

RP3: Watercourse crossings

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the watercourse crossings item.

From: **[Rural Payments Agency \(/government/organisations/rural-payments-agency\)](/government/organisations/rural-payments-agency)** and **[Natural England \(/government/organisations/natural-england\)](/government/organisations/natural-england)**

Published: 2 April 2015

Last updated: 28 May 2026 —

Grant type: **[Capital item \(/capital-grant-finder?grant_type=capital-item\)](/capital-grant-finder?grant_type=capital-item)**

Areas of interest: **[Biodiversity \(/capital-grant-finder?land_use=biodiversity\)](/capital-grant-finder?land_use=biodiversity)**, **[Uplands \(/capital-grant-finder?land_use=uplands\)](/capital-grant-finder?land_use=uplands)** and **[Water quality \(/capital-grant-finder?land_use=water-quality\)](/capital-grant-finder?land_use=water-quality)**

Contents

How much you'll be paid

How this item benefits the environment

Where you can use this item

What you must do to use this item

Evidence you must keep

Other capital items you can use with this item

Advice to help you use this item

— British Standards

— Choosing a location

This item is part of Capital Grants 2026. You must read the Capital Grants 2026 guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/capital-grants-2026>) to understand the rules and how to apply.

If you're applying for this item as part of a Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier (CSHT) application, you must read the CSHT applicant's guide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-higher-tier-csht>) to understand the rules and how to apply.

How much you'll be paid

£506.44 per crossing.

How this item benefits the environment

Providing a watercourse crossing for livestock and machinery reduces the disturbance to the watercourse. This helps reduce sedimentation.

This item can help you protect, recover and improve biodiversity on your land.

Where you can use this item

You can use this item either:

- with actions or options to create, restore or manage habitats or features with the support of a Natural England adviser (or a Forestry Commission woodland officer in woodland)
- in areas targeted to reduce water pollution from agriculture

Catchment Sensitive Farming (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/catchment-sensitive-farming-reduce-agricultural-water-pollution>) provides

advice where there are water quality or flood risk issues linked to farming.

You'll need to get relevant advice, permits or consents from the Environment Agency, (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-need-an-environmental-permit>) lead local flood authority or internal drainage board (https://www.ada.org.uk/member_type/idbs/) before you start work.

You must also contact your local planning authority to check if planning permission is needed before you start any work.

You cannot use this item:

- on historic or archaeological features identified in your Historic Environment Farm Environment Record (<https://hefer-data.org.uk/>) (HEFER)
- on areas of wildlife interest identified on your Farm Environment Record (FER) or on MAGIC (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>)

What you must do to use this item

You must:

- construct a ford (crossing) at least 4 metres (m) wide
- include a semi-circular, straight or slanted group of toe stones – secure them into the riverbed on the downstream edge to form a gravel trap
- secure the stones down to at least 600 millimetres (mm) below the existing level of the bed or below the known scour level (whichever is deeper)
- make sure the stones do not stand clear of the water during low summer flows – they must not form a weir
- make sure the approach slope gradient is no steeper than 1 in 4
- use fencing to make sure livestock cannot access the sides of the approaches to the ford

- include rock revetment to protect the sides of the approaches to the ford on the river side

You must also protect the base of the entrance and the exit ramp to avoid bankside erosion with one of the following:

- rock armouring using cobble-sized rocks to create as flat a surface as possible and filling any gaps with coarse gravel or hardcore
- coarse gravel or hardcore with treated retaining boards (50mm by 230mm) along the ramp (parallel to the river flow), spaced 1m apart

For the latter, hold the boards in position with treated posts (100mm by 100mm) that are 1m apart. Drive the posts into the bank and trim them at an angle of 1 in 4 (parallel to the slope). Drive them at least 50mm below the line of the boards to avoid tripping. Compact the bed of the ramp to provide a stable footing for livestock.

Evidence you must keep

You must keep and provide with your claim:

- photographs of the site during the different stages of construction or contracts, invoices or other documents confirming the technical specification for the completed works
- photographs of the completed work
- any consents or permissions connected with the work

You must also keep and provide on request:

- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the site before works start

Read the record keeping and site visit requirements in the [Agreement holder's guide: Capital Grants, Higher Tier capital grants and Protection and Infrastructure grants](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agreement-holders-guide-capital-grants-higher-tier-capital-grants-and-protection-and-infrastructure-grants) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agreement-holders-guide-capital-grants-higher-tier-capital-grants->

and-protection-and-infrastructure-grants-2026) for more information.

If you're applying for this item as part of a Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier (CSHT) application, read the record keeping and site visit requirements in the CSHT agreement holder's guide (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-higher-tier-csht>).

Other capital items you can use with this item

You can use this item in the same area as FG15: Water gates. (<https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/water-gates-fg15>)

Advice to help you use this item

The following advice may help you to use this item, but you do not have to follow it to get paid. It's not part of this item's requirements.

British Standards

Check to make sure the works meet relevant British Standards. (<https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/products-and-services/standards/>)

Choosing a location

It's best to build watercourse crossing points at existing stock crossing locations, as the banks are usually less steep.

You should choose a site that needs the minimum amount of excavation work. This will produce less spoil, cause less disruption and reduce the amount of sediment entering the watercourse.

Do not construct the crossing on a watercourse bend. If it is, it may lead to silt deposition on the inside of the bend and erosion on the outside.

Published 2 April 2015

Last updated 28 May 2026 — [Show all updates](#)



OG

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



[© Crown copyright](#)