



# Look after your uplands with Environmental Stewardship

Uplands Entry Level Stewardship

February 2010

[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)





If you manage land in an upland area, please read this booklet.

It gives you information about how Uplands Entry Level Stewardship (Uplands ELS) will work and will help you decide whether it's for you.

Uplands ELS is a new strand of the existing Entry Level Stewardship (ELS).

ELS is part of Environmental Stewardship (ES), an agri-environment scheme that provides funding to farmers, land managers and tenants in England.

For more information about ES please refer to the introductory booklet *Look After Your Land with Environmental Stewardship* on the Natural England website at [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

# Introduction

A new strand of Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) – Uplands ELS – is being introduced in 2010.

Uplands ELS will reward hill farmers and land managers in Severely Disadvantaged Areas (SDAs) for the delivery of environmental and landscape benefits, through a series of specially designed upland options. Uplands ELS recognises the crucial role that hill farmers play as custodians of the upland landscape, and will reward food production systems that underpin these landscapes.

Uplands ELS has been designed to complement your existing farming operation and allow you to create your own practical environmental management programme for your farm.

An important feature of Uplands ELS is that it recognises the expansive nature of many upland holdings, and the particular challenges of managing these large areas. That is reflected in the higher value payments available (see page 7).

## Uplands ELS:

- Will be launched early in 2010, at which time you will be able to request an application pack. Applications can also be made on-line. The first agreements will operate from 1 July 2010.
- Rewards farmers and land managers for continuing with and adopting environmentally beneficial farming practices.
- Is voluntary and available to all farmers and land managers who occupy land in a SDA including milk producers.
- Enables upland farmers to receive a higher payment than ELS, in return for simple but effective environmental management.

Uplands ELS is a successor to the Hill Farm Allowance (HFA), which will cease in 2010.

Uplands ELS has been designed with advice from the National Farmers Union, the Country Land and Business Association, and many other stakeholders.



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# The aims of Uplands ELS

Uplands ELS rewards farming practices that help meet the objectives of Environmental Stewardship (ES), including:

- Looking after wildlife species and their many habitats.
- Ensuring land is well managed and retains its traditional character.
- Protecting historic features.
- Protecting natural resources such as soil and water.
- Making sure traditional livestock breeds are conserved.

Uplands ELS recognises that the upland areas of England are very special places, which provide a wealth of public benefits.

It provides upland communities with government support to continue and expand the beneficial land management practices which help to preserve the special character of upland areas.

Underlying these benefits, ES will help the natural environment adapt to climate change, for example, by providing and protecting carbon storage in blanket bogs and improving water retention more generally.



# Who can apply for Uplands ELS?

You can apply for Uplands ELS if you occupy land designated as Severely Disadvantaged – providing you have no existing Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) scheme or Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) agreement in place on that land, see page 4.

You can apply for Uplands ELS on land where there is an ELS or Organic ELS (OELS) agreement with or without Higher Level Stewardship (HLS). These Environmental Stewardship agreements will either be restarted or amended depending on the type of agreement.

If such agreements do apply you may be able to claim the Uplands Transitional Payment (UTP) instead until those agreements expire.

## Uplands Transitional Payment

The UTP will be open to all farmers who can meet certain key conditions.

To be eligible you must:

- farm at least 10 ha of SDA forage;
- have an existing CSS/ESA agreement covering all or part of the Severely Disadvantaged Area of your holding;
- have successfully claimed for HFA 2010; and
- keep breeding cattle and/or sheep.

If you are a tenant and claim HFA and your landlord has an ESA or CSS agreement on the land beyond 2010, you will be able to claim for UTP until such time as your landlord's agreement expires, provided that you meet the conditions above.

The UTP scheme will be run by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) and will operate from 2011. Claims are made on the annual Single Payment Scheme application form (SP5).

Further information about the UTP is available in the Uplands Transitional Payment Explanatory Booklet 2011. The booklet has been mailed to all successful HFA 2010 claimants and copies can be obtained from the RPA's Customer Service Centre by telephoning 0845 603 7777.

# How do you enter Uplands ELS?

There are three main routes into Uplands ELS:

- If you have an existing ELS/OELS agreement you can choose to replace it with Uplands ELS/OELS.
  - Most HLS agreements may be amended to incorporate Uplands ELS/OELS.
  - If you have no existing Environmental Stewardship or ESA/CSS agreements in place, you can make a straightforward application for Uplands ELS/OELS (and/or other elements of Environmental Stewardship).
- If you have a part-farm CSS and/or ESA agreement and are not in receipt of UTP you will be able to apply for Uplands ELS on the land not already under agreement.

**If you are a new applicant, you must ensure your land is registered on the Rural Land Register (RLR) with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA).**



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## Land let on a short term tenancy

If your tenancy/licence has less than five years to run, even if you are expecting a further extension, your landlord/the landowner should agree to take over the Uplands ELS agreement in the event of your control lapsing. They should countersign your application to this effect.

Farmers with tenancies lasting to, or beyond, the end of the Uplands ELS agreement will not

need their landowner's counter signature but it may be necessary to consult the landowner, depending on the terms of the tenancy.

Further guidance on landlord/tenant issues will be available on the Defra web site at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/countryside/uplands/support.htm>

## Commons and shared grazing

Large areas of the uplands consist of common land which is highly valued for its environmental qualities and public access. Effective grazing to support agri-environment agreements on this land relies on collaboration between commoners and the co-operation of landowners.

Separate applications will need to be made for commons and shared grazing, covering the whole area involved. Unless there are exceptional cases, they will not be part of individual farm agreements. The agreements for commons and shared grazing will be managed by commoners' associations or groups of commoners or

graziers (for shared grazing). They will need to create their own internal agreements for the distribution of payments and responsibilities for the management of Uplands ELS options and requirements on the land.

In order to enter a common or shared grazing into Uplands ELS, an individual authorised by the commoners' association or group must sign the application on behalf of the members involved. The landowner's/landowners' signature(s) are also required. Detailed guidance on how to enter your common into Uplands ELS will be available separately.

# How will Uplands ELS work?

As with ELS and OELS, you will need to meet a points target for your holding, based on the size of your farm and land type.

You will earn points by meeting a set of compulsory requirements that apply to SDA land (see Box A, page 8) and selecting a number of options which can apply anywhere on the holding (see Box B, page 9).

You can choose from the existing menu of ELS/OELS options and/or from the set of new

SDA options devised for Uplands ELS (see farm illustration, page 10).

If you achieve your points target, meet the scheme conditions and agree to deliver the options you have chosen, you will receive funding.

Uplands ELS agreements last for five years or longer if linked to HLS.

## What will happen in 2010?

Final HFA payments will be made at the usual time in 2010. You should then request an Uplands ELS application pack in early 2010 for agreements to start from the 1 July 2010.

### **On-line applications are available.**

If you wish to apply via the Internet and your land is RLR-registered, you do not need to receive any information through the post.

ELS Online is a software package that will enable anyone who wishes to apply for ELS only – either for themselves or acting as an agent or

intermediary for someone else – to prepare an application on their computer and submit it to Natural England via the Internet. It is a secure process that can be used both by individual applicants and by agents submitting applications on behalf of their clients. The package includes a step by step guide to using the software to complete your application.

For further information about ELS Online, contact the ELS Online Team at

**[els.online@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:els.online@naturalengland.org.uk)**, or go online to the Whole Farm Approach website: **[www.wholefarm.defra.gov.uk](http://www.wholefarm.defra.gov.uk)**





# Payments

Payments will be made on the same basis as Environmental Stewardship, whereby half the annual payment is made six months after the start and the remaining amount is paid on the anniversary of the agreement. For example, if your agreement starts on the 1 July 2010, you will receive your first Uplands ELS payment in January 2011.

## Upland ELS rates

Uplands ELS recognises the particular challenges of managing large upland areas, and reflects that in higher payments, as shown below.

Land Category	Existing ELS payment rate per ha	New Uplands ELS payment rate per ha (includes existing ELS rate)	New Uplands Organic ELS payment rate per ha (includes existing OELS rate)
SDA moorland parcels 15 ha or larger	£8	£23	£23
SDA moorland parcels smaller than 15 ha	£30	£62	£92
SDA land below the Moorland line	£30	£62	£92

There is enhanced support for organic farmers. Land under organic management will qualify for an additional £30 per ha for SDA moorland parcels smaller than 15 ha and SDA land below the Moorland Line. In addition, common land agreements involving two or more active graziers will attract a supplementary payment of £5 per ha to recognise the additional costs of drawing up and operating a collaborative agreement.

No cap or taper will be applied to Uplands ELS payments and there will not be a minimum farm size.



# Box A: Compulsory requirements

Uplands ELS agreements are built on a set of compulsory requirements applied to SDA land, depending on the category of land in relation to the Moorland Line.

These are summarised below:

## **Moorland (land above the Moorland Line)** **These are worth 15 points per ha**

- Avoid overgrazing and under-grazing, and, in any case, maintain a minimum level of stocking using stock acclimatised to the conditions of the moor.
- The minimum level of stocking is 0.05 livestock units per ha (equates with 0.5 ewe per ha) for a period of four months between 1 June and 30 September.
- Maintain wetlands including peat bogs, other mires and hillside flushes.
- Manage any supplementary feeding sensitively (although this may be restricted in certain locations, eg. where there are SSSIs).
- Where you have the legal right to carry out burning, you must follow the Heather and Grass Burning Code.
- Do not apply fertiliser or manure.
- Do not plough, cultivate, reseed or harrow (controlling bracken by harrowing is permitted but may be restricted on common land).
- Retain and protect native woodland.



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## **Moorland commons and shared grazing** **(additional to the above)**

- All sheep must consist of hefted self-maintained flocks (exceptions are possible in some circumstances).
- Establish and maintain a commoners' association or group supported by an internal agreement.
- Maintain an ongoing record of active graziers and the numbers and type of stock.

## **Grassland and arable land** **(land below the Moorland Line)** **These are worth 11 points per ha**

- Do not supplementary feed, apply fertiliser or boom spray herbicides within six metres of a watercourse (beyond what is required under cross-compliance).
- If any maintenance, restoration or repair of dry-stone walls and hedges is undertaken, it must be carried out with materials and style traditional to the local landscape.
- Do not supplementary feed in native woodland (except when shelter is required during periods of extreme weather).
- Retain existing areas of native scrub (except on archaeological features).
- Do not remove any boulders and rock outcrops.
- Prevent the spread of bracken on land that allows the use of conventional tractor with mower.
- Collect all plastic waste associated with farming activities from the banks of watercourses.

# Box B: Options

Agreement holders will also need to deliver one or more options to meet the points target for the holding. Options can be selected from the existing suite of ELS options and/or from new Uplands ELS options. They include a limited number of capital items in recognition of the importance of the upland landscape, for example, the restoration of stone walls, stone hedge banks and earth banks.

A summary of the new Uplands ELS options are shown below. Details of the existing ELS and new options can be found in the Entry Level Stewardship Handbook at [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

New Options for Uplands ELS	Moorland parcels 15 ha or larger	Moorland parcels smaller than 15 ha	Grassland and arable below the Moorland Line
<b>Stone-faced hedge bank management on or above the Moorland Line</b> 24 points per 100m where management is carried out on both sides of the bank 12 points per 100m where management is carried out on one side of the bank	■	■	
<b>Stone wall protection and maintenance on or above the Moorland Line</b> 32 points per 100m	■	■	
<b>Earth bank management on or above the Moorland Line</b> 18 points per 100m where management is carried out on both sides of the bank 9 points per 100m where management is carried out on one side of the bank	■	■	
<b>Hedgerow restoration</b> Maximum 40m per year, 10 points per m	■	■	■
<b>Stone-faced hedge bank restoration</b> Maximum 40m per year, 55 points per m	■	■	■
<b>Earth bank restoration</b> Maximum 40m per year, 12.5 points per m	■	■	■
<b>Stone wall restoration</b> Maximum 40m per year, 30 points per m	■	■	■
<b>Sheep fencing around small woods</b> Maximum 500m erected in year one 50 points per 100m per year			■
<b>Woodland livestock exclusion</b> 75 points per ha			■
<b>Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings in remote locations</b> 4 points per m <sup>2</sup> of ground floor area	■	■	■
<b>Maintaining visibility of archaeological features</b> 53 points per feature (one or more item within a radius or length of 50m)	■	■	
<b>Post and wire fencing along watercourses</b> Maximum 500m erected in year one 50 points per 100m per year			■
<b>Winter livestock removal next to streams, rivers and lakes</b> 35 points per ha			■
<b>No supplementary feeding on moorland</b> 4 points per ha	■	■	
<b>Cattle grazing on upland grassland and moorland</b> 30 points per ha	■	■	■
<b>Haymaking</b> 60 points per ha			■
<b>No cutting strip within meadows</b> 250 points per ha of strip			■
<b>Management of enclosed rough grazing for birds</b> 35 points per ha		■	
<b>Management of upland grassland for birds</b> 37 points per ha			■

# Farm illustration

A farm with a small moorland unit and part SDA land.

Your Uplands ELS points target and the associated payment rates are fixed. This means that there is no higher payment for delivery of additional options over and above your required target.

If you are very confident that the measurements (length, area) of your options are accurate, there is no need to deliver more than your points target. However, if you want to make sure that there is some margin for error, you may wish to consider delivering options slightly in excess of your target in case, on inspection, questions are raised about the eligibility of particular options or your compliance with option prescriptions.

It is essential that you do not fall below your points target or you will be in breach of your agreement. Information about the penalties for breaches will be in the 3rd edition ES Handbook, due out in early 2010.

## A - Calculation of **points target** for the holding:

Land categories	Area (ha)	Points per ha	Total points
<b>SDA land:</b>			
Moorland parcels 15 ha or larger	200	x 23	4,600
Moorland parcels smaller than 15 ha	30	x 62	1,860
Non-Moorland (Upland Grassland and Arable)	112	x 62	6,944
<b>Total</b>	<b>342</b>		<b>13,404</b>
<b>Non SDA land:</b>			
Moorland parcels 15 ha or larger	Nil	x 8	0
Moorland parcels smaller than 15 ha	Nil	x 30	0
Land below the Moorland Line	48	x 30	1,440
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>		<b>1,440</b>
<b>Total for the whole holding</b>	<b>390</b>		<b>14,844</b>

## B - Calculation of points earned to meet the target number of points for the holding: :

1. Points earned from meeting compulsory requirements on SDA land and completion of the Farm Environmental Record (FER).

Land categories	Area (ha)	Points per ha	Total points
Moorland	230	X 15	3,450
Upland Grassland and Arable	112	X 11	1,232
Completion of FER for the whole holding	390	X 3	1,170
<b>Total</b>			<b>5,852</b>

2. Points earned from the delivery of options on SDA and non-SDA land.

New Uplands ELS/ existing ELS Option	Description	Points available	Number of units	Total Points
Existing	Hedgerow management (both sides)	22 per 100m	500	110
Existing	Hedgerow management (one side)	11 per 100m	400	44
Existing	Stone wall protection and maintenance	15 per 100m	1,500m	225
New	Stone wall protection and maintenance on/above Moorland Line	32 per 100m	400m	128
New	Hedgerow restoration	10 per m/yr	30m	300
New	Stone wall restoration	30 per m/yr	20m	600
New	Post and wire fencing alongside water courses	50 per 100m	400m	200
Existing	Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings	2 per m <sup>2</sup>	300m <sup>2</sup>	600
Existing	Unenclosed moorland rough grazing	5 per ha	200	1,000
Existing	Management of archaeological features on grassland	16 per ha	20 ha	320
New	Winter livestock removal next to streams, rivers and lakes	35 per ha	10 ha	350
New	Woodland livestock exclusion	75 per ha	4 ha	300
New	Cattle grazing on upland grassland and moorland	30 per ha	60 ha	1,800
New	Hay-making	60 per ha	11 ha	660
New	No cutting strip within meadows	250 per ha	1.5 ha	375
New	Management of upland grassland for birds	37 per ha	24 ha	888
Existing	Permanent grassland with low inputs (SDA)	35 per ha	36 ha	1,260
<b>Total number of points earned from the delivery of options:</b>				<b>9,160</b>
<b>Total number of points earned from sections 1 and 2 to meet the overall target number of points for the holding</b>				<b>15,012</b>

# Where can you get help and advice?

Contact your local Natural England office (listed opposite) for further information and details of workshops and group meetings. Full details of Uplands ELS are incorporated in the 3rd edition of the Environmental Stewardship Handbook.

Details will also be available on the Natural England website at [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

For further information about ELS Online, contact the ELS Online Team either by calling, **0300 060 1482** or **0300 060 1638** or at [els.online@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:els.online@naturalengland.org.uk), or go online to the Whole Farm Approach website at [www.wholefarm.defra.gov.uk](http://www.wholefarm.defra.gov.uk)



# Contact details

## Natural England information and offices and the Rural Payments Agency

Events page web address:

[www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/landmanagementadvice/events](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/landmanagementadvice/events)

Events booking telephone: **0300 060 1695**

Natural England's offices open from 8.30 to 5.00 Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays.

There are only six regional addresses shown as the other regions do not contain Severely Disadvantaged Areas.

### East Midlands

**Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland.**

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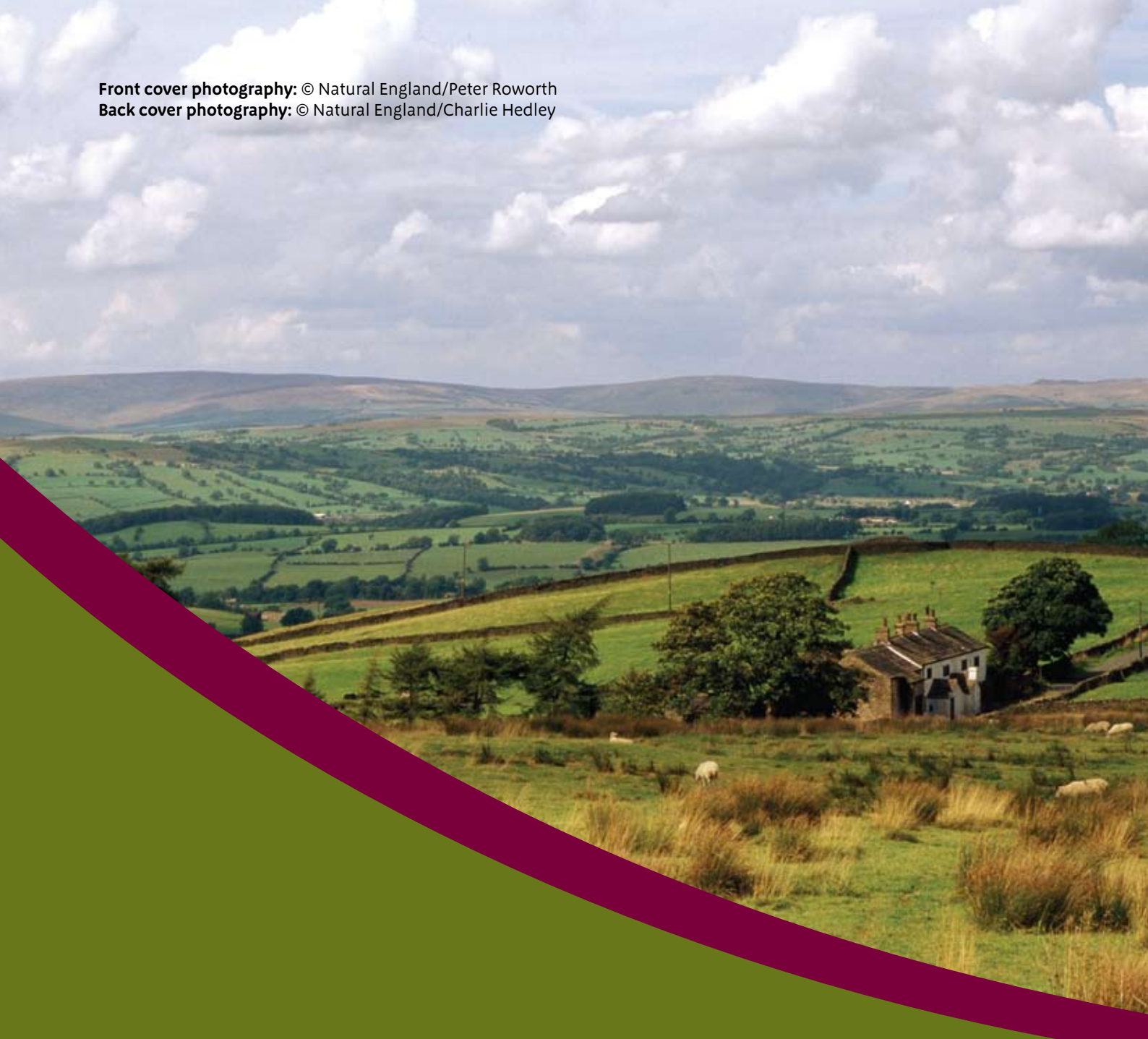
**East Riding of Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire.**

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### Rural Payments Agency's Customer Service Centre

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Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings.

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