



WOODLAND
TRUST

Space for People

Targeting action for woodland access



Summary

Woods and trees are good for us. They are good for our health, they improve our quality of life and they are a vital part of healthy, functioning landscapes that provide us with the necessities of life. The Woodland Trust believes everyone should be able to access woodland within easy reach of their homes. **Space for People**, the Woodland Trust's analysis of access to woodland in the UK, shows that in order for this to happen we urgently need to begin creating more woodland close to where people live.

The UK is one of the least wooded countries in Europe, with just 12 per cent woodland cover compared to an average of 44 per cent. Of this, 49 per cent is currently accessible to the public, where 'accessible' is defined as

woodland where there is permissive access, according to data collected annually by the Woodland Trust as part of its Woods for People project.

Using the Woodland Access Standard, developed by the Woodland Trust and now adopted by many others including the Forestry Commission, the proportion of people who currently have access to woodland within easy reach of their homes was calculated.

Similar analysis was carried out five years earlier, in 2004. A comparison showed that during the five years from 2004-09, the proportion of people having access to woodland in line with the aspirations of the Woodland

The Woodland Trust's Woodland Access Standard aspires

- that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size
- that there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round trip) of people's homes



WTPU/Steven Kind

Woods close to where people live bring a multitude of benefits

Accessible woods				
Country	% population with access to 2ha+wood within 500m		% population with access to 20ha+ wood within 4km	
	2004	2009	2004	2009
England	10.2	14.5	55.2	63.0
Wales	15.7	17.4	72.3	76.7
Scotland	15.3	27.8	54.4	83.0
Northern Ireland	7.5	7.2	50.3	40.2
UK	10.8	15.6	55.8	64.8

Inaccessible woods				
Country	% extra population with access to 2ha+wood within 500m if existing woods opened		% extra population with access to 20ha+ wood within 4km if existing woods opened	
	2004	2009	2004	2009
England	26.1	23.2	26.7	20.6
Wales	43.2	42.5	25.3	20.9
Scotland	38.5	29.2	41.2	14.2
Northern Ireland	22.5	21.6	16.3	23.2
UK	27.9	24.6	27.6	20.1

Access Standard increased overall. However, despite strong national policy commitments to increasing people’s access to woodland, there is still a substantial deficit. Only 15.6 per cent of people in the UK have access to a wood of at least 2ha within 500m of their homes, and only 64.8 per cent of people have access to a wood of at least 20ha within 4km.

Even if all woodland currently recorded as inaccessible were opened up to the public, there would still be a need to create nearly 35,000ha of woodland to meet the minimum requirements of the Woodland Access Standard across the UK for woods of at least 2ha within 500m of people’s homes, and over 18,400ha to meet the requirement of woods of 20ha within 4km of people’s homes.

The Woodland Trust’s vision is of a UK rich in native woods and trees. Creating new native woodland close to where people live would provide a multitude of benefits, and for this reason the Trust believes woodland should be seen as an essential part of green infrastructure.

This planned network of green spaces and natural habitats can provide life-support functions such as clean air and water, healthy soils, shade and shelter and space for wildlife, as well as places for people to exercise or relax close to nature, leading to increased health and well being.

Space for People provides a basis for decision-makers to assess and make adequate provision for woodland access, allowing targeting of public money where the need is greatest. The Woodland Trust would like to see ambitious targets for woodland creation in all parts of the UK, backed up by forestry and planning policy and suitable incentives, aimed at increasing the amount of accessible woodland close to where people live.



WTPU/Fiona Granger

The UK needs more new community woods like this one at Monkstown, Northern Ireland



WTPU/Keith Huggett

Everyone should have the opportunity to experience nature

New planting

Country	% population requiring new woodland for access to a 2ha+ wood within 500m		% population requiring new woodland for access to a 20ha+ wood within 4km		Minimum area of new woodland required for 2ha+ woods within 500m (ha)	Minimum area of new woodland required for 20ha+ woods within 4km (ha)
	2004	2009	2004	2009	2009	2009
England	63.7	62.3	18.1	16.4	28614	14480
Wales	41.1	40.1	2.5	2.4	1243	620
Scotland	46.2	43.1	4.4	2.7	2466	1120
Northern Ireland	70.0	71.2	33.4	36.6	2623	2211
UK	61.3	59.8	16.6	15.1	34946	18431

Space for People

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Woodland access in your area

	Accessible woodland		Inaccessible woodland	
Local authority area	% population with access to 2ha+ wood within 500 m	% population with access to 20ha+ wood within 4 km	% population with access to 2ha+ wood within 500m if existing woods opened	% population with access to 20ha+ wood within 4 km if existing woods opened

New planting

Local authority area	% population requiring new woodland for access to 2ha+ wood within 500m	% population requiring new woodland for access to 2ha+ wood within 500m	Minimum area of new woodland required for 2ha + woods within 500m	Minimum area of new woodland required for 20ha + woods within 4 km
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The Woodland Trust was founded in 1972 and is the UK's leading woodland conservation organisation. The Trust's vision is of a UK rich in native woods and trees enjoyed and valued by everyone.

The Trust relies on the support of the public, industry, commerce and agencies to carry out its work. To find out how you can help, and about membership details, please contact one of the addresses below.



www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

The Woodland Trust *

Grantham
Lincolnshire NG31 6LL
01476 581111

The Woodland Trust Scotland

South Inch Business Centre
Shore Road
Perth PH2 8BW
01738 635829

The Woodland Trust Wales (Coed Cadw)

3 Cooper's Yard
Curran Rd
Cardiff CF10 5NB
08452 935860

The Woodland Trust in Northern Ireland

1 Dufferin Court
Dufferin Avenue
Bangor
County Down BT20 3BX
028 9127 5787

* Registered office

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