

United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard

Fifth Edition (Pre-approval Draft)

(Version 5.0)

Green highlight denotes a link to a term in the glossary

Notes:

Changes to UKWAS 4 made by Working Group and approved by Steering Group on 30.06.22



N.B. Book icons to be updated and added following revision of Appendix of References

Status:

- The Revision Working Group has completed its work on preparing a Pre-approval Draft and this has been approved at national level by the UKWAS Steering Group
- Documentation has been finalised and the Pre-approval Draft and Consultation Report submitted to FSC UK and PEFC UK
- PEFC UK and FSC UK are now preparing their bespoke documentation for submission to their respective international schemes who will check that all their scheme requirements have been met
- It is usual for some conditions to be attached to any scheme endorsement / approval and these might require some changes to be made to the pre-approval draft text
- Following international approval, the aim is for UKWAS 5 to be effective from 1st April 2023.

Document history:

Version 5.0 approved by the Steering Group: xx.xx.xx

Effective date: 1 April 2023

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The mark of
responsible forestry

The formal basis for Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) forest management certification in the UK is the national forest stewardship standard FSC-STD-GBR-03-2017, available from the FSC UK website. Certificate holders are free to use this user-friendly UKWAS version in their day-to-day work and in discussions with auditors. *[N.B. Text and logos to be updated and is contingent on FSC approval of UKWAS 5]*



This standard has been endorsed by PEFC International for forest management certification in the UK and should be read in conjunction with the PEFC UK Scheme Document, which can be found on the PEFC UK website. *[N.B. Text and logos to be updated and is contingent on PEFC endorsement of UKWAS 5]*

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[Insert UKWAS Vision Statement]

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UKWAS 5 formats & amendments *[N.B. Formats as anticipated but subject to final confirmation]*

Website: the online version provides the user with easy navigation and includes search functionality and glossary term highlighting.

Document: the PDF version is designed for use as a portable paper document that can be downloaded and printed by the user.

MS Word: users requiring a plain text document in MS Word format for their use in preparing bespoke certification documentation can request a copy from the UKWAS Support Unit.

Amendments: any further corrections or revisions necessarily made to the certification standard prior to its next full revision will be incorporated into the electronic versions available on the UKWAS website. A list of all the changes made since publication of this edition will be maintained on the UKWAS website and users are recommended to check this on a regular basis.

ukwas.org.uk

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Introduction

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Introduction

1. Background and purpose

The **United Kingdom** Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)¹ is a certification standard; it provides a tool for UK **woodland** owners to demonstrate their responsible **forest** management.

The UKWAS is designed to reflect:

- The legal and good **forestry** practice requirements set out in the governmental UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) and thereby the General Guidelines adopted by European Forestry Ministers at Helsinki in 1993, the Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines (PEOLG) subsequently adopted at Lisbon in 1998 and other relevant **international agreements**.
- The requirements set out by the two leading global forest **certification schemes** – the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).
- Good practice guidance and research findings drawn from a range of sources and adapted, where appropriate, to UK circumstances.
- An ethos of continuous improvement.

Whilst the UKFS and UKWAS are closely linked, their roles are distinct and complementary:

- The UKFS is a governmental standard which sets out the requirements that all woodland owners/managers are expected to meet; the **forestry authorities** will assess applications for new planting, forest management and tree-felling against these requirements before granting any necessary permissions or offering grant aid.
- The UKWAS is a voluntary certification standard developed by a stakeholder group representing economic, environmental and social perspectives; the certification standard is more widely drawn than the UKFS and provides the basis for independent auditing and certification under the FSC and PEFC schemes so demonstrating that wood or **non-wood forest products** are sourced from a responsibly managed **woodland**.

¹ 'UKWAS' and 'United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard' are registered trademarks.

FSC- and PEFC-certified products may carry a label and are much in demand in the UK and global timber markets as they provide a widely recognised way to inform customers that those timber and other woodland products have been responsibly sourced.

The standard is subject to periodic review and, if considered necessary, revision. The review and revision, including stakeholder consultation, is undertaken by an independent working group appointed by the UKWAS steering group to reflect a balance of economic, environmental and social interests.

In the most recent revision, the requirements have been adapted to reflect the global challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and the need to embed forest resilience, enhance the natural capital value of woodlands and safeguard the provision of valuable ecosystem services. For example, there is greater focus on practices that enhance carbon storage in trees and soils and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from woodland operations.

FSC UK and PEFC UK take responsibility for submitting the revised UKWAS to their international parent bodies for assessment and, provided the UKWAS is judged to be conformant with each scheme's requirements, it will provide a standard for certification through each of these schemes. A list of certification schemes that currently use the UKWAS as the basis for certification in the UK can be found on ukwas.org.uk.

2. Procedures for use of the certification standard

The woodland management unit

The unit of certification is a woodland management unit (WMU). A WMU is a clearly defined woodland area, or areas, with mapped boundaries, managed to a set of explicit long-term objectives. The WMU is covered by the management planning documentation set out in section 2.2 of the certification standard. Elements of management planning documentation may apply to a specific WMU or may be set at a higher level (such as group schemes, or state forest services) and apply to multiple WMUs.

For example, a WMU might be a single ownership incorporating several areas of woodland that are managed within a woodland management plan; several separate ownerships managed within a woodland management plan; a community-managed forest; a management subdivision of a national forest service such as a forest district covered by a woodland management plan.

In large and/or widely geographically dispersed WMUs, the spirit of the certification standard and any good practice should be conformed to throughout the WMU.

Note: The terms 'woodland management unit' and 'forest management unit' are synonymous.

Flexibility in meeting requirements

Not all requirements will be applicable to every WMU, for example requirements relating to **plantations on ancient woodland sites** can only apply if such sites are present.

While all applicable requirements must be met, there may be flexibility in exactly how requirements are fulfilled. Any different approach taken must be an equally or more effective way of achieving the objectives intended by the requirement. The impacts of the approach taken shall be carefully monitored and recorded.

The **certification body** carrying out the audit shall make a professional judgement as to the acceptability of the flexibility (see Interpretation of the certification standard).

See also 'Using the certification standard' regarding flexibility in verifiers (see definition of example verifiers in that section).

Research

The **owner/manager** should consider contributing to and/or supporting relevant research activities which benefit the future management of woodlands. The establishment of research trials or plots may be undertaken only in the context of a research policy and should conform to the **spirit** of the certification standard.

Third-party rights - leases, burdens in title, ownership rights and legal restrictions on management

In certain situations, pre-existing leases, burdens in title and third-party ownership rights might restrict management actions in such a way that the owner/manager might not be able to fully meet all the requirements of the certification standard. For example:

- Forestry-only or long-term sporting leases where sporting or **access** rights might be restricted
- Timber leases under which the **restocking** obligation reverts to the landowner
- Wayleaves, and servitude rights
- Mineral extraction rights held by third parties
- **Traditional rights** (e.g. peat cutting).

In these circumstances **conformance** to the certification standard may still be achieved provided the owner/manager is able to demonstrate that:

- The holder of the third-party rights has been made aware of those requirements of the standard which are relevant to the rights they hold and how they can assist with conformance. It is not however necessary for the third party to agree to conform to the requirements of the standard
- All reasonable measures have been taken to mitigate negative impacts caused by the holders of third-party rights

- The third-party rights have not been created intentionally to avoid conformance.

Certification schemes might have their own requirements which apply when the owner/manager does not have full management control of a woodland management unit including where national infrastructure developments are imposed by a third party.

Timing for full implementation of the requirements relating to woodland structure and layout

A special feature of woodland management is its long-term nature. Decisions made in the past have a strong influence on the woodlands of today.

Therefore, when assessing conformance with the certification standard, certification bodies will not evaluate woodlands solely on the present structure and layout but will consider the plans for management in the short, medium and long term.

Where present structure and layout fail to meet the requirements, woodland owners/managers will need to demonstrate through management planning documentation and ongoing activities in the woodland that they are taking active measures to achieve conformance with the requirements. They will also need to demonstrate that there is a time frame for achieving full conformance based on sound management principles. Further guidance on how non-conformities are dealt with can be obtained from certification bodies or group scheme managers.

Application of the certification standard to different scales of woodland management unit and intensities of operation

Woodland management units vary in terms of the scale and intensity of management and the risk of negative impacts. While the principles remain the same regardless of woodland size and intensity of management, the level and complexity of management needed to meet the requirements of the certification standard, and the nature of the evidence to demonstrate conformance, may vary depending on the size and type of the woodland management unit. Certification schemes have different sampling intensities depending on the scale and intensity of management and operations. In drafting this standard, every effort has been made to ensure that requirements are sufficiently flexible to apply to all scales and intensities of management.

In the UK context, scale has not been found to be closely correlated with intensity or risk of woodland management; for example, many large operations might be in woodlands with relatively low environmental or social values, while the potential impacts of operations in those small woodlands which have higher environmental and social values might be commensurately high. As such, it has not proved possible to define a threshold or specify different requirements for lower potential impact operations, although this will be subject to review in future revisions of the standard. However, it is considered appropriate to specify different requirements for higher potential impact operations, and some of the requirements of this standard apply only where the entity holding or applying for certification, and therefore responsible for demonstrating conformance, is a large enterprise, as defined in the glossary.

Use of the certification standard by certification bodies

Individual certification schemes might have specific requirements regarding the official version of this standard to be used by auditors. Certification bodies should check with the relevant scheme.

3. Interpretation of the certification standard

The UKWAS Interpretation Panel provides the UKWAS Steering Group and users of the certification standard with advice on its interpretation. Further information on how the panel conducts its business is available on the UKWAS website (ukwas.org.uk) including interpretation advice notes relevant to the current edition of the standard and how to submit a request for interpretation to the Interpretation Panel.

4. Complaints & disputes

Section 5.2.2 of the standard requires owners/managers to respond constructively to complaints and seek to resolve grievances through engagement with complainants.

In the first instance, any complaints about a certified woodland management unit should be made to the woodland owner or manager. If the complaint or dispute cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, the complainant may contact the certification body which issued the certificate. Further information is provided on the UKWAS website (ukwas.org.uk).

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[Insert infographic]

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Certification standard

Fifth edition (version 5.0)

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Using the certification standard

In using the certification standard, **owners/managers** and **certification bodies** shall also take full account of the introduction, glossary and appendix of references.

The certification standard is set out as follows:

Requirements

These are the compulsory elements of the certification standard. Woodland management must meet all applicable requirements and certification bodies will check that each requirement is being met.

In recent editions of UKWAS, requirements were stated as 'shall'. This edition reverts to the simpler form of wording used in the first edition of UKWAS; this does not imply any change in the status of requirements, and these remain mandatory.

When requirements are presented as separate paragraphs or in a list, their order does not indicate any ranking or priority: all applicable requirements must be met.

Example verifiers

These are examples of objective information or evidence – documents, actions or discussions – that owners/managers may present to the certification body for their consideration in order to demonstrate that the requirement is being met.

Certification bodies are required to undertake audits and owners/managers should be able to present sufficient evidence to allow the auditor to report **conformance**. It will not always be necessary to use any or all of the verifiers suggested, and conformance to requirements may be demonstrated in other ways. The selected verifiers should be appropriate to the scale and intensity of management of the WMU and the risk of negative impacts.

The three most common example verifiers are:

- Discussion with the owner/manager.

The owner/manager may explain in conversation with the auditor their understanding of the standard, their knowledge of the WMU or the rationale for management decisions, or they may describe actions they have taken to conform to the standard.

- Field observation.

The auditor may look for tangible evidence in the WMU of conformance to the standard.

- **Management planning documentation.**

Documentation might include a piece of written, printed, or electronic matter that provides information or evidence or that serves as an official record.

The owner/manager may demonstrate through written documents, records or maps their knowledge of the WMU, the rationale for management decisions, or the actions they have taken to conform to the standard. Note that if specific management planning documentation is expected to be produced it will be described in the requirements of the standard. Documentation may include that produced by third parties, for example a **felling permission**.

When example verifiers are presented in separate paragraphs or a list, their order does not indicate any ranking or priority.

Guidance notes

These aim to help both the woodland owner/manager and the certification body to understand how requirements should be applied in practice. More information is provided to elaborate some requirements, the meaning of certain terms or phrases is explained, and examples of appropriate action are given. Where guidance is stated as 'should' it indicates a recommendation. Where it is stated as 'may' it indicates a permissible option or a list of permissible options. Where it is stated as 'can' it indicates a possibility or a list of possibilities.

Note: The guidance note can include 'Advice to owners/managers' on related matters which are beyond the direct scope of a forest management certification standard e.g. owners/managers are advised to check the specific requirements of **certification schemes** in relation to **chain-of-custody certification** matters. Such information is clearly marked and is provided as an advisory note only: it shall not be considered by certification bodies when assessing conformance with the certification standard.

When guidance notes are presented in separate paragraphs or a list, their order does not indicate any ranking or priority.

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Key to icons and formatting

References



Check the Appendix of References for further guidance. *[N.B. The Appendix of References and icons to be updated following approval of this draft]*

Glossary terms

Woodland

Highlighted terms are explained in the glossary of terms. Generally, a glossary term is only highlighted on its first occurrence in a particular section or sub-division of the text. The following glossary terms which are used frequently throughout the text are not generally highlighted:

- Management planning documentation
- Owner/manager
- Woodland
- Woodland management unit (WMU).

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used frequently in the text:

ASNW - Ancient semi-natural woodland

FISA - Forest Industry Safety Accord

LISS – Lower-impact silvicultural systems

NWFP - Non-wood forest products

PAWS – Plantation on ancient woodland site

UKFS – UK Forestry Standard

WMU - Woodland management unit

1. Legal compliance and UKWAS conformance

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1. Legal compliance and UKWAS conformance

	REQUIREMENT
1.1	Compliance and conformance
1.1.1	There is compliance with the law. There are no substantiated outstanding claims of non-compliance related to woodland management.
1.1.2	There is conformance to the spirit of any relevant codes of practice or good practice guidelines.
1.1.3	<p>a) The legal identity of the owner/manager is documented.</p> <p>b) The boundaries of the owner's/manager's legal ownership or tenure are documented.</p> <p>c) The scope of the owner's/manager's legal rights to manage the WMU and to harvest wood and non-wood forest products and/or supply services from within the WMU is documented.</p> <p>d) Legal authority to carry out specific operations, where required by the relevant authorities, is documented.</p> <p>e) Payment is made in a timely manner of all applicable legally prescribed charges connected with woodland management.</p>
1.1.4	<p>a) Mechanisms are employed to identify, prevent and resolve disputes over tenure claims and use rights through appropriate consultation with interested parties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • b) Where possible, the owner/manager seeks to resolve disputes out of court and in a timely manner.
1.1.5	<p>a) The owner/manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to conformance to this certification standard, and • Has declared an intention to protect and maintain the woodland management unit and its ecological integrity in the short and long term. <p>b) A statement of these commitments is made publicly available upon request.</p>
1.1.6	<p>a) There is conformance to guidance on anti-corruption legislation.</p> <p>b) Large enterprises have and implement a publicly available anti-corruption policy which meets or exceeds the requirements of legislation.</p>
1.1.7	There is compliance with legislation relating to the transportation and trade of forest products including relevant timber regulations-and phytosanitary requirements.

1.1.8	Where foodstuffs are produced as non-wood forest products , there is compliance with legislation relating to their handling, transportation and trade.
1.2	Protection from illegal activities
1.2.1	The owner/manager takes all reasonable measures, including engagement with the police and statutory bodies , to prevent or stop illegal or unauthorised uses of the woodland that could jeopardise fulfilment of the objectives of management.
1.3	Genetically modified organisms
1.3.1	Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are not used.

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2. Management planning

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2. Management planning

	REQUIREMENT
2.1	Policy and objectives
2.1.1	<p>a) The owner/manager has a long-term policy and management objectives which are environmentally positive, socially beneficial, economically viable and enhance forest resilience.</p> <p>b) The policy and objectives, or summaries thereof, are proactively communicated to workers consistent with their roles and responsibilities.</p>
2.1.2	Woodland management planning takes full account of the short- and long-term positive and negative economic, environmental and social impacts of proposed operations, including potential impacts outside the WMU.
2.1.3	<p>a) Woodland management planning demonstrates a commitment to long-term economic viability.</p> <p>b) The owner/manager aims to secure the necessary investment to implement the management plan in order to meet this standard and to ensure long-term economic viability.</p>
2.2	Documentation
2.2.1	<p>All areas in the WMU are covered by management planning documentation which is retained for at least ten years and incorporates:</p> <p>a) A long-term policy for the woodland.</p> <p>b) Assessment of relevant components of the woodland resource, including potential wood or non-wood forest products and services which are consistent with the management objectives.</p> <p>c) Assessment of environmental values, including those outside the WMU potentially affected by management, sufficient to determine appropriate conservation measures and to provide a baseline for detecting possible positive and negative impacts.</p> <p>d) Identification of special characteristics and sensitivities of the woodland and appropriate treatments.</p> <p>e) Specific measures to maintain and where possible enhance those areas identified under sections 4.1-4.6 and 4.9, considering areas where either the extent of these areas or their sensitivity to operations might be unknown.</p> <p>f) Identification of community and social needs and sensitivities.</p>

	<p>g) Prioritised objectives, with verifiable targets to measure progress.</p> <p>h) Rationale for management prescriptions.</p> <p>i) Outline planned felling and regeneration over the next 20 years.</p> <p>j) Where applicable, annual allowable harvest of non-wood forest products (NWFPs).</p> <p>k) Rationale for the operational techniques to be used.</p> <p>l) Plans for implementation, first five years in detail.</p> <p>m) Appropriate maps.</p> <p>n) Plans to monitor at least those elements identified under section 2.15.1 against the objectives.</p>
2.2.2	<p>a) The owner/manager provides details of a public contact point.</p> <p>b) While respecting the confidentiality of information, the owner/manager has a mechanism to make publicly available either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management planning documentation, or • A summary of the management planning documentation.
2.2.3	<p>a) Management planning documentation is kept current taking into account changes required as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring programme results • Results of audits • Results of stakeholder engagement • New research and technical information, and • Changed environmental, social, or economic circumstances. <p>b) All management planning documentation is reviewed at least every ten years.</p>
2.3	<p>Consultation and co-operation</p>
2.3.1	<p>a) Local people, relevant organisations and interested parties are identified and made aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The woodland is being evaluated for initial certification • New or revised management planning documentation, as specified under section 2.2.1, is being produced • High impact operations are planned. <p>b) The owner/manager ensures that there is full co-operation with the relevant forestry authority's consultation processes.</p>

	<p>c) The owner/manager consults appropriately with local people, relevant organisations and other interested parties, and provides opportunities for their engagement in planning and monitoring processes.</p> <p>d) Methods of consultation and engagement are designed to ensure that local people, relevant organisations and other interested parties have reasonable opportunities to participate equitably and without discrimination.</p> <p>e) At least 30 days are allowed for people to respond to notices, letters or meetings.</p> <p>f) The owner/manager engages with local people and takes action to identify and avoid significant negative social, environmental and economic impacts of management activities, and to minimise or repair any that do occur.</p> <p>g) The owner/manager responds to issues raised or requests for ongoing dialogue and engagement.</p>
2.3.2	The owner/manager seeks to engage with neighbouring woodland owners and to ensure that the management of each woodland complements and does not unreasonably compromise, the management of the others.
2.3.3	The owner/manager seeks to engage with neighbouring landowners and considers, where possible, opportunities for co-operating in wider forestry and conservation initiatives.
2.4	Productive potential of the woodland management unit (WMU)
2.4.1	The owner/manager plans and implements practices to maintain and/or enhance long-term soil, hydrological and ecological functions including soil carbon.
2.4.2	<p>a) Timber is normally harvested from the WMU at or below a level which can be permanently sustained.</p> <p>b) The average annual allowable cut is quantified, and actual harvesting levels are justified.</p> <p>c) Selective harvesting is not to the long-term detriment of the quality and value of stands.</p> <p>d) Throughout the WMU, management planning identifies opportunities where sustainable timber harvesting can be achieved alongside other objectives.</p>
2.4.3	<p>a) Harvesting of non-wood forest products (NWFPs) or use of ecosystem services from the WMU is at or below a level which can be permanently sustained.</p> <p>b) Where venison or wild boar/feral pig meat are to be supplied as certified, the owner/manager has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures for lethal wildlife management activities with reference to animal welfare and public safety • Procedures for monitoring the impacts of management activities on wildlife populations • A general evaluation of the ecological impact of wildlife management activities.
2.4.4	Where applicable, priority species are not harvested or controlled without the consent of the relevant statutory body .

2.5	Assessment of environmental impacts in existing woodland
2.5.1	<p>a) During woodland management planning, the positive and negative impacts of proposed operations on environmental values are assessed in a manner appropriate to their scale and the sensitivity of the site.</p> <p>b) The results of the environmental assessments are incorporated into planning and implementation in order to avoid adverse environmental impacts of management activities, and to minimise or repair impacts that do occur.</p>
2.5.2	The impacts of woodland plans are considered at a landscape level , taking due account of the interaction with adjoining land and nearby priority habitats and species .
2.5.3	<p>a) The owner/manager assesses the potential negative impacts of natural hazards on the WMU, including drought, floods, wind, fire, non-native plant and animal species, and other pests and diseases.</p> <p>b) Management and restructuring plans are designed to mitigate the risk of damage from natural hazards.</p>
2.6	Woodland creation
2.6.1	<p>a) During woodland management planning, the impacts of proposed woodland establishment operations on environmental values are assessed in a manner appropriate to their scale and the sensitivity of the site.</p> <p>b) New woodlands are located and designed in ways that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver economic goods and/or social benefits and/or ecosystem services • Maintain or enhance the visual, cultural and environmental values and character of the wider landscape • Ensure the creation of a diverse and resilient woodland over time, and • Seek to mitigate against the risk of damage from natural hazards.
2.6.2	<p>Planning and implementation of ground preparation and drainage works to achieve effective tree establishment avoids or minimises potential negative impacts including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil and soil carbon losses • Damage to existing peatland, wetland, and water courses or bodies.
2.7	Woodland structure
2.7.1	Woodlands are managed or restructured to achieve an appropriate diversity of stand structure, species, sizes, ages, spatial scales, regeneration cycles and open space . This structural diversity is maintained or enhanced.
2.8	Tree species selection
2.8.1	<p>a) The range of species selected for new woodlands, and natural or artificial regeneration of existing woodlands is suited to the site and takes into consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of long-term forest resilience including the potential impacts of climate change

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management objectives • Requirements for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity (see section 4) • Requirements for enhancement and restoration of habitats (see section 4) • Landscape character. <p>b) Native species are preferred to non-native. If non-native species are used it is shown that they will clearly outperform native species in meeting the owner's objectives or in achieving long-term forest resilience.</p> <p>c) Regeneration (natural or planted) restores stand composition in a timely manner to pre-harvesting or more natural conditions.</p> <p>d) In woodlands identified in sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native species are used for regeneration • Natural regeneration of non-native trees is removed in a timely manner. <p>e) In woodlands identified in section 4.3, regeneration of non-native trees is planned and managed to avoid threats to remnants and conservation features and to allow for increasing native woodland component.</p>
2.9	Introduction of non-native species
2.9.1	<p>a) Non-native tree species are only introduced to an individual woodland when evidence or experience shows that any invasive impacts can be controlled effectively.</p> <p>b) Non-native tree species are not introduced to woodland identified in sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.4.</p> <p>c) Non-native trees species are only introduced to woodland identified in section 4.3 if, compared to the non-native species they are replacing, they will bring additional biodiversity benefits and will not degrade the potential for restoration to site-native species.</p> <p>d) Other non-native plant and animal species are only introduced if they are non-invasive, bring environmental benefits, and all regulatory requirements are met.</p> <p>e) All new introductions are carefully monitored, and effective mitigation measures are implemented to control negative impacts outside the area in which they are established.</p>
2.10	Silvicultural systems
2.10.1	<p>a) Appropriate silvicultural systems are adopted which are suited to species, sites, windthrow risk, tree health risks and management objectives and which stipulate soundly-based planting, establishment, thinning, felling and regeneration plans.</p>

	<p>b) Where species, sites, windthrow risk, tree health risk and management objectives allow, a range of silvicultural approaches, and in particular LISS, are adopted with the aim of diversifying ages, species and stand structures.</p>
2.10.2	<p>a) In semi-natural woodland, LISS are adopted. All felling is in accordance with specific good practice-guidance for that type of woodland.</p> <p>b) In semi-natural woodlands over 10 ha, no more than 10% is felled in any five-year period unless justified in terms of biodiversity enhancement or lower impact.</p>
2.11	Conservation
2.11.1	<p>a) Management planning identifies a minimum of 15% of the WMU to be managed for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity as the primary objective.</p> <p>This includes all conservation areas and features identified in the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory nature conservation sites (section 4.1) • Ancient semi-natural woodlands (section 4.2) • Plantations on ancient woodland sites (section 4.3) • Other priority habitats (section 4.4) • Other woodlands and semi-natural habitats (section 4.5) • Natural reserves (section 4.7.2) • Long-term retentions (section 4.7.3). <p>b) Throughout the WMU, management planning identifies additional opportunities where conservation and the enhancement of biodiversity may be achieved alongside other objectives.</p>
2.11.2	<p>a) Management strategies and actions are developed to maintain and, where possible, improve the condition of areas and features of high conservation value identified in the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory nature conservation sites (section 4.1) • Ancient semi-natural woodland (section 4.2) • Plantations on ancient woodland sites (section 4.3) • Other priority habitats (section 4.4) • Areas and features of critical importance for watershed management or erosion control (section 4.6). <p>b) Management strategies and actions are developed in consultation with statutory bodies, interested parties and experts.</p> <p>c) Records are kept of the location and condition of these areas and features of high conservation value.</p>

2.12	Protection
2.12.1	<p>a) Management of wild deer is based on a strategy that identifies the management objectives and aims to regulate the impact of deer.</p> <p>b) Non-toxic ammunition is used in the management of wild deer.</p>
2.12.2	There is an emergency response plan appropriate to the level of risk.
2.12.3	The choice of tree protection methods and the products selected to achieve effective woodland establishment are appropriate to the herbivore risk and minimise environmental impacts.
2.12.4	There is a biosecurity policy appropriate to the level of risk.
2.13	Conversion
2.13.1	<p>a) Woodland identified in sections 4.1-4.4 is not converted to plantation or non-forested land.</p> <p>b) Areas converted from ancient semi-natural and other semi-natural woodlands to plantation or non-forested land after 1994 do not normally qualify for certification.</p>
2.13.2	<p>a) Conversion to non-forested land takes place only in certain limited circumstances as set out in this requirement.</p> <p>b) The new or restored land use is more valuable in terms of its biodiversity, landscape or historic environment benefits, and all the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conversion does not destroy areas of significantly high carbon stock • The woodland is not identified as of high conservation value in sections 4.1-4.4 and 4.6, nor identified as contributing to the cultural and historical values in section 4.9 • There is no evidence of unresolved substantial dispute • The conversion and subsequent site management protect and substantially enhance at least one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The condition of priority habitats and species ○ The condition of statutory designated sites ○ Important landscape features and character ○ Important historic environment features and character ○ Important carbon stores • The subsequent management of the converted area is integrated with the rest of the WMU. <p>c) Conversion exceeding 5% of the WMU by area or 500 ha in total takes place only with the prior approval of the relevant certification scheme(s).</p>
2.13.3	Woodland areas are converted to areas used solely for Christmas tree or short rotation coppice production only where conversion is consistent with other requirements of this certification standard, including the need to leave open space , and in accordance with any approved management plan from the relevant forestry authority .

2.14	Implementation, amendment and revision of the plan
2.14.1	The implementation of the work programme is in close agreement with the details included in the management planning documentation. Any deviation from prescription or planned rate of progress is justified, overall objectives are still achieved, and the ecological integrity of the woodland is maintained.
2.15	Monitoring
2.15.1	<p>a) The owner/manager devises and implements a monitoring programme appropriate to the scale and intensity of management.</p> <p>b) The monitoring programme is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the management planning documentation • Consistent and replicable over time to allow comparison of results and assessment of change • Kept in a form that ensures that results are of use over the long term. <p>c) The owner/manager where applicable monitors and records:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of policies and objectives and the achievement of verifiable targets • Implementation of woodland operations • Harvesting yields • Social impacts • Environmental impacts • Changes in environmental condition • Usage of pesticides, biological control agents and fertilisers and any adverse impacts • Environmentally appropriate disposal of waste materials. <p>d) Monitoring of areas and features of high conservation value (sections 4.1-4.4 and 4.6) and of cultural and historical significance (section 4.9) is sufficient to assess changes in their condition.</p>
2.15.2	<p>a) The owner/manager takes monitoring findings into account, particularly during revision of the management planning documentation and if necessary, revises management objectives, verifiable targets and/or management activities.</p> <p>b) Management strategies are adapted when monitoring findings, or other new information, show that they are insufficient to ensure the maintenance and/or enhancement of the condition of areas and features of high conservation value (sections 4.1-4.4 and 4.6) or of cultural and historical significance (section 4.9).</p>
2.15.3	Monitoring findings, or summaries thereof, are made publicly available upon request.

3. Woodland operations

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3. Woodland operations

	REQUIREMENT
3.1	General
3.1.1	All woodland operations conform to forestry good practice guidance.
3.1.2	<p>The planning of woodland operations includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining any relevant permission and giving any formal notification required • Assessing and taking into account on- and off-site impacts • Taking measures to protect water resources, soils and soil carbon and to prevent disturbance of and damage to priority species, habitats, ecosystems and landscape values, including adapting standard prescriptions where required. Any disturbance or damage which does occur is mitigated and/or repaired, and steps are taken to avoid recurrence • Taking measures to maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the natural capital values of identified services and resources such as watersheds and fisheries • Taking measures to protect water supplies <p>Adopting, where practicable, operational practices to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions.</p>
3.1.3	Operational plans are clearly communicated to all workers so that they understand and implement safety precautions, environmental protection plans, biosecurity protocols, emergency procedures, and prescriptions for the management of priority species, features of high conservation value and cultural and heritage assets.
3.1.4	<p>a) Operations cease or relocate immediately where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They damage sites or features of conservation value or of special cultural and historical significance identified in sections 4.1-4.6 and 4.9. • They reveal previously unknown sites or features which may be of conservation value or of special cultural and historical significance. <p>b) Operations in the vicinity recommence only when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sites or features have been investigated and appropriate management and/or remedial action agreed in discussion with the relevant statutory bodies and/or local authority historic environment or archaeology services • Appropriate action has been taken to repair damage and prevent any further damage, including establishing buffer areas.
3.1.5	Operational biosecurity is carried out employing techniques commensurate with the nature and level of risk.

3.2	Harvesting and restocking
3.2.1	<p>a) Timber and non-wood forest products (NWFPs) are harvested and extracted efficiently and with minimum damage to environmental values and high conservation values.</p> <p>b) Timber harvesting particularly seeks to avoid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage to soil and water courses including loss of soil carbon during felling, extraction and burning • Damage to standing trees, especially veteran trees and their root zones, during felling, extraction and burning • Degrade in felled timber.
3.2.2	Harvesting and sales documentation enables all timber and non-wood forest products (NWFPs) that are to be supplied as certified to be traced back to the woodland of origin.
3.2.3	<p>a) Whole tree harvesting is practised only where there is demonstrable management benefit, and where a full consideration of impacts shows that there are not likely to be any significant negative effects.</p> <p>b) Stump removal is practised only for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phytosanitary reasons • Forest infrastructure developments <p>Restoration of open-ground habitats.</p>
3.2.4	Lop and top is burnt only where there is demonstrable management benefit, and where a full consideration of impacts shows that there are not likely to be any significant negative effects.
3.2.5	When restocking, the owner/manager employs techniques for ground preparation that create the minimum amount of soil disturbance but are still adequate to ensure successful establishment.
3.3	Forest infrastructure
3.3.1	<p>All necessary consents are obtained and notifications made for construction, extension and upgrades of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest roads • Mineral extraction sites <p>Management, visitor access and other infrastructure.</p>
3.3.2	Roads and timber extraction tracks, visitor access, and management, shooting and fisheries infrastructure, and associated drainage are designed, created, used and maintained in a manner that minimises their environmental impact.
3.4	Integrated pest management
3.4.1	<p>a) Integrated pest management (IPM) is used, giving priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firstly, to management practices which avoid pest problems • Secondly, to non-chemical pest control methods including biological control agents

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lastly, to chemical pesticides. <p>b) Integrated pest management decisions take account of the importance of safeguarding the value of sites and features with special biodiversity attributes.</p> <p>c) Integrated pest management decisions take account of the importance of safeguarding workers, local people and visitors to the WMU.</p> <p>d) Integrated pest management demonstrates knowledge of the latest published advice and its appropriate application.</p>
3.4.2	<p>a) Where chemical control methods or biological control agents are considered necessary, an environmental and social risk assessment is prepared at WMU level.</p> <p>b) This risk assessment process selects the pest control option that, relative to other options, broadly demonstrates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The least social and environmental impact • Greater effectiveness, and • Equal or greater social and environmental benefit. <p>c) Interested parties are informed about this risk assessment process and provided with opportunities for engagement.</p> <p>d) These risk assessments are reviewed and, if necessary, revised at least every five years.</p>
3.4.3	<p>a) Specific pesticides are only used if their use is permitted by the owner's/manager's certification scheme.</p> <p>b) Pesticides whose use is restricted by the owner's/manager's certification scheme are only used if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No effective, practicable and less-hazardous alternatives are available • Their use is sanctioned using a mechanism endorsed by the owner's/manager's certification scheme, and • Any such mechanism provides for their use to be justified and for research to be carried out into less-hazardous alternatives. <p>c) Pesticides whose use is prohibited by the owner's/manager's certification scheme are only used in emergency situations or by government order, and in compliance with the requirements of the certification scheme.</p>
3.4.4	<p>a) The use of pesticides complies with legal requirements and non-legislative guidance for their use regarding transport, storage, handling, application, and emergency procedures for clean-up following accidental spillages.</p> <p>b) Operational plans incorporate the results of WMU-level environmental and social risk assessments.</p> <p>c) Application methods minimise quantities used, whilst achieving effective results, and provide effective protection of environmental values.</p>

	d) Damage to environmental values from pesticide use is avoided. Any damage which does occur is mitigated and/or repaired, and steps are taken to avoid recurrence.
3.4.5	<p>a) Records of pesticide use are documented and maintained including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade name • Active ingredient • Quantity of active ingredient used • Period of use • Method of application • Number and frequency of applications • Location and area of use, and • Reason for use. <p>b) Records of pesticide use are kept for at least five years.</p> <p>c) Where chemical pesticide usage cannot be avoided, a trend of elimination or minimisation is demonstrated, or its use is justified taking into account considerations of the cyclical nature of woodland management operations.</p>
3.4.6	<p>a) The use of biological control agents is minimised, monitored and controlled.</p> <p>b) The use of biological control agents complies with legal requirements and non-legislative guidance for their use regarding transport, storage, handling, application/release, and emergency procedures.</p> <p>c) Damage to environmental values from biological control agent use is avoided. Any damage which does occur is mitigated and/or repaired, and steps are taken to avoid recurrence.</p> <p>d) Records of biological control agent use are maintained, including type, quantity, period, location and reason for use.</p>
3.5	Fertilisers
3.5.1	<p>a) The use of fertilisers is minimised or avoided.</p> <p>b) Fertilisers are only used where they are necessary to secure establishment or to correct subsequent nutrient deficiencies.</p>
3.5.2	<p>a) The use of fertilisers complies with legal requirements and non-legislative guidance for their use in forestry.</p> <p>b) Choice of product and application methods minimises quantities used, whilst achieving effective results, and provides effective protection to environmental values.</p>

4. Natural, historical and cultural environment

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4. Natural, historical and cultural environment

	REQUIREMENT
4.1	Statutory nature conservation sites
4.1.1	<p>a) Areas and features of high conservation value having particular significance for biodiversity are identified and their condition is established by reference to statutory nature conservation designations at national or regional level and/or through assessment on the ground.</p> <p>b) There is ongoing communication and/or consultation with statutory bodies and, as necessary, with local authorities, county/local biological records centres, wildlife trusts and other relevant organisations.</p> <p>c) Adopting a precautionary approach, the identified areas and features of high conservation value are maintained and where possible enhanced, in accordance with plans agreed with statutory nature conservation agencies.</p>
4.2	Conservation of ancient semi-natural woodlands (ASNW)
4.2.1	<p>a) Ancient semi-natural woodland is identified by reference to published maps and/or by assessment on the ground.</p> <p>b) Conservation values and threats to them are identified and evaluated.</p> <p>c) Actions are prioritised using the precautionary approach, based on the level of threat.</p> <p>d) The conservation values are maintained and where possible enhanced.</p> <p>e) Management regimes and targeted actions are implemented.</p>
4.3	Management of plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)
4.3.1	<p>a) Plantations on ancient woodland sites are identified by reference to published maps and/or by assessment on the ground.</p> <p>b) Remnant and conservation features and threats to them are identified and evaluated.</p> <p>c) Restoration and conservation opportunities are evaluated within the context of the WMU and wider landscape.</p> <p>d) Actions are prioritised using the precautionary approach, based on the value of the remnants and the level of threat.</p>

	<p>e) Remnants and conservation features are maintained and enhanced.</p> <p>f) Management demonstrates, over time and spatially, a continued reduction in the level of threat to remnant and conservation features and an increasing site-native canopy and characteristics of a type appropriate to the site.</p> <p>g) Remnant and conservation features are marked on maps and records are kept of their condition.</p>
4.4	Other priority habitats
4.4.1	<p>a) The principal priority habitats are identified and their condition is established.</p> <p>b) Adopting a precautionary approach, the identified priority habitats are maintained and where possible enhanced.</p>
4.5	Protection of conservation values in other woodlands and semi-natural habitats
4.5.1	<p>a) Areas, species and features of conservation value in other woodlands are identified.</p> <p>b) The identified areas, species and features of conservation value are maintained and where possible enhanced.</p> <p>c) Adverse ecological impacts are identified and inform management.</p>
4.5.2	<p>a) Valuable small-scale semi-natural habitats that have been colonised, planted, or incorporated into the WMU, but which have retained their ecological characteristics (or have a high potential to be restored), are identified and enhanced, restored or treated in a manner that does not lead to further degradation of their potential for restoration.</p> <p>b) Adverse ecological impacts are identified and inform management.</p>
4.5.3	Areas of semi-natural habitat constitute a minimum of 10% of the WMU. Where existing habitats or restored remnant features comprise less than 10% of the WMU, the owner/manager takes action to convert other areas to more natural conditions .
4.6	Watershed management and erosion control
4.6.1	<p>a) Areas and features of critical importance for watershed management or erosion control are identified and their condition is established in consultation with relevant statutory bodies.</p> <p>b) Where critically important areas or features are identified, their management is agreed with the relevant statutory bodies.</p>
4.7	Maintenance of biodiversity and ecological functions
4.7.1	Appropriate measures are taken to protect identified priority species and their habitats.

	In planning and implementing measures within the WMU, the owner/manager takes into account the geographic range and ecological requirements of priority species beyond the boundary of the WMU.
4.7.2	Natural reserves constitute a minimum of 1% of the WMU. These reserves are located where they will deliver biodiversity benefits, and any adverse ecological impacts are managed on a minimum-intervention basis.
4.7.3	Long-term retentions and/or areas managed under LISS constitute a minimum of 1% of the WMU. Where this is impracticable, an additional minimum 1% of natural reserve is identified.
4.7.4	The owner/manager plans and takes action to maintain continuity of veteran tree habitat by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping and protecting existing veteran trees, and • Managing or establishing suitable trees to eventually take the place of existing veterans.
4.7.5	a) The owner/manager plans and takes action to accumulate a diversity of both standing and fallen deadwood over time in all wooded parts of the WMU, including felled areas. b) The owner/manager identifies areas where deadwood is likely to be of greatest nature conservation benefit and plans and takes action to accumulate large dimension standing and fallen deadwood, and deadwood in living trees in those areas.
4.8	Maintenance of local native seed sources
4.8.1	a) In woodlands identified in sections 4.1-4.4, where appropriate and possible, owners/managers use natural regeneration or planting stock from parental material growing in the local native seed zone (native species). b) In ancient and other semi-natural woodland : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preference is given to natural regeneration. Where natural regeneration is insufficient, planting stock from 'source-identified' stands in the local native seed zone is used if it is available • If timber quality is an objective, the use of planting stock deriving from selected stands within the local native seed zone is considered appropriate.
4.9	Protection of cultural and historic environment sites
4.9.1	Through engagement with the relevant statutory historic environment agencies, local authorities , local people and other interested parties , and using other relevant sources of information, the owner/manager: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies significant heritage features and other aspects of special cultural and historical significance • Assesses their condition, identifies potential threats, and • Adopting a precautionary approach, devises and implements measures to maintain and/or enhance them Maintains ongoing communication and/or consultation with statutory historic environment agencies, local authority archaeology services, and other relevant organisations.

4.10	Game-rearing, shooting and fisheries management
4.10.1	<p>a) Game-rearing and release-are carried out sustainably and in accordance with the spirit of codes of practice produced by relevant organisations.</p> <p>b) New game-release pens are located outside areas of high conservation value.</p> <p>c) Existing game-release pens in areas of high conservation value are not used after the end of 2025.</p>
4.10.2	Shooting is carried out sustainably and in accordance with the spirit of codes of practice produced by relevant organisations.
4.10.3	<p>a) Non-toxic ammunition is used in all shooting activities except as defined in (b) below.</p> <p>b) Lead-based 0.22 calibre sub-sonic ammunition and air rifle pellets may be used for grey squirrel control until the end of 2025.</p>
4.10.4	Fishing and associated activities are carried out sustainably and in accordance with the spirit of codes of practice produced by relevant organisations.

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5. People, communities and workers

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5. People, communities and workers

	REQUIREMENT
5.1	Public access rights, permissive uses, traditional rights, and the health and wellbeing of local people, visitors and communities
5.1.1	There is compliance with public access legislation.
5.1.2	Permissive uses authorised by the owner/manager and traditional rights are identified and sustained except when such uses can be shown to threaten the integrity of the woodland or the achievement of the objectives of management.
5.1.3	a) There is provision for some public access subject only to limited exemptions. b) Where there is a special demand for further public access, specific types of access provision or community use, the owner/manager makes reasonable efforts to meet this demand.
5.1.4	a) Private water supplies are identified and recorded through engagement with local people . b) Management to protect the identified private water supplies is agreed in consultation with downstream users.
5.2	Minimising adverse impacts
5.2.1	The owner/manager mitigates the risks to public health and safety and other negative impacts of woodland operations on local people and visitors.
5.2.2	The owner/manager responds constructively to complaints, seeks to resolve grievances through engagement with complainants in the first instance, and follows established legal process should this become necessary.
5.3	Local economy
5.3.1	a) Consistent with their other objectives, the owner/manager makes the best use of the woodland's potential products and services. b) Consistent with their other objectives, the owner/manager is receptive to requests from local people or communities to make use of woodland products and services. c) The owner/manager provides local people with equitable opportunities for employment and to supply goods and services.

5.4	Health and safety
5.4.1	<p>a) There is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with health and safety legislation • Conformance with associated codes of practice • Conformance with FISA guidance. <p>b) There are contingency plans for any accidents.</p> <p>c) There is appropriate competency.</p>
5.5	Training and continuing development
5.5.1	All workers including volunteers have appropriate qualifications, training and/or experience to carry out their roles in conformance to the requirements of this standard, unless working under proper supervision if they are currently undergoing training.
5.5.2	Large enterprises promote training and encourage and support new recruits to the industry.
5.6	Workers' rights
5.6.1	<p>a) There is compliance with equality legislation.</p> <p>b) Owners/managers promote equality, so that all workers are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities.</p> <p>c) There is no use of child labour except as permitted under employment legislation.</p> <p>d) There is compliance with modern slavery legislation.</p> <p>e) Workers are not deterred from joining a trade union or employee association.</p> <p>f) Direct employees are permitted to negotiate terms and conditions, including grievance procedures, collectively should they so wish.</p> <p>g) Workers have recourse to mechanisms for resolving grievances which meet the requirements of statutory codes of practice.</p> <p>h) Wages paid to workers meet or exceed the statutory national living wage.</p>
5.7	Insurance
5.7.1	The owner/manager and workers are covered by adequate public liability and employer's liability insurance.
5.7.2	For authorised events and licensed activities held in the WMU by third parties, the owner/manager requires that adequate insurance is held by the responsible party.

Glossary of terms

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Glossary of terms

Access (for public)	Access to woodland and its associated land open to the public for recreational or educational use (sometimes subject to charges).
Accreditation service	An authoritative body which evaluates and recognises the competence of bodies to certify that woodland management conforms to the specific requirements of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard. Accreditation Services International (ASI) and the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) both provide an accreditation service in the UK. Those bodies which are accredited are referred to as certification bodies.
Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)	See <i>Woodland</i> .
Ancient woodland	See <i>Woodland</i> .
Ancient woodland site	See <i>Woodland</i> .
Appropriate Assessment	Appropriate Assessment (AA) is a stage in the process associated with the statutory requirement to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) under the applicable Habitats Regulations: Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) in England & Wales, The Habitats Regulations 1994 (as amended) in Scotland, The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995.
Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI)	A designated site providing statutory protection for the best examples of the flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features of Northern Ireland. ASSIs also underpin other national and international nature conservation designations.
ASNW	Ancient semi-natural woodland. See <i>Woodland</i> .
Biodiversity	The variety of ecosystems and living organisms (species), including genetic variation within species.
Biological control agent	A living organism used to eliminate or regulate the population of another living organism. Their use can play an important role in an integrated pest management strategy.
Brash mat	Cut branches spread along the route where forest machinery will be driving to reduce soil damage.
Broadleaved (trees or woodlands)	Broadleaved trees are characterised by their broad leaves and most are deciduous. They produce 'hardwood' timber.

	<i>Also see Conifer (trees).</i>
Buffer (buffering)	<p>An area of land where use and/or management is restricted to conserve or enhance the value of adjacent environmental, social or cultural values or heritage assets.</p> <p>Examples of buffering include protecting a water course from polluted run-off, a semi-natural woodland or other valuable habitat from invasion by seed from a nearby non-native source, or an historic feature from physical damage by growing trees and roots.</p>
Carbon balance	<p>The carbon balance is an expression of whether over time the store of carbon in an ecosystem is increasing, decreasing or in equilibrium.</p> <p>A positive carbon balance indicates that carbon is being accrued whilst a negative carbon balance indicates that carbon is being lost.</p>
Certification body	<p>A body which is accredited by an accreditation service to certify (by giving written assurance) that woodland management conforms to the specific requirements of the UK Woodland Assurance Standard. Also sometimes referred to as a conformity assessment body.</p> <p><i>Also see Accreditation service.</i></p>
Certification scheme	<p>A scheme that establishes a set of standards and processes that govern a system to verify that its standards (e.g. for sustainable forest management and chain-of-custody) are met and thereby provide assurance to customers and stakeholders.</p> <p><i>Also see Chain-of-custody certification.</i></p>
Chain-of-custody certification	<p>Chain-of-custody certification is a traceability system that ensures that certified products come from a well-managed source. The chain starts at the forest and is maintained through every link of the chain through to the end user.</p>
Circular economy	<p>The circular economy is a model of production and consumption which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended. In practice, it implies reducing waste to a minimum. When a product reaches the end of its life, its materials are kept within the economy wherever possible. These can be productively used again and again, thereby creating further value.</p>
Clearfelling	<p>Cutting down of an area of woodland (if it is within a larger area of woodland, it is typically a felling greater than 0.25 ha). A scatter or small clumps of trees may be left standing within the felled area.</p>

Compliance	In the context of this certification standard, the term 'compliance' refers to meeting legal requirements.
Conformance	In the context of this certification standard, the term 'conformance' refers to meeting the requirements of the certification standard.
Conifer (trees or woodlands)	Conifer trees are characterised by their needle or scale-like leaves and most are evergreen. They produce 'softwood' timber. <i>Also see Broadleaved (trees).</i>
Coppice	Management based on regeneration by regrowth from cut stumps (coppice stools). The same stool is used through several cycles of cutting and re-growth. The term 'coppice with standards' describes coppice with a scatter of trees of seedling or coppice origin, grown on a long rotation to produce larger-sized timber and to regenerate new seedlings to replace worn out stools. <i>Also see Short rotation coppice.</i>
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations.
Coupe	An area of woodland that has been or is planned for clearfelling.
Cultural (feature)	Historic environment sites, historic buildings and heritage assets, and landscapes including ancient woodlands and veteran trees.
Deadwood	All types of wood that are dead including whole or wind-snapped standing trees, fallen branch wood and stumps, decaying wood habitats on living trees such as rot holes, dead limbs, decay columns in trunks and limbs, and wood below the ground as roots or stumps.
Diffuse pollution	Diffuse pollution comes from non-point sources, widespread activities in the forest environment. Of particular relevance to woodland operations are oil spills and leaks, cutting-chain lubricants, siltation of water-courses, pesticide or fertiliser run-off and smoke.
Drainage	An operation to remove excess water from an area in a controlled way. In woodlands, drains are usually open, unlined channels.
Ecological integrity	The health and vitality of the woodland's physical and biological components.
Ecosystem	A community of plants and animals (including humans) interacting with each other and the forces of nature.
Ecosystem service	The benefits people obtain from ecosystems. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisioning services such as food, forest products and water

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulating services such as regulation of floods, drought, land degradation, air quality, climate and disease • Supporting services such as soil formation and nutrient cycling, and • Cultural services and cultural values such as recreational, spiritual, religious and other non-material benefits.
Endemic species	A species (or distinct sub-species) naturally occurring and confined to a specific geographical area or country. For the purposes of this standard this is the British Isles (Great Britain and the island of Ireland).
Environmental and social risk assessment	A process to predict, assess and review the likely or actual environmental and social effects of a well-defined action, to evaluate alternatives, and to design appropriate mitigation, management and monitoring measures.
Environmental appraisal	Generic term for the process of assessing the impact of plans or operations on the environment.
Environmental impact assessment	Environmental impact assessment (EIA) is the process and documentation associated with the statutory requirement under Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.
Environmental values	<p>The following set of elements of the biophysical and human environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecosystem functions (including carbon sequestration and storage) • Biological diversity • Water resources • Soils • Atmosphere • Landscape values (including cultural and spiritual values). <p>The actual worth attributed to these elements depends on human and societal perceptions.</p>
Felling permission	A permission or licence issued by the relevant forestry authority to permit trees to be felled. With certain exceptions it is illegal to fell trees without prior approval.
FISA	Forest Industry Safety Accord.
Forest	Synonymous with woodland.
	<i>See Woodland.</i>
Forest resilience	The ability of a forest system to recover from short-term disturbances or to adapt to long-term changes, such as climate change, pests or diseases, while retaining or recovering the same basic structure and ways of functioning. Resilience should be considered in both ecological and economic terms.

Forestry	The science and art of managing woodlands.
Forestry authority(ies)	The competent body with responsibility for the regulation of forestry in each country of the United Kingdom: Forestry Commission (in England), Department of Agriculture and Rural Development/Northern Ireland Forest Service, Scottish Forestry and Welsh Government/Natural Resources Wales or their successor bodies.
Forestry leaseholder	The holder of a forest lease that grants control over the management of forestry operations.
Game	Animals, either wild or reared, managed for hunting or shot for food.
General licence	General licences are permissive licences, meaning that users do not need to apply for them, but they must comply with their terms and conditions. They allow users to kill or take certain species for defined purposes such as preventing serious damage to certain commodities e.g. livestock and crops, for the purposes of conserving wild birds, plants and animals, or for public health and safety reasons.
Genotype	The genetic constitution of an organism, as contrasted with its expressed characteristics which are known as the phenotype.
Genetically modified organism (GMO)	Organisms in which the genetic material has been altered in a way that does not occur naturally by mating and/or natural recombination. This includes gene editing.
Glade	Small area of open ground which forms an integral part of the woodland.
Greenhouse gas	Gases that trap heat in the earth's atmosphere and cause warming that disrupts the world's climate. These include carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxides.
Group selection	A method of managing irregular stands in which regeneration is achieved by felling trees in small groups.
Heritage asset	A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape having a heritage interest. Heritage assets can be 'designated heritage assets' identified by a statutory historic environment body or 'non-designated heritage assets' such as those identified by the local planning authority.
High conservation value	Ecologically important woodland and non-woodland areas and features of ecological and biodiversity interest or critical ecosystem services identified in sections 4.1-4.4 and 4.6.
Historic environment	All tangible evidence of past interactions between humans and their environment, incorporating heritage assets, archaeological sites, historic landscapes and natural heritage.
Interested parties	People directly affected by or who have a significant interest in the woodland being managed.

International agreement	An agreement under international law entered into by sovereign states and international organisations which may also be known as a treaty, protocol, covenant, convention, exchange of letters etc. It provides a means for willing parties to assume obligations among themselves, and a party that fails to live up to their obligations can be held liable under international law. The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office's 'UK Treaties Online' (UKTO) database on Gov.uk lists those involving the UK.
Invasive non-native (species)	Introduced non-native species which spread readily and dominate native species.
IUCN Red List	The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is widely recognised as the most comprehensive, objective global approach for evaluating the conservation status of plant and animal species. It provides a global context for the establishment of conservation priorities at the local level.
Landscape level	The level of the landscape unit. <i>Also see Landscape unit.</i>
Landscape unit	An area of broadly homogeneous landscape character.
Large enterprise	An organisation with at least 250 employees.
LISS	'Lower-impact silvicultural systems' including group selection, shelterwood or under-planting, small coupe felling, coppice or coppice with standards, minimum intervention and single tree selection systems which are suitable for windfirm conifer woodlands and most broadleaved woodlands. <i>Also see Broadleaved, Conifer, Coppice, Group selection, Minimum intervention, Shelterwood, Single tree selection, Small coupe felling, and Under-planting.</i>
Local authority	<i>See Statutory body.</i>
Local people	Anyone living or working in the vicinity who has an interest in the woodland. It is intentional that this term is not more closely defined, and the wider public is not excluded. It is particularly difficult to be precise about how local people are to be contacted or consulted. In some situations, it would be appropriate for this simply to mean those living beside the woodland (e.g. concerning noise disturbance). In other cases (such as using local services), a much wider geographical area will be appropriate. If there is difficulty in identifying local contacts, then the elected representatives should be the first choice.
Lop and top	Woody debris from cutting operations, sometimes converted into chippings.
Low-intensity managed woodland	Woodland management units (WMUs) are classed as being managed in a low-intensity manner when the rate of timber harvesting is less than 20% of the mean annual increment (MAI) within the total production woodland area of the WMU, AND either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The annual harvest from the total production woodland area is less than 5,000 cubic metres, OR

- The average annual timber harvest from the total production woodland is less than 5,000 m³/year during the period of validity of the certificate as verified by harvest reports and surveillance audits.

Note: where WMU-specific estimates of mean annual increment are unavailable or impracticable, regional estimates of growth rates for specific woodland types may be used.

Lower-impact silvicultural systems	See <i>LISS</i> .
Management planning documentation	See <i>Woodland management plan</i> .
Mineral extraction site	Sites used for extraction of surface or subsurface mineral products or other natural resources, including but not limited to quarries, borrow pits, sand and gravel operations, oil and gas extraction and mining operations.
Minimum intervention	Management with no systematic felling or planting of trees. Operations normally accepted are fencing, control of non-native plant species and vertebrate pests, maintenance of paths and rides and safety work.
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	A designated site containing examples of some of the most important natural and semi-natural terrestrial and coastal ecosystems, managed to conserve their habitats or to provide special opportunities for scientific study of the habitats, communities and species represented within them. In addition, they may be managed to provide public recreation that is compatible with their natural heritage interests.
Native (species)	A species that has arrived and inhabited an area naturally, without deliberate assistance by man, or would occur had it not been removed through past management. For trees and shrubs in the UK this is usually taken to mean those species present after post-glacial recolonisation and before historical times. Some species are only native in particular regions. Differences in characteristics and adaptation to conditions can occur more locally hence the term 'locally native'.
Natural conditions	Native species, associations of native species and other environmental values that are typical of the locality.
Natural reserve	Natural reserves are predominantly wooded, usually mature and intended to reach biological maturity. They are permanently identified and in locations which are of particularly high wildlife interest or potential. They are managed by minimum intervention unless alternative interventions have higher conservation or biodiversity value. <i>Also see Minimum intervention.</i>
Non-native (species)	Species which are not classified as native species.

	<i>Also see Native (species) and Invasive non-native (species).</i>
Non-toxic ammunition	Any firearm ammunition, bullet or shot made of metals other than lead.
Non-wood forest product (NWFP)	Non-wood forest products include plants or parts of plants, bark, sap, moss, fungi, fruits, seeds and nuts, honey, venison and other animal products. Also known as non-timber forest products (NTFP).
Open space	In a woodland this includes streams, ponds and well laid-out roads and rides.
Origin (genetic)	The original natural genetic source of the trees.
	<i>Also see Provenance.</i>
Owner/manager	The person or entity holding or applying for certification and therefore responsible for demonstrating conformance to this standard. This may be a forestry leaseholder.
	<i>Also see Forestry leaseholder.</i>
Parkland	<i>See Wood pasture.</i>
PAWS	Plantation on ancient woodland site.
	<i>See Woodland.</i>
Peatland	Peatlands are areas of peaty soil formed from organic matter from wetland plants which accumulates faster than the annual decomposition. Accumulation is favoured by acidity and water saturation. They are important carbon sinks.
Permissive (access/use)	Use is by permission whether written or implied, rather than by right.
Pest	An organism harmful to plants or to wood or other plant products, an undesired plant and any harmful creature.
Pesticide	Any substance, preparation or organism prepared or used, among other uses, to protect plants or wood or other plant products from harmful organisms, to regulate the growth of plants, to give protection against harmful creatures or to render such creatures harmless.
Plantation	<i>See Woodland.</i>
Plantation on ancient woodland site (PAWS)	<i>See Woodland.</i>
Precautionary approach	Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental damage. (Based on Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.)

Priority habitat Habitats identified by statutory nature conservation and countryside agencies as required under Section 41 (England) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 2(4) of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, and Section 3(1) of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Lists of habitats identified by statutory agencies are published differently in each country; see the appendix of references.

Also see Statutory body.

Priority habitats and species *See Priority habitats and Priority species*

Priority species Protected, rare and endangered species which are:

- Identified by statutory nature conservation and countryside agencies as required under Section 41 (England) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Section 2(4) of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004, and Section 3(1) of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Lists of species identified by statutory agencies are published differently in each country; see the appendix of references.
- Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Protected under the Habitats Regulations (European Protected Species), and/or
- Categorised as Near Threatened, Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List
- Categorised as red or amber in the UK Red Lists
- Endemic species.

For UKWAS, IUCN Red List species will qualify as priority species only if they are within or geographically close to their natural range as described by IUCN in global or regional lists.

Also see Statutory body, Endemic species, UK Red Lists, and IUCN Red List.

Provenance Location of trees from which seed or cuttings are collected. Designation of Regions of Provenance under the Forest Reproductive Materials regulations is used to help nurseries and growers select suitable material. The term is often confused with 'origin' which is the original natural genetic source.

Publicly available Accessible to local people or other interested parties. For example, placing material on a website or on signage, providing electronic or hard copies of documents, or making documents available for inspection at a local office. In most cases, a charge may not be made for making material publicly available. However, where a summary of material has been made publicly available free of charge, a charge to cover costs of reproduction and handling may be made if any additional material is requested.

Public Rights of Way	<p>In England and Wales, Public Rights of Way are statutory rights of way and are recorded on Definitive Maps held by local authorities showing whether the right of way is by foot, horse or vehicle.</p> <p>In Northern Ireland, records of Public Rights of Way are held by local authorities. There are three types: footpaths (walkers only), bridleways (walkers and horse riders), carriageways (walkers, cyclists, horse riders, horse-drawn and motor vehicles).</p> <p>In Scotland, ScotWays maintains a National Catalogue of Rights of Way and local authorities hold their own records. The primary source of law relating to rights of way is the common law but they are also referred to in statute. It is not necessary for a route to be recorded for it to be a right of way; it simply needs to meet all the necessary criteria.</p>
Ramsar site	Wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.
Recreation	<p>Activity or experience of the visitor's own choice within a woodland setting. (Facilities might sometimes be provided and charges levied for their use.)</p> <p><i>Also see Access.</i></p>
Regeneration	Renewal of woodland through sowing, planting, or natural regeneration.
Relict	A remnant of a formerly widespread species or habitat that persists in an isolated area from a previous land-use or vegetation cover.
Remnant	<p>The baseline of surviving ancient woodland features found in PAWS, for which there is physical or documentary evidence.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland specialist flora. These are species with a strong affinity for ancient woodland but can vary in relation to geographic region • Trees originating from the pre-plantation stand. They can be maidens, standards, coppice stools or pollards and might include ancient or veteran trees • Natural regeneration of site-appropriate native trees • Deadwood originating from the pre-plantation stand, coarse woody debris and associated decomposer communities • Undisturbed woodland soil profile. <p>These features provide the continuity of habitat with the pre-plantation phase.</p>
Restocking	Replacing felled trees by sowing seed, planting or natural regeneration.

Retention	Individual trees, stable stands or clumps of trees retained, usually for environmental benefit, significantly beyond the age or size for felling generally adopted by the owner.
Ride	Permanent unsurfaced access route through woodland.
Root zone	Root zones extend as a minimum to the area below the drip line or extent of the tree's crown.
Semi-natural habitat	<p>Semi-natural habitats have ecological assemblages that are comprised mainly of locally native species and have retained some structural characteristics of the natural ecosystem. They might have evolved through traditional agricultural, pastoral or other human activities, and might depend on the continuation of these practices to retain their characteristic composition, structure and function. These habitats and ecosystems often have high value in terms of biodiversity and the services they provide.</p> <p>Semi-natural habitats can include semi-natural woodland.</p> <p><i>Also see Native (species), and Woodland.</i></p>
Semi-natural woodland	<i>See Woodland.</i>
Shelterwood	<p>The shelterwood system involves the felling of a proportion of the mature trees within an area whilst leaving some trees as a seed source and shelter for natural regeneration. The seed trees are subsequently removed. Note that the term 'seed tree system' is often used to describe 'shelterwoods' with densities of <50 retained mature trees per hectare.</p> <p>The spatial arrangement of the retained trees can be uniform, in groups, or in strips, so giving rise to the name of different shelterwood systems. The removal of the seed trees can involve several felling operations.</p>
Short rotation coppice	<p>Short rotation coppice (usually willow or poplar) typically grown and harvested every 2 to 6 years.</p> <p><i>Also see Coppice.</i></p>
Significantly high carbon stock	In the context of this certification standard, this term refers to those woodlands which store a particularly high volume of carbon, whether in veteran or other living trees, deadwood or soils, and where conversion of the woodland to non-forested land would result in significant carbon loss over the long term.
Silvicultural (silviculture)	The techniques of tending and regenerating woodlands and harvesting their physical products.
Single tree selection	A method of managing irregular stands in which individual trees of any size are removed more or less uniformly throughout the stand.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	A designated site providing statutory protection for the best examples of the flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features of England, Scotland and Wales. SSSIs also underpin other national and international nature conservation designations.
Small coupe felling	A small-scale clearfelling system. The system is imprecisely defined but coupes are typically between 0.5 ha and 2.0 ha in extent, with the larger coupes elongated in shape so the edge effect is still high.
Snag	A standing dead tree that has lost its top.
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	Area designated under the Habitats Regulations.
Special Protection Area (SPA)	Area designated under the Habitats Regulations.
Spirit (conformance to)	Conformance to the spirit means that the owner/manager is aiming to achieve the principles set out in the certification standard.
Statutory body(ies)	<p>There are four categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statutory nature conservation and countryside agencies: Natural England, NatureScot, Natural Resources Wales and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency or their successor bodies • The statutory environment protection agencies: Environment Agency (in England), Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Natural Resources Wales and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency or their successor bodies • The statutory historic environment agencies: Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland, Cadw (in Wales) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency or their successor bodies • Local authorities responsible for a wide range of functions including highways, planning and archaeology services.
Thinning	Tree removal, which results in a temporary reduction in basal area, made after canopy closure to promote growth and greater value in the remaining trees.
Timely manner	As promptly as circumstances reasonably allow; not intentionally postponed by the owner/manager.
Traditional rights	Rights which result from a long series of habitual or customary actions, which have, by uninterrupted acquiescence, acquired the force of a law within a geographical or sociological unit.
Under-planting	<p>The planting of young trees under the canopy of an existing stand – often combined with a shelterwood or group selection system.</p> <p><i>Also see Group selection.</i></p>
UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	The GDPR controls how personal information is used by organisations, businesses or the government.

UK Red Lists	<p>These are lists of animals or plants naturally occurring within the UK which have been assessed using criteria based on the IUCN approach. Species are assigned a Red, Amber or Green status, with red being species of highest conservation concern and green of least concern. The lists are maintained by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).</p> <p>Species which are Red or Amber-listed usually receive legal protection as they are protected by statute or listed in the Annexes of EU conservation Directives and/or appear on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species list. A list of conservation designations for UK taxa is maintained by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).</p>
United Kingdom (UK)	References to the 'United Kingdom' or 'UK' refer to the 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland' which comprises England, Scotland and Wales (collectively referred to as 'Great Britain') and Northern Ireland.
Value(s)	The weights given to economic, biodiversity, recreational, environmental, social and cultural impacts when considering management options.
Veteran tree	A tree that is of interest biologically, culturally or aesthetically because of its age, size or condition, including the presence of deadwood micro-habitats.
Water course	Any directly connected natural or man-made channel through which water flows continuously or intermittently. References to forestry practice on adjacent land should be taken as applying also to adjacent water bodies e.g. ponds and lakes.
Whole tree harvesting	The removal from the harvesting site of every part of the tree above ground.
Windthrow	Uprooting of trees by the wind.
Windthrow risk	A technical assessment of risk based on local climate, topography, site conditions and tree height.
WMU	See <i>Woodland management unit</i> .
Wood pasture	Areas of historical, cultural and ecological interest including parkland, where grazing is managed in combination with a proportion of open-grown tree canopy cover.
Woodland	<p>Predominantly tree-covered land whether in large tracts (generally called forests) or smaller units (known by a variety of terms such as woodlands, woods, copses and shelterbelts).</p> <p>Those woodlands which are comprised mainly of locally native trees and shrubs, and have some structural characteristics of natural woodland are referred to as semi-natural woodland.</p>

Those woodlands which are derived principally from the human activity of planting, sowing or intensive silvicultural treatment but lack most of the principal characteristics and key elements of semi-natural woodland are generally referred to as **plantations** or **woodlands of planted origin**. They often include a proportion of naturally regenerated trees and are often managed to become more like natural woodlands over time.

Woodland is referred to as **ancient woodland** when it has been in continuous existence since before AD 1600 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland or since before AD 1750 in Scotland.

The term **ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)** is used to describe those semi-natural stands on ancient woodland sites. The precise definition varies according to the local circumstances in each country within the United Kingdom and guidance should be sought from the relevant forestry authority.

The term **ancient woodland site** refers to the site of an ancient woodland irrespective of its current tree cover. Where the native tree cover has been felled and replaced by planting of tree species not native to the site it is referred to as a **plantation on ancient woodland site (PAWS)**.

Woodland management plan

The collection of documents, reports, records and maps that describe, justify and regulate the activities carried out by any manager, staff or organisation in a management unit, including statements of objectives and policies.

Woodland management unit (WMU)

The woodland management unit (WMU) is the area to which the management planning documentation relates. A WMU is a clearly defined woodland area, or areas, with mapped boundaries, managed to a set of explicit long-term objectives.

Worker

All employed persons including public employees as well as self-employed persons and volunteers. This includes owners/managers, part-time and seasonal employees, of all ranks and categories, including labourers, administrators, supervisors, executives, contractor's employees, self-employed contractors and sub-contractors, and other licensed operators.

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References

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References *[N.B. Text in this section and the Annex of References is to be reviewed and updated at a later stage in the revision]*

Main legislation, regulations, guidelines and codes of practice referred to in the UKWAS

The main legislation, guidelines and codes of practice relevant to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard are shown here. These are correct and as complete as possible as at August 2017 but should not be treated as an exhaustive list. It is important at all times to refer to the most recent and/or new documents and relevant websites should be checked frequently.

The key main documents are listed below and the other main documents are available in a separate UKWAS Appendix document under the five section headings of the certification standard.

Key Legislation

1967: Forestry Act 1967 (as amended)

1967: Plant Health Act 1967

1982: Forestry Commission Bye-laws

1953: Forestry Act (Northern Ireland) 1953

2010: Forestry Act (Northern Ireland) 2010

Key Publications

2017: The UK Forestry Standard (fourth edition) which incorporates previously separate guidelines on seven themes:

Forests and Biodiversity

Forests and Climate Change

Forests and Historic Environment

Forests and Landscape

Forests and People

Forests and Soil

Forests and Water

Other main reference documents

Other main reference documents are provided in a separate UKWAS Appendix document available on ukwas.org.uk.

For easy reference, the documents are assigned to the appropriate section headings of the certification standard.

Further information sources

Information on the UK Forestry Standard and to download a copy - forestry.gov.uk/ukfs

Information on forestry grant schemes and regulations may be obtained from the relevant [forestry authorities](#).

Guidance on environmental regulations is provided on the following websites:

England – gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency

Scotland & Northern Ireland - netregs.gov.uk

Wales – naturalresources.wales

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