

Government Forestry Policy Statement

The [Government's response](#) to the Independent Panel on Forestry's final report was published today, 31st January 2013.

Key points from the response being communicated by the Forestry Commission include:

- Our publicly owned forests will stay in public hands. A new independent body to manage our forests for the long-term will be set up, holding the public forest estate in trust for the nation.
- Government will maintain and improve public access to our woods and forests, particularly those close to towns and cities where the greatest number of people can enjoy them.
- Government want to see England's forests and woodlands increase in size and number.
- Everyone has a role to play in managing our existing forests better as well as increasing woodland cover.

The FCTU are considering the content of the response and what it means for our members. It raises further questions following on from the Panel's report, particularly on staffing, funding, timescales, legislation and how the new body independent from Government will function. On the future of the FC, Defra have stated *"the future shape of the Forestry Commission, as recommended by the Panel, along with its functions and powers will be considered by Defra and the Forestry Commission. This will be done alongside the Triennial Review and Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Expert Taskforce."*

We intend to hold further members meetings in England during February, with the intention of agreeing a position on our aims and what we as union members want to see as an acceptable way forward. Details on these meetings will available soon.

Keep informed via your local rep and the [FCTU website](#), or [contact us](#) to send us your views or questions.