



## Essential tips for BPS 2018 claims

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With just over three weeks until the 15 May deadline for BPS 2018 claims, Alice De Soer from the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV) gives some essential tips on applying for BPS 2018.

In England, either [apply for BPS online \(http://www.gov.uk/rural-payments\)](http://www.gov.uk/rural-payments), or use a paper BP5 form. Almost 84% of 2017 claims were submitted online – you can switch from paper to online by calling the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) on 03000 200 301. To request a paper BP5 form, call the RPA by 4 May.

You can only [apply online in Wales \(http://www.gov.wales/rpwoonline\)](http://www.gov.wales/rpwoonline) and [Northern Ireland \(http://www2.dardni.gov.uk\)](http://www2.dardni.gov.uk). In [Scotland, apply online \(https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/\)](https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/), or use a paper Single Application Form.

Submit applications and supporting evidence by midnight on Tuesday 15 May 2018 to avoid late claim penalties. The guidance below focuses on online BPS 2018 applications in England.



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### Key actions

- Either sign in to the [Rural Payments hub \(http://www.gov.uk/rural-payments\)](http://www.gov.uk/rural-payments) to complete your application online or fill in a paper BP5 form
- [Read the guidance online \(http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018\)](http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018)
- Submit your application and supporting evidence by midnight on 15 May 2018

See also: [Hedges – tips for BPS and Countryside Stewardship in 2018 \(http://www.fwi.co.uk/business/tips-hedges-mps-countryside-stewardship-2018.htm\)](http://www.fwi.co.uk/business/tips-hedges-mps-countryside-stewardship-2018.htm)

## Where to find BPS 2018 guidance

The [BPS 2018 guidance for English applicants can be accessed online \(http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018\)](http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018). Read the “Basic Payment Scheme: rules for 2018” and “How to claim BPS online in 2018” guidance, as well as using the on-screen “help” links.

## Check digital maps online

Since BPS 2017 applications were submitted, the RPA has done extensive mapping updates, so check online digital maps are correct (from “Land”, click “View land”).

Read the RPA guidance on how to check digital maps before you request any changes and the latest [March 2018 RLE1 guidance \(http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018\)](http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018). If maps need updating, submit an RLE1 form and sketch map.

## When an RLE1 form is required to update mapped hedges information

If the new mapped hedges information on digital maps is showing incorrectly or is missing, an RLE1 and sketch map is only required before 6 July 2018 if those hedges are: being used for EFA on a BPS 2018 application; being claimed for an existing Countryside Stewardship (CS) agreement under options BE3 (Management of hedgerows), BN5 (Hedgerow laying) and BN6 (Hedgerow coppicing); or, being included under option BE3 in a CS application for an agreement starting 1 January 2019.

An RLE1 form isn't needed now for any other incorrectly mapped hedges. Read the [RPA guidance on “How to check and change your hedge information” \(http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018\)](http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018) online.

## Adding land

Land can be transferred online by the previous occupier, unless it shows a “status” of less than 100% owned or “tenant”. Alternatively, [email the RPA \(mailto: "ruralpayments@defra.gsi.gov.uk"\)](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gsi.gov.uk) by 4 May, put “Add land” as the subject and include your SBI, business name, your name and contact number and the relevant land parcel reference numbers.

The RPA should confirm within five working days. If land can't be transferred online or added, include it on a [paper continuation booklet \(http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018\)](http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018) and submit an RLE1 form.

## Transferring or removing land

Land can be transferred or removed online (from “Business overview”, click “Land” and then “Transfer land”. Then select “Transfer type” – sale/gift, lease or remove), unless it shows a “status” of less than 100% owned or “tenant”.

To remove this land, delete the land uses on the “Land use” screen, check the claimed area (C8) is “0.0000” and submit an RLE1 form.

## Transfer entitlements

Entitlements must be held by a claimant on 15 May 2018 to use them for a BPS 2018 claim. In England, the entitlements transfer deadline is 15 May – they can be transferred online (from “Entitlements”, click “Transfer entitlements”) or using an RLE1 form.

In Wales, the deadline is 30 April. In Scotland and Northern Ireland the deadline has already passed.

## Check and update land use

The “Land use” screen should show all your land parcels, including any transfers or “add land” requests once completed.

Check and update agricultural and non-agricultural land use areas and codes to reflect the correct position on the ground as at 15 May 2018. Also declare EFAs. Use the [“BPS 2018 land use codes” \(http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018\)](http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018).

## Check greening calculations

Use the [“Greening workbook for 2018” \(http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018\)](http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018) to check greening calculations.

The BPS application summary “greening checker” is only a guide and isn't always correct. Check what has been declared for ecological focus areas (EFAs) in the “Use less EFA than available” screen (under “Apply for BPS” and go to “Make changes to your application”).

Nitrogen-fixing crops and fallow land are automatically included as EFAs. If they shouldn't be EFAs (usually because of the plant protection products ban), click “N” for the land parcel and “save” the changes.

## Check the claimed area

Always check the claimed area (C8) in the Activate less BPS area” screen (from “Apply for BPS”, click “Activate less BPS area”). In some cases, the claimed eligible area can incorrectly default to “0.0000”. Type the area to be claimed in the “Applied for” column.

## Check the online BPS 2018 application

After updating land uses/areas and completing the declarations, “generate” a new BP5 application summary. It should show the updated information.

Check it is correct and submit the application by midnight on 15 May 2018. A receipt showing the date/time of submission should be received – any subsequently submitted application will show the original date/time of submission, but the receipt should show the correct date/time.

Save the BP5 application summary on a computer or print it as the information is live on the RPA’s system, so what is shown may change after the application is submitted.

## Submit supporting evidence

Supporting evidence can’t be submitted online. Either post it to the RPA (Rural Payments, PO Box 352, Worksop, S80 9FG) or hand-deliver it to one of the [six RPA drop-in centres \(http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018\)](http://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018), so they’re received by 15 May deadline.

Write your SBI on every sheet and keep a copy for your records. If posting documents, use either Royal Mail Signed For or Special Delivery.

## Amending a BPS 2018 application after 15 May

Applications submitted by 15 May 2018 deadline can have certain amendments made without penalty up to midnight on 31 May 2018. This includes adding land, increasing eligible area and changing “land use”.

If an online application is amended, [email the RPA \(mailto: "ruralpayments@defra.gsi.gov.uk"\)](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gsi.gov.uk) to explain it’s a change to the originally submitted application. Use “Amendments to BPS 2018 application” as the subject and include your SBI.

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**Read more on:** BPS (<http://www.fwi.co.uk/business/payments-schemes/bps>)

Business (<http://www.fwi.co.uk/business>)

Business management (<http://www.fwi.co.uk/business/business-management>)

Payments, schemes and grants (<http://www.fwi.co.uk/business/payments-schemes>)