

Circulation: NFU BPS Information List

Date: 24 April 2018

Number:

Contact: Richard Wordsworth 0247 685
8556 / Anna Logan 0247 6858636

BPS Update – BPS 2018 Roundup

Below is an update on BPS 2018 application issues.

A Drop in centres – dates and times change

Following NFU and other stakeholder pressure, the RPA has reviewed and revised its support for those hand delivering BPS forms and related documents. Key details are below:

- Drop in Centres will be open from 23 April through to 15 May at the RPA's six main sites (Carlisle, Exeter, Newcastle, Reading, Workington and York) to offer a check and receipt service for completed BP5 forms and supporting documents. Initially it was from 1 May, as in 2017 90% of all BP5 forms and supporting documents received at Drop in Centres were handed in during the last two weeks of the application window.
- They will be open during normal office hours (8.30am - 5pm) which excludes weekend opening and the bank holiday on 7 May. Please note no weekends or bank holidays.
- There will also be an extended opening time of the centres until 10pm on the day of the application deadline, Tuesday 15 May.
- Details including locations and opening times are published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018) here www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018.

In addition for agents there is an informal 'meet and greet' arrangement being developed when they come into the main sites at an agreed time or day. This will help those farmers with a single form or a couple of forms not to be stuck behind an agent with multiple forms. Agents have been informed in detail of this process. We have asked the RPA to make farmers aware so they are aware of different approaches being taken to benefit both farmer and non-farmer users of drop in centres.

Will RPA help farmers to use the online service to make my BPS application at drop in centres? – RPA is not offering face to face support at drop in centres. As in previous years RPA offer telephony support to help farmers apply online. In addition there is onscreen help in the online service, which guides farmers through using the screens step-by-step. This guidance can be printed off at www.gov.uk/rpa/bps2018. There are a number of videos that help farmers use the online service.

B Problems with Submitted Claims

I have received an RPA letter saying there is land information missing or not entered correctly on my 2018 BPS application – what should I do? Farmers need to complete, sign, date and return the relevant parts of the proforma sent to them with the letter. The farmer needs to do this by midnight on 11 June. The farmer cannot change their application in ways that would increase the value of their claim after midnight on 11 June. The BPS 2018 handbook has more information about changing submitted forms. If any land parcels or part land parcels with missing information are not corrected by 11 June, the RPA will remove them from the application and will not be considered part of the 2018 BPS claim.

C RPA Call back service – need for correct contact numbers

The NFU has received feedback from the RPA that their helpline team are receiving a number of call back requests where the caller has provided an incorrect or incomplete telephone number. This also appears to have been the situation with the cases stakeholders have referred to RPA too. It would be useful if you could emphasise to members the importance of ensuring the correct telephone number is left during the call back request.

D Changes to agent's claim handling

RPA have changed the name of our 'Agent Relationship Managers' (ARMs) to 'Agent Processors' for agents. As before to help the handling of agents claims, all RPA recognised agents clients' SBIs will be allocated to an Agent Processor, but the SBIs could be shared with someone on the same team. This will help RPA handle claims and queries as efficiently as possible. Each Agent Processor is part of a team of around 40 people responsible for around 12,000 SBIs. The team is divided into groups of people who work on general 'BPS processing' such as task-based work, correspondence and call backs. We also have different teams working on the following specialist areas.

- Inspections
- Mapping
- Common land
- Cross-border
- Entitlements

What this means for agents is if they contact the RPA helpline with a query, the call handler will try to answer the query, this is to give Agent Processors more time to work on the claims. If the call handler cannot give the agent an answer straightaway, they will request a call back through the respective Agent Processor. The agent will receive a call back within 48 hours, either from the Agent processor or they will arrange for a colleague with the relevant subject knowledge to call the agent back.

E Turf & BPS Q&A

Question - I have been asked about turf and whether it should be viewed as 'arable' or permanent grassland. In this case, the land is re-sown once every 18 months or so. As it is grass each year and is not part of the crop rotation of the holding, I am presuming it should be permanent grassland but just wanted to check for the purposes of a BPS 2018 application as it influences whether EFA is required or not.

RPA Response - The query does not specify what the turf is to be used for; turf for fuel or turf for replanting. I therefore provide details of both options below;

Turf Production for fuel

CM02 - This code should only be used for a site which is permanently used for the production of turf for fuel. A site is permanently used for the production of turf for fuel if the production has taken (or will take) place for 3 years or more.

Turf for replanting

Turf for later replanting will be considered part of the agricultural area of the land parcel and should be coded as either permanent grassland or temporary grassland.

The land use code for turf production is covered in the Land use codes 2018 on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

END