



# Basic Payment Scheme – tips for applying in 2019

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With the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) application window open across the UK by the end of this week, Alice De Soer at the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV) offers some essential tips for this year's applications in England.

## Brexit and BPS 2019

Regardless of what happens with the UK's exit from the EU, BPS 2019 will continue to operate under the current rules. Even if there is "no deal", it's business as usual.

## BPS 2019 rules

The rules are the same as in 2018, but it is essential to read the [BPS 2019 Scheme Rules](#) guidance on the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website. You must still be a "farmer" and eligible land must be agricultural land, primarily used for an "agricultural activity" throughout 2019 and be "at your disposal" on 15 May 2019.

## Apply online

Wherever possible, apply online using the [Rural Payments service](#). Read the [How to claim BPS online in 2019](#) guidance. Paper BP5 forms should be received by early April.

See also: [Countryside stewardship – tips for 2019 scheme](#)

## Get prepared

Even if you are not applying quite yet, go to [www.gov.uk/rural-payments](http://www.gov.uk/rural-payments) and check that you can sign in. There is a new password reset page to make this easier. If you haven't applied before, you must register.

Check your contact details, particularly the email address as the RPA uses that to contact you. If someone else is applying for you, check they have BPS "submit" permission (go to "Give access to this business").

Transfer entitlements online (from "Entitlements", go to "Transfer entitlements") by 15 May 2019 for use with BPS 2019 applications in England. The cut-off dates are 2 April in Scotland, 30 April in Wales and 2 May in Northern Ireland.

## Check digital maps

Land used to claim BPS needs to show correctly on your digital maps (go to "View land"), including: land cover, permanent non-agricultural areas/features, and permanent boundaries.

Use form RLE1 to update any of these. If hedges are incorrect or missing, use an RLE1 only if you are using them as an Ecological Focus Area (EFA).

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### Business management >

Land can be transferred or removed online in most cases (from "Land" go to "Transfer land"). To add land, email the RPA at [ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk), use the subject "BPS 2019 – Add Land" and include your SBI, land parcel references and a contact name and number.

## Starting an online application

Sign in at [www.gov.uk/rural-payments](http://www.gov.uk/rural-payments) and go to “Applications”. Click on “Apply for BPS”, then “Create a new direct payments application”. You’ll need to “generate” an application summary (which looks like a paper BP5 form) but don’t submit it – use it to identify what needs updating.

## Update ‘Land use’

Update the “Land use” screen (from “Land” go to “Land use”), giving the agricultural and non-agricultural areas and EFAs if required, to reflect the position on the ground at 15 May 2019. This updates Part C (Field data sheet) and Part D (Greening: EFAs). It won’t change what is shown on your digital maps.

To check your updates, ‘Generate’ a new application summary. If they don’t show correctly, click ‘Activate less BPS area’ and/or ‘Use less EFA than available’, check the information and ‘Save’ your updates. ‘Generate’ a new application summary which should show your updates. Then complete the other parts of your application.

## Check EFAs

The application summary “greening checker” sometimes give incorrect answers, usually because of “undeclared” areas on the “Land use” screen or land included on a paper supplementary field data sheet.

Always check the “Use less EFA than available” screen to see what has been declared as EFA. The RPA uses that information to validate your claim. There is a “greening workbook” on the website to double-check your calculations.

## Check the area claimed

Another screen to carefully check is “Activate less BPS area” as this shows the area claimed (column C8). It can sometimes show incorrectly as 0.0000. If it does, update it.

## Submitting an application

After carefully checking your application, submit it and then generate another application summary showing the submission date and time. Save or print this as the information is live and may change after submission.

Post supporting documents to the RPA (Rural Payments, PO Box 352, Worksop, S80 9FG) or hand-deliver to an RPA drop-in centre. If posting, use Royal Mail Special Delivery or Signed For.

The RPA must receive your application and supporting documents by no later than midnight on 15 May 2019 to avoid any late claim penalties.

### Top tips

- Sign-in to [www.gov.uk/rural-payments](http://www.gov.uk/rural-payments) to apply online
- Check land on the digital maps
- Transfer land and entitlements online wherever possible
- Submit application and supporting documents by 15 May 2019

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