



Ffocws ar Goedwigaeth yn Gyntaf
Focus on Forestry First

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Scheme rules

2023



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CONTENTS

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Section A - Introduction

This guidance is for those working in the forestry and arboriculture sector in Wales, who intend to apply for support from the Skills Development scheme. The details contained within this booklet are not exhaustive and may be updated.

The purpose of Skills Development is to:

- Increase the productivity, diversity and efficiency of the trees and timber sector, improving their competitiveness and resilience, reducing their reliance on subsidies;
- Improve the environment, encouraging sustainable land management practices, the sustainable management of our natural resources and climate action;
- Promote strong, sustainable rural economic growth and encourage community-led action development.

Skills Development (SD) – aims to raise the skills and competence of the forestry and arboriculture sector. Focus on Forestry First Ltd (FFF Ltd) will work with beneficiaries to identify their current and future training needs that support the delivery of Government Policy. This will be set out in a Training Agreement. We will allocate funding for those training events that are supported by this scheme.

- Beneficiaries will be expected to fund 50% of the cost of the course.
- The payment of the 50% by the beneficiary and the payment of the training provider costs will be done through FFF Ltd so for audit purposes FFF Ltd is in full control of the funding and there is compliance with the data protection regulations.
- FFF Ltd is experienced in the management and monitoring of training delivered with the support of grant schemes.
- FFF Ltd will work with Training Providers in Wales to deliver the training events.
- FFF Ltd will maintain continuous evaluation of the delivery and performance of the beneficiaries to ensure that any changes that are needed to maintain optimum delivery are implemented in a timely manner.

Overall programme aim is to maximise productivity, efficiency and profitability through developing industry competent staff.

This scheme also supports the commitment of woodland set out in the Welsh Government's woodland strategy, Woodland for Wales.

Focus on Forestry First Ltd (FFF Ltd) is the not for profit company limited by guarantee.

Section B – Eligibility

To be eligible for the Skills Development grant you or your business must:

- have a residential or business address within Wales.

And be one of the following:

- A small business (including employees,) a sole trader, or a registered charity working in the forestry and arboriculture sector.
- In (or recently left,) the armed services planning a new career in the forestry and arboriculture sector.
- Volunteer or member of staff for a community woodland registered with Llais y Goedwig.
- Unemployed without access to funding of more than 50% of the cost of the training.

Notes

Small Business – Registered businesses with up to 50 employees. The applicant must be able to demonstrate that the majority of their work (more than 50%,) is working in a woodland/forest setting or providing an arboricultural service.

Note: We no longer support local authorities, Welsh Government departments and public bodies; Welsh Government advisory groups and companies.

Section C – Skills Development Scheme

What is Supported?

Skills Development provides grant aid towards the cost of a wide range of training events. These must be included in your Training Agreement before you are eligible for support (see below.)

The training events that we will support can be found on the website at:
<https://www.focusonforestryfirst.co.uk/skills-development-supported-qualifications>

Level of support

The current level of support is 50% of the cost of the event. This is only secured and confirmed once you have secured a place on the course, we have been notified by your approved training provider, and paid your 50% contribution.

The maximum value of training supported by Skills Development is set at approximately £1200.00 per Beneficiary. This will be calculated by using average costs per course as the training agreement is developed. Once a course takes the total value over £1200.00 then no further courses will be included in the Training Agreement.

Beneficiaries can only be included in one Training Agreement.

Information we require to enter the Skills Development Scheme

You must be registered with FFF Ltd to become a beneficiary of the project. To do this you complete the online form found on our website www.focusonforestryfirst.co.uk. This includes a Skills Evaluation section that you also must complete. This gives us details of your business and your employees (if you have any) so we can understand why you require support for specific training events.

You will then be required to pay the relevant registration fee through the registration form. Currently this is £75+VAT for a single person/sole trader and £125+VAT for a Business with Employees or Community Woodland Group. (The registration fee may be subject to change.)

FFF Ltd will evaluate your training needs based on this information. We may have some queries which will be emailed to you within 7 - 10 working days of receiving your forms. Once we have collated the information, FFF Ltd will supply you with your Training Agreement. This needs to be carefully checked, you will have 5 working days to get back to us with any changes.

Section D – How to Apply

Registration for Support. You must be registered with FFF Ltd to become a beneficiary of the project. To do this you complete the online form found on our website www.focusonforestryfirst.co.uk This includes a Skills Evaluation section that you also must complete. This gives us details of your business and your employees (if you have any) so we can understand why you require support for specific training events.

You will then be required to pay the relevant registration fee through the registration form. Currently this is £75+VAT for a single person/sole trader and £125+VAT for a Business with Employees or Community Woodland Group. (The registration fee may be subject to change.)

Develop a Training Agreement. FFF Ltd will check the beneficiaries training needs based on the information submitted. We may have some queries which will be emailed to the beneficiary within 7 - 10 working days of receiving the forms.

The maximum value of training supported by Skills Development is set at approximately £1200.00 per Beneficiary. Beneficiaries can only be included in one training agreement. FFF Ltd will use average costs per course to assess the value of the Training Agreement. Once a course takes the total value over £1200.00 then no further courses will be included in the Training Agreement.

Once we have collated the information, FFF Ltd will supply the beneficiary with a Training Agreement. This needs to be carefully checked, the beneficiary has 5 working days to get back to us with changes before it is active. There is no guarantee of funding for the events listed in your training agreement. Funding is only secured when we accept a valid notification i.e., you are booked onto a course.

Booking Courses. Once the beneficiary has their Training Agreement, they will be able to contact their preferred training provider to book their course(s). The beneficiary must do this, FFF Ltd. will not arrange your training. You will only get funding from FFF Ltd for courses detailed on your training agreement. We will not fund any other courses.

FFF Ltd has a list of agreed training providers available who will know what to do next. These can be found on the FFF Ltd website. They will notify us of your planned training. We will not accept bookings for courses more than 3 months in advance of the date of notification. We need to be notified of your attendance on the course at least 28 days in advance of the course.

You should expect an invoice for your contribution fee of 50% of the total cost of the course within 5 working days. This must be paid immediately to secure your funding. If you do not pay before this invoice at least 3 working days before the start of the training course, then we will not provide the grant and you will have to pay the full cost.

If you do not attend the event, then you will be liable to pay cancellation charges directly to the Training Provider.

Additional Clause for Employees of a Training Provider

If the Beneficiary and the Trainer/Assessor are employees of the Training Provider, then the following rule applies.

- Where training and formal assessment are separate then we will fund the training using a company trainer, but the assessment must be by an independent assessor.
- Where the training and formal assessment leading to a Certificate of Competence is integrated, then this must be undertaken by an independent trainer/assessor.
- Training leading to a certificate of attendance or similar, can be undertaken by a company trainer. But we would not support one on one, there must be other attendees, preferably from outside the Training Provider company, for the duration of the course. We must have contact details for these attendees if not FFF Beneficiaries.
- Standalone assessments must be by an independent assessor.

Note – Independent assessor means an assessor that is not an employee of the Training Provider or one that is contracted on a full time basis to the Training Provider. Company means the Training Provider.

After the Training Event. The training provider must send the claim invoice and the supporting evidence to FFF Ltd within 6 weeks of the course end date. The supporting evidence must include the attendance register, certificate of competence or training, and feedback where an assessment results in a failure. Invoices without all the required evidence will be returned until all evidence is submitted.

All invoices must contain PO number, Business ID & Name, Trainee ID & Name, Course Title, and the event date. Invoices received without this information will be returned for correction and not paid.

Changes to Scheme Rules

From time to time, we may need to make changes to your contract including the payment rates. If we do, then we will contact you and provide the reasons why we have to make the changes.

Complaints Procedure

Complaints will be dealt with under the Focus on Forestry First Ltd Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure. For a copy or for further advice on how to make a complaint please contact Focus on Forestry First Ltd, details in Section F.

Section E – General Data Protection Regulation: Privacy Notice

This notice informs you about Focus on Forestry First Ltd use of the information used in connection with your application for aid .

The data controller for the information submitted as part of your application is Focus on Forestry First Ltd, C/O Coed Pwllacca, Brynwern, Builth Wells, Powys, LD2 3SE.

The data protection officer for the same information is the Data Protection Officer, Focus on Forestry First Ltd, C/O Coed Pwllacca, Brynwern, Builth Wells, Powys, LD2 3SE.

Email: info@focusonforestryfirst.co.uk

The information will be processed and managed by Focus on Forestry First Ltd in accordance with its obligations and duties under the following European Regulations:

- Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013
- Council Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013
- Council Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 640/2014
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 807/2014
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 808/2014
- Commission Regulation (EU) No 809/2014
- General Data Protection Regulation (EU) No 679/2016

The information will primarily be used for the purposes of processing and determining applications for financial support.

Focus on Forestry First Ltd does not collect any special category data.

1113The information may be used for the following:

- compilation of reports of aggregated data and/or summary statistics to be made publicly available
- informing decisions relating to policy changes and funding including research studies conducted on behalf of the Welsh Government to inform Monitoring and Evaluation of Rural Development Schemes
- protecting applicant's interest in land conservation and issues that may arise due to funding queries
- allowing partner organisations to fulfil their legal duties
- shared with fraud prevention agencies who will use it to prevent fraud and money- laundering and to verify your identity
- publication of certain information and responding to requests for information.

The Publication and Disclosure of Information

Your information, including your personal information, may be the subject of a request by another member of the public. When responding to such requests Focus on Forestry First Ltd may be required to release information, including your personal information.

Rights under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The GDPR gives individuals rights in respect of the personal data held on them. These rights include:

- the right to be informed (this notice)
- the right to ask for and receive copies of the personal data that the Welsh Government holds about them, although the Welsh Government can sometimes withhold some data or not provide copies
- the right, in some circumstances, to prevent or restrict the Welsh Government processing personal data
- the right, in some circumstances, to have wrong data rectified
- the right, in some circumstances, to have data erased (to be forgotten).

If you wish to exercise any of your rights under the GDPR, you should contact the Focus on Forestry First Ltd at the address provided at the beginning of this notice.

Individuals also have the right to ask the Information Commissioner, who enforces and oversees the GDPR, to assess whether or not the processing of their personal data is likely to comply with the GDPR. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House
Water Lane,
Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123

Section F – Contact Details

Contact details are as follows:



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