



INFORMATION FOR WOODLAND OWNERS – Chalara Ash Dieback

Introduction

Forestry Commission Scotland's (FCS) Forestry Grant Scheme contains a grant option for Tree Health to assist private woodland owners in Scotland where they have been served with a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN) because of the discovery of trees infected with Chalara.

Background

Chalara dieback of ash is a serious disease of ash trees caused by a fungus called *Chalara fraxinea* (*C. fraxinea*), including its sexual stage, *Hymenoscyphus pseudoalbidus* (*H. pseudoalbidus*). The disease causes leaf loss and crown dieback in affected trees, and in young trees usually leads to tree death.

Ash trees suffering with Chalara infection have now been found widely across Europe since initial reports of accelerated ash dieback were reported in Poland in 1992. These have included forest trees, trees in urban areas such as parks and gardens, and also young trees in nurseries.

In February 2012 Chalara was found in a consignment of infected trees sent from a nursery in the Netherlands to a nursery in Buckinghamshire, England. Since then it has been found in a number and variety of locations in Great Britain, including urban landscaping schemes, newly planted woodland, further nurseries and the wider environment on the east coast.

Chalara is now being treated as a quarantine pest under national emergency measures and any suspected sighting should be reported.

The latest information on Chalara can be found on the Forestry Commission's website at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-8udm6s>

Chalara Action Plan for Scotland

The Chalara Action Plan for Scotland available as a PDF on <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-8udm6s> identifies a "sheltered" area in north-west Scotland and an associated buffer area.

The sheltered area has been identified as an area where: long distance spore dispersal from the continent appears to be least likely to occur in the near to medium future; there are currently relatively few young plantings with known infections; there are currently no known wider environment infections; and there are a significant number of ash woods of particularly high nature conservation value. The objective of action in this area and an adjacent buffer (which is nearer to predicted east coast infections in the wider environment) is to prevent new foci of infections developing. However, there remain significant uncertainties about spore



arrival (in densities and in a condition that could spark wider infections given the already low distribution of ash) and disease progression in a climate significantly different from the continental regimes on which current knowledge of Chalara is largely based. As such, the actions to be taken in the sheltered area represent an 'insurance policy', the cost of which is currently likely to be relatively modest. However, the policy of maintaining a "sheltered" and "buffer" area is subject to review and would be likely to change if significant numbers or areas of infected sites are found there.

Elsewhere in Scotland the general view is that enforced action would be most unlikely to generate significant savings in terms of the speed of disease arrival or progression.

Serving a Statutory Plant Health Notice

You are not required to take any particular action if you own infected ash trees, **unless** we or another plant health authority serves you with a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN).

FCS will serve a notice using powers under the Plant Health (Forestry) Order 2005. This Notice will normally be served on the woodland owner.

The woodland owner is then legally bound to undertake the actions defined in the SPHN. FCS will use statutory Plant Health Notices:

- In the sheltered area to require the removal and destruction of all recently planted ash trees on infected sites
- In the buffer area to require removal and destruction of only recently planted ash trees on infected sites that are showing evidence of infection (symptomatic).

Our Conservancy staff will liaise with you to discuss the requirements of the SPHN and the timetable to be followed. You will be offered a contract for grant support to help meet the costs of the removal and destruction of ash and for replanting such sites with alternative species.

Time is of the essence in responding to the requirements of SPHNs.

For sheltered areas - Removing and destruction of **all** recently ash trees (infected and non-infected) within the area of the SPHN, and applying the specified biosecurity measures, will be the minimum requirement under the Notice.

For Buffer areas - Removing and destruction of **only** recently planted ash showing evidence of infection (symptomatic) on infected sites, and applying the specified biosecurity measures, will be the minimum requirement under the Notice.



Biosecurity

The biosecurity measures which give the practical steps designed to minimise the risk of introducing or spreading pests and disease prescribed in the SPHN must be adhered to by all parties. The Forestry Commission has produced guidance on [biosecurity measures](#) and good working practice for the forestry sector.

Grant Support in Sheltered and Buffer areas

Grant support is only available for infected sites in the sheltered and buffer areas that have been served with a SPHN. The grant is based on the net area of ash and will not be available for other tree or shrub species.

Information on grant support can be found at <https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/tree-health/>

Non-infected ash sites in sheltered and buffer areas (not served with SPHN)

There will be no requirement to remove and destroy ash on non-infected, recently planted sites within the sheltered or buffer areas. Owners may do so voluntarily but will not receive any assistance in meeting the costs of removal. Grants paid for the initial planting will not be reclaimed if replanting takes place.

Ash sites out with the sheltered and buffer areas

There will be no statutory requirement to remove recently planted ash trees from infected or non-infected sites in areas out with sheltered and buffer areas. However there will be no financial support for removing trees out with the sheltered and buffer areas.

For infected sites, owners may however wish to voluntarily remove such trees. Evidence of infection would be required and owners are recommended to liaise with their local Conservancy.

For non-infected sites, owners who wish to remove ash from non-infected sites would require to replant at their own expense.

Symptoms of Chalara dieback of ash

Symptoms of Chalara dieback of ash can be viewed at: www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-8udm6s

Reporting Sites of suspected infection

In the sheltered and buffer areas, owners who suspect they have infected ash trees (young or old) should immediately report their suspicion to Forestry Commission Scotland via e-mail treehealthscotland@forestry.gsi.gov.uk or through the FCS National Office general enquiry line on 0131 3146156



Elsewhere, reports of infection should be submitted through the Forestry Commission Tree Alert form (www.forestry.gov.uk/treealert).

Reclaim of grant payments under existing grant schemes

Where the original planting has been funded under an existing grant scheme such as SFGS or Rural Priorities, we will not require grant repayment where tree death is caused by Chalara or where tree removal has been specified in a SPHN.

Local Conservancy staff will work closely with woodland owners on a scheme by scheme basis to assess the impact of any ash plant loss from Chalara and to discuss the future management of the scheme.

Any remaining payments from existing SFGS or Rural Priorities contracts may not be paid where successful establishment is not achieved.

Role of Local Conservancy Staff

Local Conservancy staff will liaise with you to:

- discuss the terms of the SPHN (i.e. what work is to be done and the date by which work is to be completed),
- agree area to be cleared
- discuss the Chalara grant support

Carrying out the Work

If you plan to use a forestry agent and/or contractor to carry out the work required, it is recommended that you arrange an appropriate contract.