



Natural England Discretionary Advice Service Advice for Developers

What is the Discretionary Advice Service?

The Discretionary Advisory Service (DAS) is a service offered by Natural England providing pre-application and post-consent advice in relation to development on land and at sea. It is supported by the introduction of charges. With this service we aim to offer improved customer service, support sustainable development and achieve better environmental outcomes through the planning and licensing systems.

DAS will give you:

- Initial Advice on your case at no charge
- the opportunity to access continued, informal/discretionary advice around statutory conservation issues, on a charged basis
- a Case Adviser contact for all your pre-application advice
- agreed timescales for responding to your needs.

What services will charges apply to?

We offer this service on development proposals at the pre-application stage and on post-consent projects. Additionally we also offer a new chargeable screening service for European Protected Species mitigation licence applications, enabling the applicant to find out at an earlier stage whether their plans are likely to meet licensing requirements.

What's in it for me?

By offering quality, tailored advice at an early stage of development proposals, we aim to make the development process more straightforward and reduce the potential risk, delay and added cost in achieving a successful application. The chargeable service will enable more access to Natural England's expertise, a named Case Adviser, and certainty over what areas of advice you will receive and by when.





Why is Natural England doing this?

Natural England has recognised that its customers are looking to Natural England to provide a level of service that is not sustainable with current resources. To address this, we are introducing new and improved services to provide non-statutory advice related to planning and licensing proposals, supported by the introduction of charges. Charges will enable us to invest in additional staff capacity to increase our provision of both new and existing services.

How much will it cost?

Charges will only be introduced for discretionary services, i.e. non-statutory ones which the customer can choose whether or not to use. All our statutory services, such as responding to planning and licensing consultations, and processing wildlife licensing applications, will remain free of charge.

Charging rates will be set at a level to fully recover our costs and any surplus income will be reinvested in expanding the service. For our detailed charging tariff please see our website.

How do I access this service?

It's easy to access DAS. We ask you to help us scope the advice you need by completing a request form. This can be found on the DAS pages of our website and should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Before you do, you may want to discuss your application with a Natural England Adviser: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk. There is also guidance on the website.

Initially the application will be screened to ensure that it falls within the scope of the Discretionary Advice Service. We will reply within 15 working days confirming whether the application is eligible for DAS. If it is, a Natural England Adviser will contact you to agree and confirm the scope, timescales and delivery method of the Initial Advice.

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