Forest Research

Forestry Statistics 2026

Chapter 1a: Woodland Area and Planting

Release Date:

22 October 2026

Coverage:

United Kingdom

Geographical breakdown:

Country

Issued by: Forest Research,
Northern Research Station, Roslin, Midlothian, EH25 9SY

Enquiries: Official Statistics Team, 0300 067 5238
statistics@forestresearch.gov.uk

Website: https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/



The Research Agency of the
Forestry Commission

Forest Research is the Research Agency of the Forestry Commission and is the leading UK organisation engaged in forestry and tree related research. The Agency aims to support and enhance forestry and its role in sustainable development by providing innovative, high quality scientific research, data, technical support and consultancy services.

Contents

Introduction..... 4
Key findings..... 5
1.1 Woodland area 6
1.2 Certified woodland area 16
1.3 Land use.....21
1.4 New planting and publicly funded restocking 24
1.5 Canopy loss 39
1.6 Woodland loss 46
1.7 Canopy cover in England 52

Introduction

This chapter contains information on:

- UK woodland area;
- certified woodland area;
- areas of new planting and restocking;
- felling; and
- canopy cover in England.

Estimates for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are included in addition to UK totals. Woodland area and growing stock by species and age class, derived from the National Forest Inventory, are provided in Chapter 1b. International comparisons are provided in Chapter 9: International Forestry. Further information on the data sources and methodology used to compile the figures is provided in Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

Figures on woodland area and certified woodland area at 31 March 2026 and on new planting and restocking for the period 2025/26 were previously published in Provisional Woodland Statistics 2026, released on 25 June 2026. For further details on revisions, see the Woodland Areas and Planting section of Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

Longer time series of woodland area and planting tables (where available) can be accessed in spreadsheet format from our Time Series page.

Figures in tables have been independently rounded, so may not add to the totals shown. Percentage changes quoted in this release are based on unrounded figures.

Key findings

The main findings are:

- The area of woodland in the UK at 31 March 2026 is estimated to be 3.30 million hectares. This represents 14% of the total land area in the UK, 20% in Scotland, 15% in Wales, 10% in England, and 9% in Northern Ireland.
- Of the total UK woodland area, 861 thousand hectares is owned or managed by Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales or the Northern Ireland Forest Service.
- The total certified woodland area in the UK at 31 March 2026 is 1.42 million hectares, including all Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Welsh Government Woodland Estate and Forest Service woodland. Overall, 43% of the UK woodland area is certified.
- 13.46 thousand hectares of newly created woodland were reported in the UK in 2025/26.
- 14.21 thousand hectares of publicly funded restocking were reported in the UK in 2025/26.

1.1 Woodland area

Woodland is defined in UK forestry statistics as land under stands of trees with a minimum area of 0.5 hectares and a canopy cover of at least 20%, or having the potential to achieve this. The definition relates to land use, rather than land cover, so integral open space and felled areas that are awaiting restocking are included as woodland. Further information, including how this UK definition compares with the international definition of woodland, is provided in Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

Statistics on woodland area are used to inform government policy and resource allocation, to provide context to UK forestry and land management issues and are reported to international organisations. They are also used in the compilation of natural capital accounts.

Increases in woodland area result from the creation of new woodland. This can be achieved through new planting or by natural colonisation of trees. Further information is available in section 1.4 on new planting and publicly funded restocking.

Decreases in woodland area result from the conversion of woodland to other land uses. Regulatory approval is usually required before trees can be felled. Felling approval will normally require the area to be restocked, but there are some cases in which trees may be permanently removed, generally for environmental reasons. The permanent removal of trees may also be authorised under planning regulations, to enable development.

Most public sector woodland is managed by Forestry England (FE), Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS), Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Forest Service (FS) in

Northern Ireland. Other public sector woodland (e.g. owned by local authorities) is included with privately owned woodland as "private sector" in this release.

The Natural Resources Wales woodland areas relate to the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE). There is approximately 900 hectares of woodland on National Nature Reserves and other land managed by Natural Resources Wales that is not included in the Natural Resources Wales figures.

1.1.1 Area of woodland

The area of woodland in the UK at 31 March 2026 is estimated to be 3.30 million hectares (Table 1.1). Of this total, 1.52 million hectares (46%) is in Scotland, 1.35 million hectares (41%) is in England, 0.31 million hectares (10%) is in Wales and 0.12 million hectares (4%) is in Northern Ireland.

A total of 861 thousand hectares (26%) of woodland in the UK is owned or managed by Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales or the Northern Ireland Forest Service.

Conifers account for just under one half (48%) of the UK woodland area, although this proportion varies from 71% in Scotland to 23% in England.

Table 1.1 Area of woodland by ownership & forest type, UK, 31 March 2026

thousand hectares

Forest type & ownership	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
Conifers					
Public sector	144	89	411	53	697
Private sector	163	51	663	9	885
Total	306	140	1,074	62	1,582
Broadleaves					
Public sector	71	26	58	9	164
Private sector	970	149	386	48	1,552
Total	1,041	174	444	57	1,716
Total					
Public sector	215	115	469	62	861
Private sector	1,132	199	1,049	57	2,437
Total	1,347	314	1,518	119	3,298

Source: Forestry Commission, Forestry England, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Service, National Forest Inventory.

Notes:

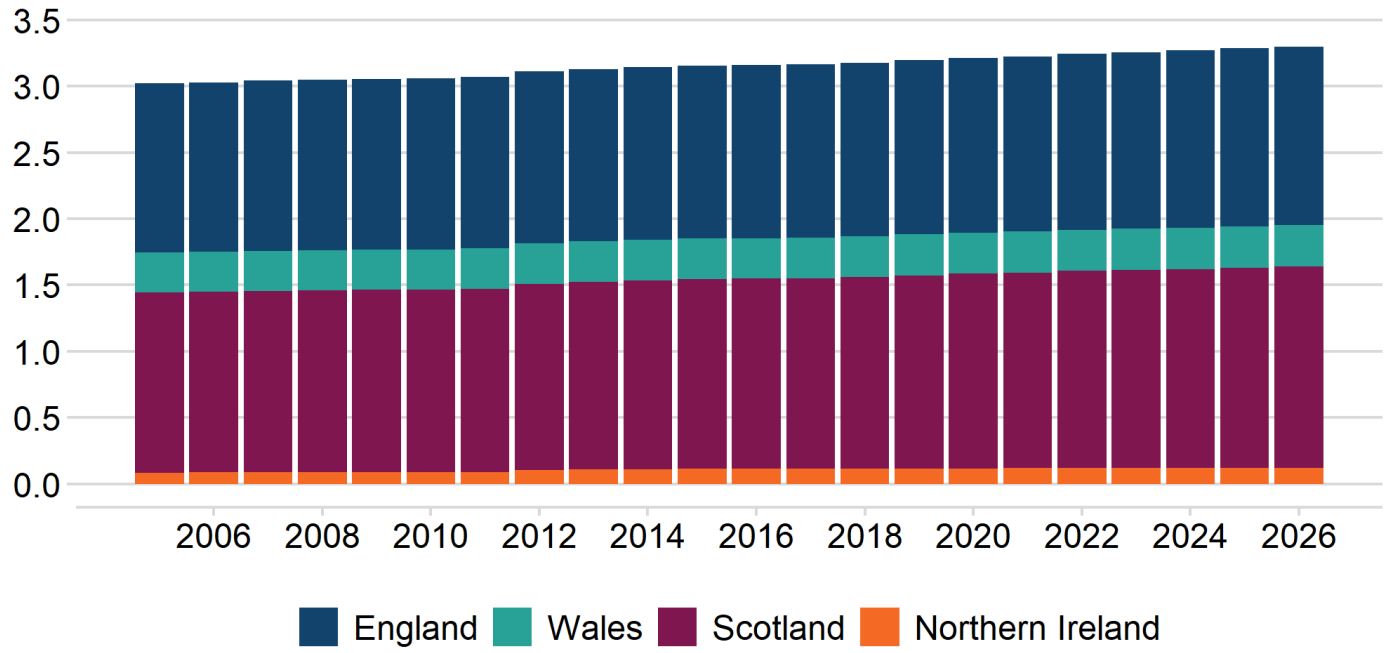
1. Public sector: Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Forest Service. NRW estimates only relate to the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE).

2. Private sector: all other woodland. Includes woodland managed by NRW outside the WGWE, other publicly owned woodland (e.g. owned by local authorities) and privately-owned woodland.
3. Figures for England, Wales and Scotland are based on data obtained from the National Forest Inventory and adjusted for new planting, but at present no adjustment is made for woodland recently converted to another land use. Further information on how the figures have been estimated is available in Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.
4. Figures for Northern Ireland are obtained from the Northern Ireland Woodland Register.
5. Broadleaves include coppice and coppice with standards.

Figure 1.1 shows woodland area by country since 2005. Woodland area in the UK has risen by 277 thousand hectares since 2005, a change of 9% over the period.

Figure 1.1 Woodland area by country, UK, 2005 to 2026

million hectares



Source: Forestry Commission, Forestry England, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Service, National Forest Inventory.

Notes:

1. Woodland areas for England, Wales and Scotland shown in this figure are based on data from the National Forest Inventory. The trends shown take account of areas of new planting and identifiable permanent woodland loss. Areas of woodland loss that are not yet identifiable (e.g. conversion of woodland for the restoration of open habitats) are not accounted for. Further information can be found on the National Forest Inventory page.
2. Figures for 2005 to 2009 for England, Wales and Scotland were revised from those initially published, to produce results that are consistent with the National Forest Inventory and enable comparisons over time.

3. Areas at 31 March.

1.1.2 Woodland cover through time

The 3.30 million hectares of woodland in the UK in 2026 (Table 1.1) represents 14% of the total land area in the UK, 20% in Scotland, 15% in Wales, 10% in England and 9% in Northern Ireland (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2 Woodland cover, UK, 1086 to 2026

percentage of land cover

Year	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
1086	~15.0	[x]	[x]	[x]	[x]
Circa. 1350	~10.0	[x]	~4.0	[x]	[x]
17th Century	~8.0	[x]	~4.0	~1.5	[x]
1905	5.2	4.2	4.5	1.1	4.7
1924	5.1	5.0	5.6	1.0	5.0
1947	5.8	6.2	6.6	1.7	5.9
1965	6.8	9.7	8.4	3.1	7.4
1980	7.3	11.6	11.8	4.9	9.0
1995 to 1999	8.4	13.8	16.4	6.0	11.3
1998	9.5	14.4	16.7	6.0	12.0
2026	10.3	15.1	19.5	8.6	13.6

Source: National Forest Inventory, Forestry Commission, Forestry England, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Service, Domesday Survey of England, Scottish Woodland History (Smout, 1997) and Roy Military Survey of Scotland, 1747 to 1755.

Notes:

1. Percentage of land cover is calculated as woodland area as a percentage of the total surface area excluding inland water. The total surface areas, excluding inland water, are taken from the UK Standard Area Measurements (published by the Office for National Statistics).
2. Estimates for England and Scotland before 1905 come from a variety of sources, including the Domesday Survey of England, Scottish Woodland History (Smout, 1997) and Roy Military Survey of Scotland, 1747 to 1755.
3. For Northern Ireland, the 17th Century figure is an estimate for all Ireland, the 1905 figure is an estimate for the Province of Ulster, the 1908 and 1947 figure assumes no change from 1939 to 40 census.
4. 1998 figures shown for England, Wales and Scotland have been revised from those originally published to produce estimates that are consistent with subsequent data from the National Forest Inventory.
5. Figures for England, Wales and Scotland are based on data obtained from the National Forest Inventory and adjusted for new planting, but at present no adjustment is made for woodland recently converted to another land use. Further information on how the figures have been estimated is available in Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.
6. Figures for Northern Ireland are obtained from the Northern Ireland Woodland Register.
7. [x] = data not available.
8. These figures are outside the scope of Accredited Official Statistics. For further information see Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

1.1.3 Woodland area by ownership

Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales and the Forest Service in Northern Ireland owned or managed 26% of the total woodland area in the UK in 2026 (Table 1.3). This proportion was 16% of the woodland area in England, 31% in Scotland, 37% in Wales and 52% in Northern Ireland.

Table 1.3 Area of woodland by ownership, UK, 2022 to 2026

thousand hectares

Ownership/year	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
Public sector woodland					
2022	214	115	469	62	860
2023	214	115	468	62	859
2024	214	115	468	62	859
2025	214	115	469	62	860
2026	215	115	469	62	861
Private sector woodland					
2022	1,116	195	1,019	55	2,387
2023	1,120	196	1,026	56	2,398
2024	1,125	197	1,033	56	2,412
2025	1,128	199	1,042	57	2,425
2026	1,132	199	1,049	57	2,437
Total woodland					
2022	1,330	310	1,488	118	3,246
2023	1,334	311	1,495	118	3,257
2024	1,339	312	1,501	118	3,271
2025	1,342	313	1,511	119	3,285
2026	1,347	314	1,518	119	3,298

Source: Forestry Commission, Forestry England, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Service, National Forest Inventory.

Notes:

1. Public sector: Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Service (Northern Ireland). NRW estimates only relate to the Welsh Government Woodland Estate.
2. Private sector: all other woodland. Includes woodland managed by NRW outside the Welsh Government Woodland Estate, other publicly owned woodland (e.g. owned by local authorities) and privately owned woodland.
3. Figures for England, Wales and Scotland are based on data obtained from the National Forest Inventory (NFI) and adjusted for new planting, but at present no adjustment is made for woodland recently converted to another land use. Further information on how the figures have been estimated is available in Chapter 10: Sources & Methodology.
4. Northern Ireland figures are obtained from the Northern Ireland Woodland Register.
5. There may be a delay between changes in woodland ownership occurring and the changes being reflected in the statistics.
6. Areas at 31 March.

1.2 Certified woodland area

Certified woodland has been independently audited against a certification standard. Forestry certification schemes are owned by national or international non-governmental organisations and exist to promote good forest practice. They offer product labels to demonstrate that wood or wood products come from well-managed forests.

Figures for certified woodland areas are often used as an indicator of sustainable forest management. However, it should be noted that woodland that is not certified may also be managed sustainably.

Most changes to the certified woodland area figures over time are a result of new areas being certified or certificates not being renewed upon expiry. Temporary changes can also occur if there is a time lag between expiry and renewal.

Statistics on certified timber are provided in Chapter 2.

Three certification schemes operate in the UK. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) are internationally recognised, and woodland certified under either has been independently audited against the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS).

The total area of woodland that is certified under internationally recognised schemes (FSC or PEFC) in the UK at 31 March 2026 is 1.42 million hectares (Table 1.4a). This represents 43% of the total UK woodland area, 59% of the woodland area in Scotland, 56% in Northern Ireland, 47% in Wales and 23% in England.

Table 1.4a Area of certified woodland, UK, 31 March 2026

thousand hectares

Country	Public	Private	Total	Percentage of woodland area (%)
England	215	93	307	23
Wales	115	32	147	47
Scotland	469	426	896	59
Northern Ireland	62	4	67	56
UK	**861**	**555**	**1,417**	**43**

Source: Forest Stewardship Council, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Forest Service.

Notes:

1. Total certified woodland area under internationally recognised schemes (FSC or PEFC).
2. Public sector: Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Service (Northern Ireland). NRW estimates only relate to the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE).
3. Private sector: all other woodland. Includes woodland managed by NRW outside the WGWE, other publicly owned woodland (e.g. owned by local authorities) and privately owned woodland.
4. All Forestry England/Forestry and Land Scotland/Welsh Government Woodland Estate/Forest Service woodland is certified. Areas for these public sector woodland estates are the latest areas, as shown in Table 1.1, rather than the areas shown on certificates.

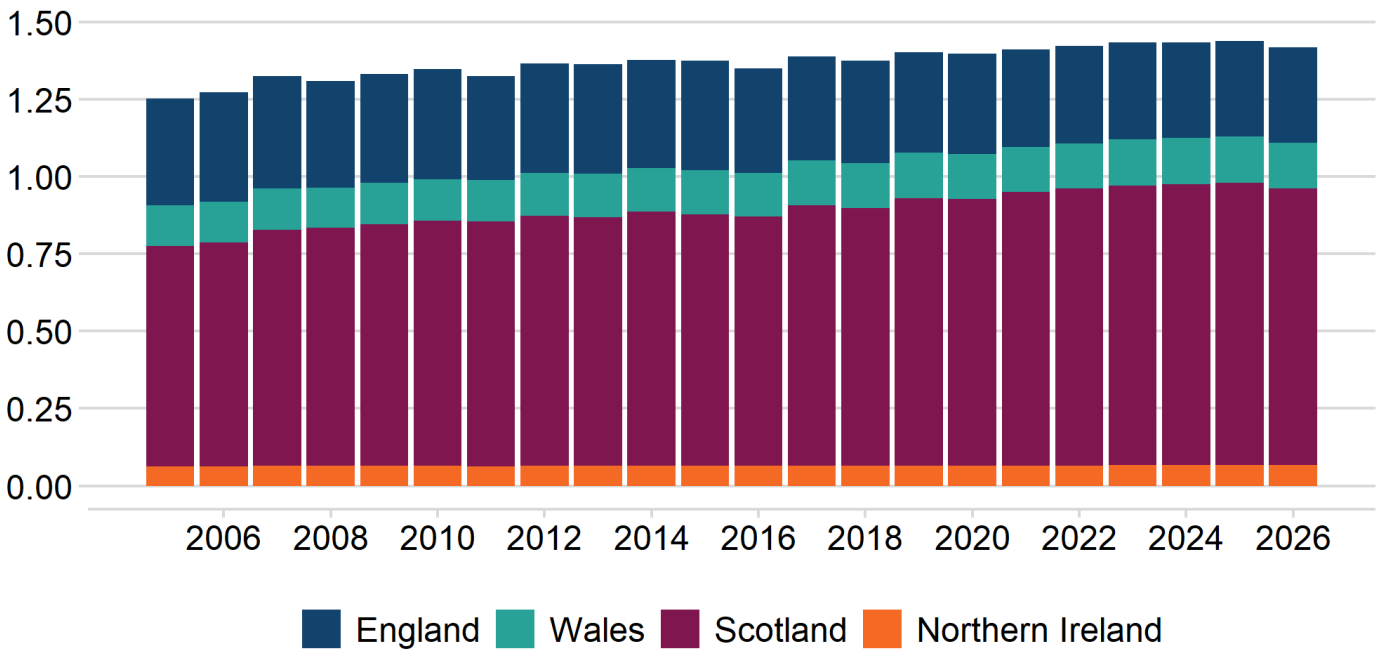
Data: Longer time series of the above table are available from the Time Series page.

Figure 1.2 presents certified woodland area by country since 2005. This shows an increase in certified woodland area of around 166 thousand hectares (13%) from 2005

to 2026, with most of this change occurring in the early 2000s. The 1.42 million hectares of certified woodland at 31 March 2026 is a decrease of 22 thousand hectares (or 1.5%) on the previous year.

Figure 1.2 Area of certified woodland by country, UK, 2005 to 2026

million hectares



Source: Forest Stewardship Council, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Forest Service.

Notes:

1. Total certified woodland area under internationally recognised schemes (FSC or PEFC).

In addition to the two internationally recognised schemes (FSC and PEFC) covered above, there is a further scheme available in Great Britain that is run by Grown in Britain (GiB), which requires compliance with the UK Forestry Standard. Table 1.4b sets out the certified woodland area under each of the three schemes. At 31 March 2026, 1,417 thousand hectares were certified under FSC, 1,339 thousand hectares under PEFC and 290 thousand hectares under GiB.

Most certified woodland holds more than one certificate, so these totals overlap and do not sum to the total certified area. All PEFC certified woodland is also certified under FSC, and 98% of the GiB certified area is also certified under FSC and PEFC. The remaining 7 thousand hectares are certified under GiB only, adding to the total from Table 1.4a to provide an overall total certified woodland area of 1,423 thousand hectares.

Table 1.4b Area of certified woodland by certification scheme, UK, 31 March 2026

thousand hectares

Certification scheme	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
FSC	307	147	896	67	1,417
PEFC	283	139	851	66	1,339
GiB	290	[low]	0	0	290
Total certified	**314**	**147**	**896**	**67**	**1,423**

Source: Forest Stewardship Council, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification, Grown in Britain, Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Forest Service.

Notes:

1. Total certified woodland area under all schemes (FSC, PEFC and GiB).
2. FSC: Forest Stewardship Council. PEFC: Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification. GiB: Grown in Britain.
3. Many woodlands are certified under more than one scheme. Areas certified under more than one scheme are included in the total for each of those schemes, but are counted once only in the total certified woodland area, so the scheme totals do not sum to the total.
4. Certified woodland under the FSC and PEFC schemes has been independently audited against the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS), which is recognised by both schemes internationally. Grown in Britain certification requires compliance with the UK Forestry Standard but is not audited against UKWAS, and is not internationally recognised in the same way. Unlike Table 1.4a, the total certified woodland area shown here includes Grown in Britain certified woodland that is not also certified under the FSC or PEFC schemes, so the two totals are not directly comparable.
5. Further information on how the certified woodland figures are compiled is provided in Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.
6. [low] = less than 0.5 thousand hectares.

1.3 Land use

Not all land that is owned or managed by Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales and the Forest Service in Northern Ireland is woodland; other land uses include agricultural land, mountain areas and moorland.

The woodland areas and land areas shown for Natural Resources Wales relate to the Welsh Government Woodland Estate. There is approximately 900 hectares of woodland on National Nature Reserves and other land managed by Natural Resources Wales that is not included in the Natural Resources Wales figures.

Woodland accounted for 79% of all Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales and Forest Service land in the UK at 31 March 2026 (Table 1.5). This proportion was highest in Wales (93%) and lowest in Scotland (73%).

Table 1.5 Public sector land use, UK, 2022 to 2026

thousand hectares

Land use	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
Woodland					
2022	214	115	469	62	860
2023	214	115	468	62	859
2024	214	115	468	62	859
2025	214	115	469	62	860
2026	215	115	469	62	861
Other land					
2022	39	9	167	13	227
2023	39	9	173	13	234
2024	39	9	172	13	233
2025	40	8	170	13	231
2026	40	8	169	13	230
Total land area					
2022	253	123	634	75	1,086
2023	253	124	641	75	1,092
2024	253	124	640	75	1,091
2025	254	123	639	75	1,091
2026	254	123	639	75	1,092

Source: Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Forest Service, National Forest Inventory.

Notes:

1. Public sector: Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Service (Northern Ireland). NRW estimates only relate to the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE).
2. "Other land" includes agricultural land and areas of moorland and mountain.
3. There may be a delay between changes in woodland ownership occurring and the changes being reflected in the statistics.
4. Areas at 31 March.

1.4 New planting and publicly funded restocking

1.4.1 New planting

New planting is the creation of new areas of woodland by planting trees on land that was not previously woodland. The statistics presented here also include new woodland that is created by natural colonisation of trees (where known). Statistics on new planting are used to inform government policy and resource allocation and are used in producing annual estimates of woodland area.

There are a number of factors that can affect the level of new planting in the UK. These include:

- choices by landowners reflecting their own motivation and needs;
- the costs and availability of land for conversion to woodland;
- the availability of grants for new planting, the level of grant payments available and the awareness of grants among potential recipients;
- the tax benefits available from owning woodland;
- expected future markets for wood products such as timber and woodfuel;
- income from payments for ecosystem services, particularly carbon storage;
- national and local initiatives, for example on biodiversity, green infrastructure and water management.

In 2025/26, 13.46 thousand hectares of new woodland were created in the UK (Table 1.6a). Broadleaves accounted for 63% of the new planting area in 2025/26.

A total of 54% of the new planting took place in Scotland, 39% in England, 5% in Wales and 2% in Northern Ireland.

Table 1.6a Area of new planting by forest type, UK, 2021/22 to 2025/26

thousand hectares

Year ending 31 March	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
Conifers					
2021/22	0.27	0.18	6.34	0.09	6.88
2022/23	0.26	0.47	5.53	0.07	6.33
2023/24	0.43	0.28	8.72	0.04	9.47
2024/25	0.68	0.28	4.55	0.12	5.64
2025/26	0.67	0.31	3.93	0.04	4.94
Broadleaves					
2021/22	1.98	0.44	4.14	0.45	7.01
2022/23	2.87	0.72	2.66	0.38	6.63
2023/24	4.12	0.36	6.32	0.39	11.19
2024/25	5.08	0.56	3.91	0.38	9.94
2025/26	4.58	0.38	3.29	0.26	8.52
Total					
2021/22	2.26	0.62	10.48	0.54	13.89
2022/23	3.13	1.19	8.19	0.45	12.96
2023/24	4.55	0.64	15.04	0.43	20.66
2024/25	5.77	0.84	8.47	0.50	15.58
2025/26	5.25	0.68	7.22	0.30	13.46

Source: Forestry Commission, Forestry England, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Welsh Government, Northern Ireland Forest Service, grant schemes.

Notes:

1. Private sector new planting figures are based on grant-supported new planting and (where possible) with estimates for areas planted without grant aid.
2. Figures for grant-aided planting relate to areas for which grants were paid during the year.
3. Estimates for areas planted without grant aid are believed to be under-reported and, as a result, the reported figures are likely to under-estimate the true level of planting activity. For England, woodland planting funded by sources other than the Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant, the Woodland Carbon Fund and the HS2 Woodland Fund include planting supported by the Woodland Trust, by the Environment Agency, by Natural England, by the Community Forest Trust, by the Northern Forest and land acquired by the National Forest Company.
4. The planting season lies both sides of 31 March, and the weather can cause planting to be advanced or delayed.
5. Includes woodland formed by natural colonisation (where known).

Data: Longer time series of the above table are available from the Time series page.

In 2025/26, most new planting (87%) took place on private sector land (Table 1.6b).

Table 1.6b Area of new planting by ownership, UK, 2021/22 to 2025/26

thousand hectares

Year ending 31 March	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
Public sector					
2021/22	[low]	0.02	0.62	0.02	0.67
2022/23	0.03	0.09	0.17	0.00	0.30
2023/24	0.18	0.03	0.90	[low]	1.11
2024/25	0.43	0.07	0.65	0.08	1.23
2025/26	0.73	0.04	0.93	0.04	1.73
Private sector					
2021/22	2.25	0.60	9.85	0.52	13.23
2022/23	3.09	1.09	8.02	0.45	12.66
2023/24	4.38	0.60	14.14	0.43	19.55
2024/25	5.33	0.77	7.82	0.43	14.35
2025/26	4.52	0.65	6.29	0.27	11.73
Total					
2021/22	2.26	0.62	10.48	0.54	13.89
2022/23	3.13	1.19	8.19	0.45	12.96
2023/24	4.55	0.64	15.04	0.43	20.66
2024/25	5.77	0.84	8.47	0.50	15.58
2025/26	5.25	0.68	7.22	0.30	13.46

Source: Forestry Commission, Forestry England, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Government, Northern Ireland Forest Service, grant schemes.

Notes:

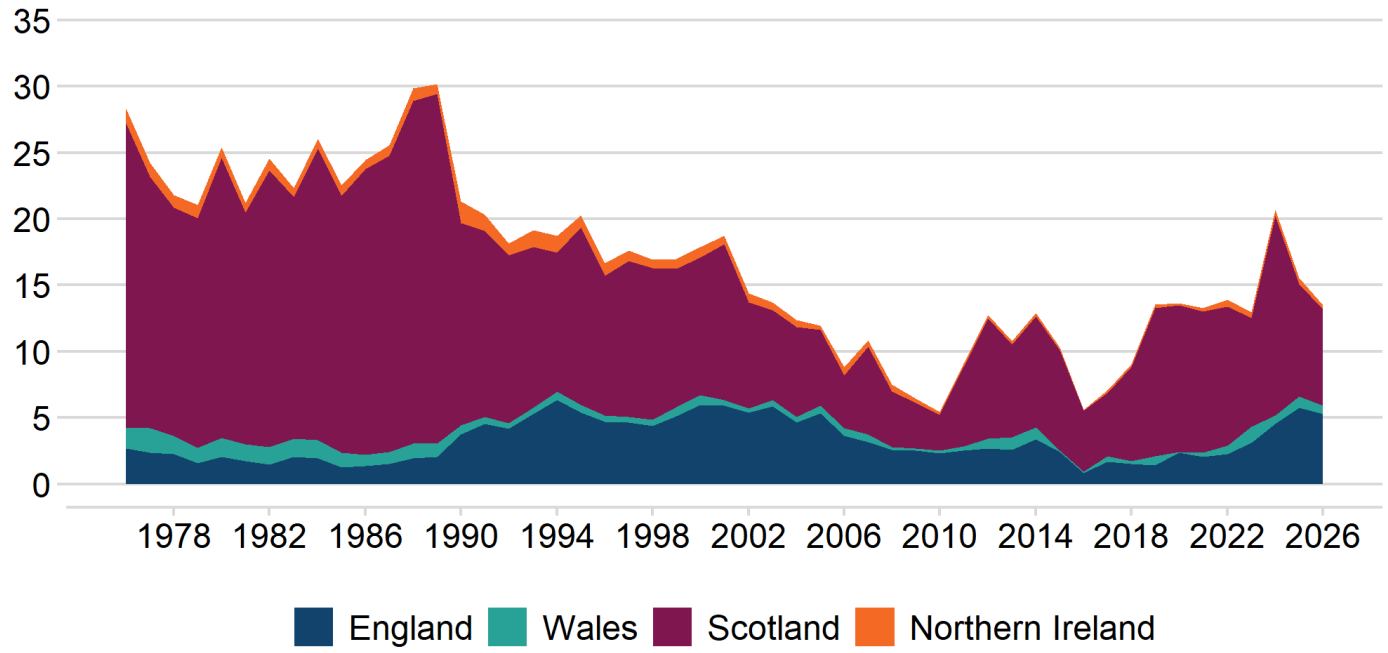
1. Public sector: Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Service (Northern Ireland). NRW estimates only relate to the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE).
2. Private sector new planting figures are based on grant-supported new planting and (where possible) with estimates for areas planted without grant aid.
3. Figures for grant-aided planting relate to areas for which grants were paid during the year.
4. Estimates for areas planted without grant aid are believed to be under-reported and, as a result, the reported figures are likely to under-estimate the true level of planting activity. For England, woodland planting funded by sources other than the Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant, the Woodland Carbon Fund and the HS2 Woodland Fund include planting supported by the Woodland Trust, by the Environment Agency, by Natural England, by the Community Forest Trust, by the Northern Forest and land acquired by the National Forest Company.
5. The planting season lies both sides of 31 March, and the weather can cause planting to be advanced or delayed.
6. Includes woodland formed by natural colonisation (where known).
7. [low] = less than 0.005 thousand hectares.

Data: Longer time series of the above table are available from the Time Series page.

Figure 1.3 shows areas of new planting by country since the year ending March 1976. Trends in new planting rates have been influenced by changes to the incentives available to land owners (in the form of grants) and the availability of land for planting.

Figure 1.3 Area of new planting by country, UK, 1975/76 to 2025/26

thousand hectares



Source: Forestry Commission, Forestry England, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Welsh Government, Northern Ireland Forest Service, grant schemes.

Notes:

1. Private sector figures are based on grant-supported new planting and (where possible) with estimates for areas planted without grant aid.
2. Figures for grant-aided planting relate to areas for which grants were paid during the year.
3. Estimates for areas planted without grant aid are believed to be under-reported and, as a result, the reported figures are likely to under-estimate the true level of planting activity. For England, woodland planting funded by sources other than the Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant, the Woodland Carbon Fund and the HS2 Woodland Fund include planting supported by the Woodland Trust, by the Environment Agency, by Natural England and land

acquired by the National Forest Company. For Scotland, a small amount of new planting without grant aid was included for 2016/17 and 2018/19 to 2019/20.
4. The planting season lies both sides of 31 March, and the weather can cause planting to be advanced or delayed.
5. Includes woodland formed by natural colonisation (where known).

In the last 10 years, areas of new planting in the UK have ranged from 7.1 thousand hectares in 2016/17 to 20.7 thousand hectares in 2023/24.

At 13.46 thousand hectares, the current level of new planting in the UK is 14% lower than the level reported in 2024/25.

For further information, see the New Planting and Restocking section of Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

1.4.2 Publicly funded restocking

Restocking is the replacement of trees on areas of woodland that have been felled; this can be done either through replanting or natural regeneration. The statistics presented here include felled areas that have been restocked by both natural regeneration and replanting.

As restocking takes place on woodland that has been previously harvested and it is a condition of most felling licences that the area is restocked, restocking rates are mainly driven by harvesting levels (with a time lag, usually of around 2 years, between harvesting and restocking). Figures for timber harvesting (wood production) are available in Chapter 2: UK-Grown Timber.

Economic factors, including grant rates, may have some effect on the species choice at restocking. In addition, the precise timing of restocking may be affected by weather conditions.

This release only covers publicly funded restocking, that is:

- Restocking of Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales and Forest Service woodland; and
- Grant aided restocking of private sector woodland.

Grant support for restocking in Scotland has been limited since 2008. The Forestry Grant Scheme was launched in Scotland in March 2015 and does include support for restocking in most but not all circumstances. As a result, grant-aided restocking does not represent all private sector restocking in Scotland. It is therefore likely that conifer restocking in Scotland in recent years is under-reported in this release and other statistics.

Grant support in England is now provided by the Countryside Stewardship scheme, which opened for applications in early 2016. Funding for restocking under Countryside Stewardship is only available under limited circumstances (through the tree health grant). The restoration (and restocking with native species) of PAWS (Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites) is also supported by the HS2 Woodland Fund. No estimate has been made for restocking in England that is no longer supported by grants and therefore restocking in England in recent years is under-reported in this release and other statistics.

There are no current live grants in Wales for restocking. No estimate has been made for restocking in Wales that is no longer supported by grants and therefore restocking in Wales in recent years is under-reported in this release.

A total of 14.21 thousand hectares of publicly funded restocking were reported in the UK in 2025/26 (Table 1.7a). Conifers accounted for 80% of the total area of restocking, and 79% took place on public sector land (Table 1.7b).

A total of 67% of publicly funded restocking took place in Scotland, 20% in England, 8% in Wales and 4% in Northern Ireland.

Table 1.7a Area of publicly funded restocking by forest type, UK, 2021/22 to 2025/26

thousand hectares

Year ending 31 March	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
Conifers					
2021/22	2.29	0.93	8.34	0.79	12.35
2022/23	2.01	1.08	6.17	0.81	10.06
2023/24	2.43	1.29	7.91	0.67	12.30
2024/25	2.39	1.22	7.64	0.61	11.86
2025/26	1.99	1.04	7.71	0.59	11.34
Broadleaves					
2021/22	0.81	0.54	1.56	0.02	2.93
2022/23	0.68	0.26	1.31	0.08	2.33
2023/24	1.10	0.28	2.16	0.02	3.57
2024/25	1.27	0.25	2.38	0.04	3.95
2025/26	0.82	0.16	1.85	0.04	2.86
Total					
2021/22	3.09	1.48	9.90	0.81	15.28
2022/23	2.69	1.34	7.47	0.89	12.39
2023/24	3.53	1.58	10.07	0.69	15.87
2024/25	3.66	1.47	10.02	0.65	15.81
2025/26	2.81	1.20	9.56	0.64	14.21

Source: Forestry Commission, Forestry England, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Government, Northern Ireland Forest Service.

Notes:

1. Private sector figures are based on areas for which grants were paid during the year.
2. Since 2010/11, estimates of the area planted without grant aid are not available. As a result, the reported figures are likely to under-estimate the true level of planting activity.
3. The planting season lies both sides of 31 March, and the weather can cause planting to be advanced or delayed.
4. Includes woodland restocked by natural regeneration (where known).
5. Restocking by natural regeneration in non-clearfell areas may be under-represented.
6. Results for 2022/23 do not include private sector restocking in England, for which data is unavailable.

Data: Longer time series of the above table are available from the Time Series page.

Table 1.7b Area of publicly funded restocking by ownership, UK, 2021/22 to 2025/26

thousand hectares

Year ending 31 March	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
Public sector					
2021/22	2.54	1.34	5.59	0.65	10.11
2022/23	2.69	1.00	3.53	0.55	7.77
2023/24	2.55	1.39	5.60	0.61	10.15
2024/25	2.41	1.46	7.50	0.64	12.01
2025/26	1.89	1.18	7.67	0.53	11.27
Private sector					
2021/22	0.55	0.14	4.32	0.16	5.17
2022/23	[x]	0.34	3.94	0.35	4.62
2023/24	0.97	0.19	4.47	0.09	5.72
2024/25	1.25	0.01	2.52	0.02	3.79
2025/26	0.92	0.01	1.90	0.11	2.94
Total					
2021/22	3.09	1.48	9.90	0.81	15.28
2022/23	2.69	1.34	7.47	0.89	12.39
2023/24	3.53	1.58	10.07	0.69	15.87
2024/25	3.66	1.47	10.02	0.65	15.81
2025/26	2.81	1.20	9.56	0.64	14.21

Source: Forestry Commission, Forestry England, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Welsh Government, Northern Ireland Forest Service.

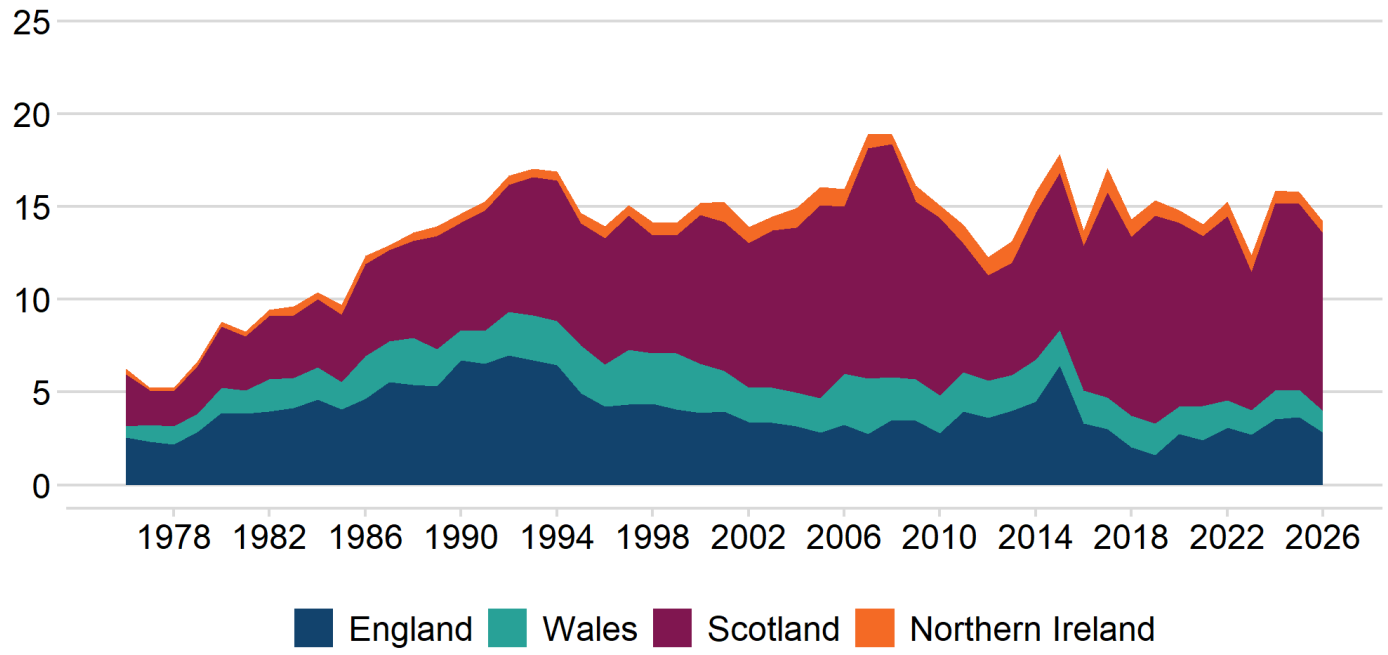
Notes:

1. Public sector: Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, Forest Service (Northern Ireland). NRW estimates only relate to the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE).
2. Private sector: all other woodland. Includes other publicly owned woodland (e.g. owned by local authorities) and privately-owned woodland.
3. Private sector figures are based on areas for which grants were paid during the year.
4. Since 2010/11, estimates of the area planted without grant aid are not available. As a result, the reported figures are likely to under-estimate the true level of planting activity.
5. The planting season lies both sides of 31 March, and the weather can cause planting to be advanced or delayed.
6. Includes woodland restocked by natural regeneration (where known).
7. Restocking by natural regeneration in non-clearfell areas may be under-represented.
8. [x] = data not available. Data on private sector restocking in England in 2022/23 is unavailable.

Figure 1.4 shows reported areas of restocking by country since the year ending March 1976. It indicates an increase in restocking rates during the period. Over the same period, there has been a general increase in UK wood production over most of the period, although this has stabilised in the last 10-15 years (see Chapter 2: UK-Grown Timber).

Figure 1.4 Area of publicly funded restocking by country, UK, 1975/76 to 2025/26

thousand hectares



Source: Forestry Commission, Forestry England, Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Forest Service, grant schemes.

Notes:

1. Private sector figures are based on areas for which grants were paid during the year.
2. Since 2010/11, estimates of the area planted without grant aid are not available. As a result, the reported figures are likely to under-estimate the true level of planting activity.
3. The planting season lies both sides of 31 March and the weather can cause planting to be advanced or delayed.
4. Includes woodland restocked by natural regeneration.
5. Restocking by natural regeneration in non-clearfell areas may be under-represented.

The reported area of restocking fell significantly after a peak of 19 thousand hectares in 2006/07. This followed changes to grant support for restocking in Scotland, that resulted in some non-grant aided Sitka spruce restocking being excluded from the estimates. The chart shows a dip in the area of restocking in 2015/16, following changes to grant schemes across the UK.

The reported area of publicly funded restocking in the UK in 2025/26 represents a 10% decrease on the previous year. For further information, see the New Planting and Restocking section of Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

1.5 Canopy loss

Approval for the felling (cutting down) of trees in the UK is granted through felling licences issued by the Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry, Natural Resources Wales or the Forest Service in Northern Ireland.

Felling licences may be conditional (where felling approval is granted subject to replanting) or unconditional (where tree felling is approved without the requirement to replant). Unconditional licences are routinely issued for silvicultural thinning operations and in these cases no woodland loss takes place. However, an unconditional felling licence without the requirement to replant may be issued if there are overriding environmental considerations, for example to enable the restoration of important habitats. The removal of trees may also be authorised under planning regulations, to enable development (including for windfarms). In this case, a felling licence is not required.

The removal of trees might also be required through a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN). A SPHN may require the felling and destruction of infected trees or containment of infested material on site, and is issued by the Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry, Natural Resources Wales or the Forest Service to prevent the spread of pests and diseases. Similar actions are also required within the public woodland estate managed by these organisations. There is no legal requirement for woodland to be restocked after felling under a SPHN.

Since 2010/11, SPHNs have mainly been issued to attempt to slow down the spread of *Phytophthora ramorum*, first found in the UK in 2002 on viburnum, and in 2009 on Japanese larch, a significant sporulating host resulting in a dramatic upsurge in the disease.

Statutory felling of infected *Phytophthora ramorum* larch does not apply within the designated *Phytophthora ramorum* management zone in south west Scotland where the high levels of infection and proportion of larch in the area make this unfeasible. However, felling licences are still required, and movement licences are required to stop spread out of this area. In Wales, *Phytophthora ramorum* Core Disease Zone SPHNs are still served to contain material on site, but felling still requires a felling licence.

Further information on felling and Statutory Plant Health Notices is provided in Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

1.5.1 Felling licences

Information on unconditional felling licences that do not relate to thinning may be seen as an indication of the level of woodland loss on land that is not owned or managed by Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales or the Forest Service. However, the data relates only to felling licences issued, so does not provide information on whether the felling actually took place (or the timing of the felling). In addition, felling licences do not cover woodland loss that is authorised under planning regulations.

Table 1.8 shows the area covered by unconditional felling licences issued by the Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry and Natural Resources Wales in the last 10 years. The figures do not include unconditional felling licences issued to permit thinning of woodlands. The table covers woodland in England, Scotland and Wales that is not owned or managed by Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland or Natural Resources Wales only; it does not cover felling that is exempt from felling licence approval (such as authorisations for felling under planning regulations, felling required under a Statutory Plant Health Notice or felling that is approved on condition that the area is restocked).

A total of 0.7 thousand hectares of woodland in Great Britain were covered by unconditional felling licences (with no requirement to restock) in the year to March 2026.

Table 1.8 Area of private sector woodland covered by unconditional felling licences, Great Britain, 2016/17 to 2025/26

thousand hectares

Year	England	Wales	Scotland	Great Britain
2016/17	0.2	[low]	[low]	0.2
2017/18	0.2	[low]	[low]	0.2
2018/19	0.7	[low]	[low]	0.8
2019/20	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.6
2020/21	0.4	0.4	0.3	1.0
2021/22	0.3	[low]	0.1	0.4
2022/23	0.5	[low]	0.2	0.6
2023/24	0.6	[low]	[low]	0.6
2024/25	0.6	[low]	0.0	0.6
2025/26	0.6	0.0	[low]	0.7

Source: Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry, Natural Resources Wales.

Notes:

1. Felling licences issued in the period. Excludes areas exempt from felling licence approval and licences issued for thinning.
2. From April 2019 Felling Permissions, issued under the Forestry and Land Management Act (Scotland) 2018, have replaced Felling Licences in Scotland.
3. [low] = less than 0.05 thousand hectares.
4. These figures are outside the scope of Accredited Official Statistics. For further information see Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

1.5.2 Statutory Plant Health Notices

Table 1.9a shows the number of sites where a Statutory Plant Health Notice has been served in the UK between 2016/17 and 2025/26. For Scotland, the figures show the number of Statutory Plant Health Notices issued, rather than number of sites.

All woodland, including sites owned or managed by Forestry England, Forestry and Land Scotland, Natural Resources Wales or the Forest Service in Northern Ireland are covered. As Statutory Plant Health Notices are not issued in the *Phytophthora ramorum* management zone in southwest Scotland, the figures presented here do not cover all felling of infected larch.

In the year to 31 March 2026, 50 sites in England, 4 sites in Wales, 146 in Scotland and 0 in Northern Ireland were served with Statutory Plant Health Notices (Table 1.9a).

Table 1.9a Number of sites where a Statutory Plant Health Notice has been served, UK, 2016/17 to 2025/26

Year	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
2016/17	103	52	65	0	220
2017/18	82	132	71	14	299
2018/19	128	204	284	0	616
2019/20	48	92	199	0	339
2020/21	203	172	278	2	655
2021/22	269	159	295	0	723
2022/23	56	146	333	0	535
2023/24	11	53	206	0	270
2024/25	65	28	171	0	264
2025/26	50	4	146	0	200

Source: Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Forest Service.

Notes:

1. The number of sites where infection of larch by *Phytophthora ramorum* has been confirmed, or where there is sufficient suspicion of infection and a Statutory Plant Health Notice has been served on the landowner.
2. For Scotland, figures relate to the number of Statutory Plant Health Notices issued. Excludes felling within the *Phytophthora ramorum* management zone in south west Scotland, where Statutory Plant Health Notices are not issued.
3. These figures are outside the scope of Accredited Official Statistics. For further information see Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

In 2025/26, 1.0 thousand hectares of woodland in the UK required felling under Statutory Plant Health Notices. This was made up of 0.7 thousand hectares in

Scotland, 0.3 thousand hectares in England and less than 0.1 thousand hectares in Wales (Table 1.9b). There were no Statutory Plant Health Notices issued in Northern Ireland in 2025/26.

Table 1.9b Felling areas under Statutory Plant Health Notices, UK, 2016/17 to 2025/26

thousand hectares

Year	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland	UK
2016/17	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.7
2017/18	0.2	1.2	0.3	0.1	1.7
2018/19	0.6	1.6	1.4	0.0	3.6
2019/20	0.3	0.5	1.0	0.0	1.8
2020/21	1.3	1.4	1.8	0.0	4.5
2021/22	1.5	1.2	1.3	0.0	4.0
2022/23	0.6	0.7	1.0	0.0	2.4
2023/24	0.3	0.2	1.1	0.0	1.5
2024/25	0.4	0.1	0.9	0.0	1.4
2025/26	0.3	0.0	0.7	0.0	1.0

Source: Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry, Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Forest Service.

Notes:

1. The area that is required to be felled within the Statutory Plant Health Notice.
2. Felling areas in Scotland relate to larch only.
3. Excludes felling within the *Phytophthora ramorum* management zone in south west Scotland, where Statutory Plant Health Notices are not issued.

4. These figures are outside the scope of Accredited Official Statistics. For further information see Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

1.6 Woodland loss

Tables 1.10a to 1.10d present data derived from the National Forest Inventory woodland maps on the areas of:

- Permanent woodland loss to development;
- Ground under development (which may, in later years, be identified as permanent woodland loss to development); and
- Areas of newly restored priority habitats.

The tables do not reflect any planting that may have occurred to offset woodland loss in particular areas.

Between 2006/07 and 2024/25, for Great Britain, an annual average of 499 hectares of woodland loss was recorded, 132 hectares of ground under development and 113 hectares of newly restored priority habitats.

Table 1.10a Area of woodland loss, England, 2006/07 to 2024/25

hectares

Year	Area of woodland loss	Area of ground under development	Area of newly restored priority habitats	Total area
2006/07 to 2008/09	185	83	29	297
2009/10 to 2011/12	637	188	23	849
2012/13 to 2013/14	205	69	30	304
2014/15	275	102	32	408
2015/16	592	193	102	887
2016/17	240	193	12	445
2017/18	475	194	31	700
2018/19	334	122	16	472
2019/20	134	56	139	330
2020/21	339	139	58	535
2021/22	357	90	118	565
2022/23	99	56	23	179
2023/24	245	114	71	430
2024/25	197	145	66	409

Source: National Forest Inventory.

Notes:

1. Estimates are derived from Earth observation.

2. Woodland loss: Areas where definitive evidence for the permanent removal of woodland cover has been established.
3. Ground under development: Areas where there has been significant earth movement of the type associated with development.
4. Newly established habitat: Areas where there has been a significant change in the habitat type through the complete establishment of non-tree vegetation.
5. For further details on the methodology please see Preliminary estimates of the changes in canopy cover in British woodlands between 2006 and 2015 (Forestry Commission, 2016).

Table 1.10b Area of woodland loss, Wales, 2006/07 to 2024/25

hectares

Year	Area of woodland loss	Area of ground under development	Area of newly restored priority habitats	Total area
2006/07 to 2008/09	67	44	6	117
2009/10 to 2011/12	158	23	7	187
2012/13 to 2013/14	111	14	2	128
2014/15	38	12	2	53
2015/16	47	22	9	78
2016/17	24	12	3	39
2017/18	35	10	1	46
2018/19	28	15	8	51
2019/20	11	5	[low]	16
2020/21	18	12	[low]	31
2021/22	5	3	3	12
2022/23	3	2	[low]	5
2023/24	3	4	2	8
2024/25	127	10	61	198

Source: National Forest Inventory.

Notes:

1. See Table 1.10a for more information.

2. [low] = less than 0.5 hectares.

Table 1.10c Area of woodland loss, Scotland, 2006/07 to 2024/25

hectares

Year	Area of woodland loss	Area of ground under development	Area of newly restored priority habitats	Total area
2006/07 to 2008/09	291	65	43	398
2009/10 to 2011/12	878	60	32	970
2012/13 to 2013/14	425	48	60	533
2014/15	162	37	27	226
2015/16	625	76	76	777
2016/17	190	71	9	270
2017/18	95	31	4	130
2018/19	88	52	16	157
2019/20	266	20	200	487
2020/21	427	29	99	555
2021/22	330	18	260	608
2022/23	459	17	173	649
2023/24	160	29	224	412
2024/25	87	25	65	177

Source: National Forest Inventory.

Notes: See Table 1.10a for more information.

Table 1.10d Area of woodland loss, Great Britain, 2006/07 to 2024/25

hectares

Year	Area of woodland loss	Area of ground under development	Area of newly restored priority habitats	Total area
2006/07 to 2008/09	543	191	78	812
2009/10 to 2011/12	1,673	272	62	2,006
2012/13 to 2013/14	741	130	93	964
2014/15	475	152	61	687
2015/16	1,265	290	186	1,742
2016/17	454	276	24	754
2017/18	606	235	35	875
2018/19	451	189	40	680
2019/20	412	82	339	833
2020/21	783	180	158	1,121
2021/22	692	111	381	1,184
2022/23	561	75	197	833
2023/24	407	146	297	850
2024/25	411	180	192	784

Source: National Forest Inventory.

Notes:

1. See Table 1.10a for more information.

1.7 Canopy cover in England

The Environmental Targets (Woodland and Trees Outside Woodland) (England) Regulations 2023 set a target that by the end of 31 December 2050 at least 16.5% of all land in England is covered by woodland and trees outside woodland. In order to monitor progress towards this target, a baseline measurement was undertaken to record the position at March 2022.

To estimate canopy cover at March 2023, the following metrics have been combined:

- The area of woodland in England at 31 March 2023, from the woodland area estimates used throughout this chapter, which are based on the National Forest Inventory woodland map for England;
- The area of trees outside woodland (covering small woodlands, groups of trees and lone trees, but excluding hedgerows), based on the 2023 map of Trees Outside Woodland for England; and
- The area of traditional orchards, based on the Natural England orchard dataset and orchards recorded by the National Forest Inventory. This estimate has not been updated since the March 2022 baseline.

Table 1.11 presents the estimate of canopy cover in England at March 2023. Total canopy cover is estimated to be 1,951 thousand hectares, 15.0% of the land area of England, against the target of 16.5% by 2050. This is an increase of 11 thousand hectares compared with the estimate of 1,940 thousand hectares at March 2022, which comprised 1,330 thousand hectares of woodland and 586 thousand hectares of trees outside woodland.

Table 1.11 Canopy cover, England, 2023

Canopy cover	Area (thousand hectares)	Percentage of total land area (%)
Woodland	1,334	10.2
Trees outside woodland	593	4.6
Orchards	24	0.2
Total canopy cover	**1,951**	**15.0**

Source: Forest Research.

Notes:

1. The area of trees outside woodland is derived from the 2023 Trees Outside Woodland map for England, derived from remote sensing and fieldwork.
2. The estimated area of orchards is derived from Natural England's traditional orchards dataset and from the National Forest Inventory map. The areas from the dataset have been adjusted to remove areas where stocking densities are too low to qualify as traditional orchards.
3. Areas at 31 March.
4. These figures are outside the scope of Accredited Official Statistics. For further information see Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

Alice Holt Lodge
Farnham
Surrey, GU10 4LH, UK

Tel: 0300 067 5600

Northern Research Station
Roslin
Midlothian, EH25 9SY, UK

Tel: 0300 067 5600

Forest Research in Wales
Talybont Research Office
Cefn Gethiniog
Talybont-on-Usk
Brecon
Powys, LD3 7YN, UK

Tel: 0300 067 5709

info@forestresearch.gov.uk

www.forestresearch.gov.uk

Forest Research will consider all requests to make the content of our documents available in alternative formats.

Please send any such requests to: research.info@forestresearch.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2026