per week.

4.2 Roles and their example activities

Please note that the list of example activities for each role is not exhaustive.

Role		Example activities
Forest nursery		
Crop technician or manager		Monitoring crops, planning treatments, and other technical activities
Nursery operative or agency		Weeding, sowing, spraying, lifting, grading
Planning		
Agent, manager, consultant or forester		Writing woodland creation or management plans
Surveyor		Ecological, habitat or soil surveys
Forest management		
Forest operative or craftsperson	Coppicing	Cutting in coppice systems
	Establishment and maintenance	Weeding, beating up, brush cutting, spraying, pruning, respacing
	Fencing	Erecting fences
	Planting	Planting trees

Role		Example activities
Ground preparation operator		Ploughing, mounding
Forest works manager		Oversight of operations
Supervisor		Supervision of operations
Agent, manager, consultant or forester		Coordination of operations
Wildlife manager, pest controller or stalker		Control of mammalian pests
Harvesting (including thinning), extraction and haulage		
Forest operative or craftsperson	Chainsaw operator (felling)	Single tree felling
Forest works manager		Oversight of operations
Supervisor		Supervision of operations
	Harvester	Operating harvesters in harvesting operations
	Forwarder	Operating forwarders in harvesting operations
	Other	Operating skyline, winch, chipper or mulcher
Wagon driver		Operating wagons/heavy goods vehicles

Role	Example activities
Other	
Civil engineer	Designing infrastructure in a forestry environment
Community forester	Working with members of the community to carry out tree planting and tree maintenance work
Drone operator	Plant health and other inspections
Ecologist	Protected species surveys
GIS technician	Mapping
Historic environment advisor	Archaeological surveys
Local authority tree officer	Woodland management plans
Machinery operators (civil engineering)	Building roads, bridges and other infrastructure in a forestry environment