

RP5: Cross drains

Find out about eligibility and requirements for the cross drains item.

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

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Sustainable drainage systems on rural land

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

£750.26 per drain.

How this item benefits the environment

A cross drain can intercept and direct surface runoff away from farm tracks and yards. The drain helps reduce channelling of surface runoff and the risk of sediment and other pollution entering a watercourse.

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

Where you can use this item

You can only use this item in areas targeted for the reduction of water pollution from agriculture, either:

- where a farm track is acting as a conduit (channel) for water runoff or pollution

- to redirect clean water in farmyards

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 cannot use this item:

- to manage or redirect contaminated effluents and slurries
- without relevant advice or consent from Historic England if the track is identified as an historic routeway in your Historic Environment Farm Environment Record (<https://hefer-data.org.uk/>) (HEFER)

What you must do to use this item

You must:

- position the cross drain so it catches the water on the uphill side of the track or yard and transfers it to an outlet where it will not cause new erosion or runoff issues
- redirect water from the cross drain to a stable drainage outlet such as a ditch or culvert – you can direct low flows to a field or field margin
- construct the drain either by digging a partially covered channel to collect sediment and redirect surface water – alternatively construct a low hump to direct surface flows
- maintain drains and drainage outfalls or the areas around humps by removing built-up sediment or other materials that may cause blockages

You must also either construct:

- an open channel
- a raised hump

Construct an open channel by excavating a channel across the width of the track or in a yard at least 100 millimetres (mm) deep and 100mm to 250mm wide. Line the channel with concrete and install a drainage grate that must be at least 150mm wide.

Construct a raised hump by excavating a trench across the track or yard to a depth of at least 300mm. Fill it with concrete and secure kerbstones across the trench so they protrude 60mm to 100mm above the surrounding surface.

You must not:

- damage or direct any runoff towards any historic or archaeological feature or wildlife area identified on your Farm Environment Record, HEFER or on MAGIC (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>)
- allow contaminated water from drains to reach a watercourse or pond

Evidence you must keep

You must keep photographs of the completed work and provide them with your claim.

You must also keep and provide on request.

- any consents or permissions connected with the work
- receipted invoices or bank statements where a receipted invoice is unavailable
- photographs of the site before works start
- written advice from a historic environment specialist if the track is a historic routeway

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-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>).

Items you can use with this item

You can use this item with these items:

FG15: Water gates (<https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/water-gates-fg15>)

RP1: Resurfacing of gateways (<https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/resurfacing-of-gateways-rp1>)

RP4: Livestock and machinery hardcore tracks (<https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/livestock-and-machinery-hardcore-tracks-rp4>)

RP7: Sediment ponds and traps (<https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/sediment-ponds-and-traps-rp7>)

RP11: Swales (<https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/swales-rp11>)

RP13: Yard - underground drainage pipework (<https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/yard-underground-drainage-pipework-rp13>)

RP15: Concrete yard renewal (<https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/concrete-yard-renewal-rp15>)

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/>).

Using this item with other measures

You can use this item with other measures (such as buffer strips, sediment traps, swales and dams) to slow the flow of water across the land. This helps prevent pollutants travelling to a watercourse. Follow best practice for reducing soil erosion and increasing water infiltration in fields.

Choosing a site for the drain

Divert water draining from the surrounding land before it flows on to the track or yard. You can do this by using breaks such as hedges, ditches or buffers.

Place cross drains at intervals across sloping tracks. The number of drains will increase with the length or steepness of the slope. The distance between the drains will vary according to the site, but they must be close enough to collect heavy surface flows.

Managing outfall from the drain

Direct outfall from the drains to a specially created temporary water storage area. This allows water to infiltrate the ground, protecting existing watercourses. Direct low flows to a well-managed, tussocky grass field

margin. You can use additional capital items such as silt traps or swales to create a temporary water storage area.

Maintaining the structures

Check the structures for a build-up of sediment or other pollutants after heavy rainfall. Inspect them after agricultural activities such as moving muddy machinery or livestock, as that's likely to shift soil to the track.

Positioning the tracks

Position tracks so they do not run directly downhill or carry pollutants directly between farmyard or fields and watercourses (if possible).

Consider using this item when using item [RP4: Livestock and machinery hardcore tracks](https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/livestock-and-machinery-hardcore-tracks-rp4) (<https://www.gov.uk/countryside-stewardship-grants/livestock-and-machinery-hardcore-tracks-rp4>) in a place where runoff is still likely to be a problem.

Sustainable drainage systems on rural land

Improve the management of water on the land by using [rural sustainable drainage systems](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-sustainable-drainage-systems) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-sustainable-drainage-systems>).



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