

Tips for creating a high quality Woodland Management Plan with myForest

myForest makes the job of writing and submitting your Woodland Management Plan easier, whether you are a small woodland owner writing your first plan, or you are an experienced land manager with multiple approved plans under your belt.

Although the process of management plan approval is typically iterative, the higher the quality of your first draft, the more quickly you can expect it to be approved.

Here are some tips to help ensure a quicker turnaround when submitting your plan to Scottish Forestry (SF) or the Forestry Commission (FC - main template), and some pitfalls to avoid. Note that this guidance doesn't cover management plans in Wales or Northern Ireland.

- Refer to published guidance.
 - Forestry Commission [Create a Woodland Management Plan](#) (includes a handy checklist)
 - Scottish Forestry [Management Plan Guidance](#)
- Complete the management plan template as fully as possible using the plan editors in myForest.
 - At a recent presentation from the Forestry Commissions south-west team, lack of detail was given as the most common reason why management plans require redrafting. This was particularly noted in the Woodland Protection section.
 - We know from our interactions with Forestry Commission and Scottish Forestry that stakeholder engagement is often not given the level of focus that could be required. Be proportionate but thorough when completing this.
 - Use the expandable boxes in the myForest plan editors to allow space to provide the level of detail needed.
- Make use of online resources.
 - Use the links in the myForest plan editors when you need to find out more information
 - Use the data layers in myForest, the FC [Map Browser](#) and SF [Land Information Search](#), and other sources, to help you find the right information on constraints and other site information
 - The [Community Woodlands Association](#) website is a good source of information on how to write a SF Management Plan

- Check for compliance with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS).
 - All plans must meet the UKFS criteria (page 2 of the Forestry Commission's Woodland Management Plan or Annex 1 of the Scottish Forestry [Management Plan Guidance](#))
 - Failure to complete a section can result in your plan being returned to you without even reaching the woodland officer due to non-compliance
 - Complete a [UKFS Checker](#) assessment in myForest to learn more about your woodland management and the UK Forestry Standard:

UKFS Checker Overview

Introduction

The **UK Forestry Standard (UKFS)** is the technical standard for sustainable forest management in the UK. It sets out the approach of the four governments of the UK, and defines the requirements and provides guidance for foresters on how to practice sustainable forest management in the UK.

The myForest UKFS Checker is designed to enable you to carry out a sustainability self-assessment of your woodland stewardship against the 2024 version of the UK Forestry Standard.

- The UKFS Checker is organised around the 8 chapters, or themes, of the UK Forestry Standard, with four questions on each theme.
- Follow the tour to see how to navigate around the template, and follow links to Canopy Learning and external sources of information if you need more help.
- Return to the Overview to see how you are progressing through the individual Themes, your overall progress to completing the assessment, your score and your rating.
- Repeat the assessment as often as you like and see your score and ratings increase. Rating levels progress from Entry through to Gold.

[Take the myForest UKFS Checker Tour](#)

Guidance

- A total of 36 questions assess your knowledge, planning and management against the Standard.
- The questions are organised in groups of four for each UKFS chapter, with four more related to mapping and planning.
- The questions have been designed to fit with all woodland types. If you feel a question is not relevant to your woodland but you have gone through the process of considering this then you should answer "yes".
- Click on [Guidance](#) to access additional information to help you answer the questions.
- Click "Need help with..." to go to the relevant section of the Canopy Learning UK Forestry Standard course.
- Refer to Forestry Commission's Forest Research [UKFS Practice Guides](#), for detailed information on many of the topics covered.
- Check out the myForest Data Layers for each set of questions by selecting the appropriate Data Layer Category, to see what may be in or around your woodland.
- Once you have completed a UKFS Checker assessment, click on the three dots menu and select Submit. Your assessment will be saved under "Submitted Assessments".
- Click on the three dots menu beside your submitted assessment to download your Report and Certificate.

[Click here for more guidance on the UK Forestry Standard](#)

Canopy Learning

To access the free additional support materials in the UK Forestry Standard Support Course register on Canopy Learning [here](#). Be sure to set your browser to "remember" your login details.

Then enrol for free on the course [here](#).

As you go through the UKFS Checker template, click on "Need help with..." for links to the UKFS Support course.

[Need help with UKFS Checker?](#)

- Remember to include thinning & felling proposals (Forestry Commission) and thinning proposals (Scottish Forestry).
 - Enter inventory details and felling proposals for each sub-compartment in myForest
 - Your proposals will be automatically added to the relevant part of your documentation:
 - For Forestry Commission plans, download the Inventory and Plan of Operations, complete the additional details in the Customer Details tab, and submit with your management plan and maps
 - For Scottish Forestry plans, the Thinning Table forms part of the management plan download. For all felling other than thinning, you will need to apply for a separate Felling Permission. You can do this using the built-in Felling Permission Application template in myForest.

- Make sure your mapping is accurate.
 - Watch tutorials on the [myForest YouTube Channel](#) and guidance on the [Community Woodlands Association](#) website
 - Whenever possible, use online government resources to import digital maps of your land from the Rural Payments Agency (England) or Rural Payments & Services (Scotland)
 - When mapping areas in myForest, use snapping to avoid overlaps or gaps between adjoining compartments and sub-compartments
 - You can share your digitised compartments and sub-compartments with the Forestry Commission by downloading the Woodland Management Plan shapefile in myForest.
- Create the necessary maps and ensure they meet the relevant standards.
 - SF [General Mapping Guidance](#)
 - FC [Requirements for creating compartment maps](#)

