

**Rhaglen Weithredu Genedlaethol ar Fawndiroedd:
Adroddiad Blwyddyn 5**

**National Peatland Action Programme:
Year 5 Report**

2024/25

#AdferMawndirCymru
#NaturUwchCarbonIs



#HighNatureLowCarbon
#WalesPeatlandAction

Natural Resources Wales, June 2025

(English language version)

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Fifth Year Highlights: 2024/25

National Peatland Action Programme 2024/25 Highlights

>600ha of restoration activity*

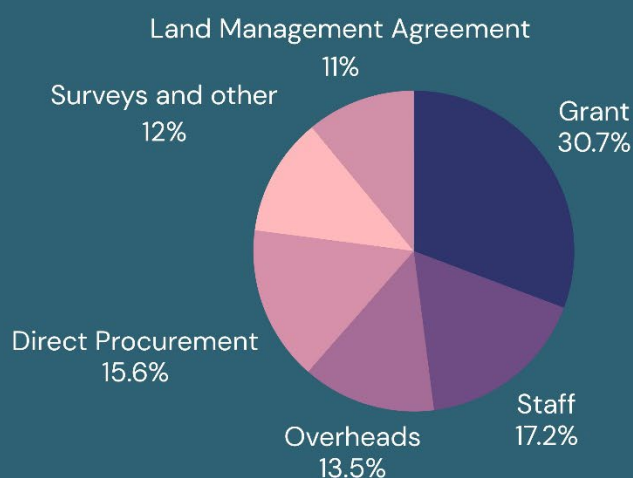
Restoration
at Hafod Elwy, WGWE

14 partners funded via 3
different grant mechanisms.

>41% of restoration activity spend
delivered in collaboration
with partners across Wales.

New Peatland Restoration Grant
launched.

Spend summary



Over 30 practitioners attended
the national practitioners
knowledge-sharing event.



*including 527ha of hydrological and erosion restoration. Reported figures are over 3,200ha of restoration activity when including tree clearance.

Executive Summary

Welsh Government's aim to address the Nature and Climate emergencies through the [Biodiversity Deep Dive Recommendations](#) and Net Zero Plan has been central core aims for the [National Peatland Action Programme](#) (NPAP), managed through Natural Resources Wales (NRW). This is the fifth year of an initial five-year Programme which aimed for 600ha peatland restoration action annually. The five-year target of reaching 3000ha was achieved a year early, at the end of the fourth year (2024). Concluding the fifth year, Wales has restored over 3600ha; setting those peatlands on the recovery pathway to boost nature and support carbon capture.

Through the Biodiversity Deep Dive, Welsh Government (WG) identified a long-term pathway of continuity, upscale and increased targets, with the aim to triple peatland restoration activity by 2031.

This fifth year has been characterised by a combination of delivery, reflection, and forward planning as NPAP looks to accelerate delivery in future years.

Some 2024/25 highlights to be found in this document include:

Restoration delivery

- Over 600 hectares of restoration¹
- Over 3200ha² of restoration activity³
- Over 220ha NPAP direct delivery on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate
- 527ha of hydrological and erosion restoration.
- Funding distribution of:
 - >£1.15M to 14 peatland restoration partner organisations, via 3 grant programmes
 - £323,372 via Land Management Agreements.
- Increased NPAP capacity through the appointment of additional team members.

Wales Peatland Action in partnership

- Coordination of key strategic groups and networks to develop capability, share best practice and improve the flow of information at all levels:
 - Practitioners Group

¹ On a restoration pathway to recovery, not excluding possible future need for follow-up or on-going management. Figures are conservative, based on best available data at the time of reporting until the GIS data is fully quality assured and published on the Wales Peatland Data Portal.

² Note a difference between 'restoration activity' area and 'footprint' area (around 3000ha). For example, if two restoration activities such as tree clearance and hydrological restoration works have been conducted on the same area, these are only counted once for a 'footprint area'.

³ Each intervention is included in activity figures e.g. if tree clearance is undertaken in advance of hydrological works, the area of tree clearance is recorded as an activity and the area of subsequent hydrological restoration is recorded as a separate activity. This figure may also reflect instances where activities happen across financial years but on the same area of peatland. The 'restoration activity' area is larger than the 'footprint'.

- Strategic Partners Group
 - Monitoring Group
 - Evidence Group.
- Support of regional networks and partnerships through the NRW Area Statements.

Resource protection (planning)

- NRW implemented edition 12 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) concerning the avoidance of impacts to irreplaceable peatland habitat and its underpinning peat soil resource.
- Planning casework appraisals at all stages in the DNS process.

Evidence and advice

- Peat depth and condition survey programme of hypermodified and afforested peatland resource.
- Positive indications from preliminary invertebrate monitoring trials.

This has also been a year of collectively consolidating the delivery partnership under the 'Wales Peatland Action' banner, with the unifying aim of 'High Nature Low Carbon'.

1.Introduction

This report describes work undertaken during the fifth year (2024/25) of the National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP).

This is a strategic national Programme funded by Welsh Government (WG) and led by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Programme details can be viewed on a dedicated section of NRW's website ([Natural Resources Wales / The National Peatland Action Programme](#)).

The Programme recognises the intrinsic link between biodiversity benefits provided by healthy peatlands and their role in wildfire prevention, water supply/quality, carbon storage, and greenhouse gas emissions regulation. It aims to increase the ecosystem resilience of Welsh peatlands through a programme of restoration and sustainable management.

The national Programme ([Table 1](#) following) focuses restoration activity across six priority action themes:

- Peat erosion
- Peat drainage
- Sustainable management of degraded upland peatlands
- Sustainable management of degraded lowland peatlands
- Afforested peatland
- Hyper-modified peatlands.

An additional three cross-cutting themes address NPAP's collective capacity and capability in Wales:

- National coordination
- National monitoring and activity capture
- Increasing stakeholder and wider engagement in peatland restoration and its value to society.

Table 1. Summary of NPAP priority action themes and cross-cutting themes.

NPAP Priority Action Themes

Peat erosion



- Peatland erosion results in the loss of peatland vegetation and part or all of the essential supporting peat deposit.
- Erosion results in significant emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) and particulate and dissolved carbon.
- Peat erosion also causes significant drainage impacts which extend well beyond the immediate footprint of erosion features.
- Erosion will be exacerbated by climate change and whilst a relatively local and primarily upland issue, urgent action is required to prevent further peat loss and to encourage its redevelopment through a range of techniques.

Peat drainage

- Active drainage remains widespread and is associated with increased GHG emissions as well as causing unfavourable hydrological regimes for active (peat forming) mire habitats.
- Drainage also introduces positive feedback mechanisms through changes in surface topography which result in greater water loss.



Sustainable management of degraded upland peatlands



- Blanket bog is our most extensive peatland habitat, and its landscape scale gives it particular significance in terms of ecosystem resilience, GHG mitigation, carbon storage, and natural flood-risk management.
- Peat erosion and drainage are key themes in their own right, but further widespread measures are needed to tackle issues of graminoid or ericoid dominance and the restoration of blanket bog from heavily modified precursors.
- The aim of this action theme is to restore blanket peatlands to a condition where low-cost sustainable management is effective in retaining ecosystem service provision and biodiversity interest, and in reducing fire risk.

Sustainable management of degraded lowland peatlands

- Lowland peatlands are a critical resource for peatland biodiversity but are fragmented, with low current resilience.
- Modified lowland peatlands release significant GHG emissions and may store large amounts of carbon per hectare due to the depth of peat deposits.
- This theme focuses on restoring sites to a point where ongoing sustainable management (including seasonal grazing where appropriate) can sustain ecosystem service provision and biodiversity interest.



Afforested peatlands



- Afforestation results in increased emissions of greenhouse gases from the peat surface and causes peatland habitat degradation.
- Afforested peatlands are an extensive component of the Welsh peatland resource, mainly in upland contexts.
- The current focus of the Programme has been on restoring areas of peatland with low yield class plantations, and also open ground within the Welsh Government Woodland Estate.

Hyper-modified peatlands

- These comprise our most heavily modified peatlands and include heavily drained areas under improved grassland and arable land use. The most intensive GHG emissions arising from peatlands in Wales are from these categories.
- This priority action will seek to begin through a process of consultation and the use of demonstration sites.



Cross-cutting Themes

National coordination

- National coordination is needed to build capacity and capability in delivering peatland restoration on the part of all NPAP partners.
- The Area Statement process forms an important part of this work, with a national practitioner forum being used to promote best practice across all aspects of NPAP.
- The theme also focuses on developing guidance where needed and helping in the provision of training for both practitioners and contractors to upscale the ability to deliver restoration projects.

- A national coordinated programme of activity recording and outcome monitoring is needed, to ensure accurate reporting of project actions and outcomes, for a wide range of reporting drivers.
- This work is also needed to guide and target further effort and ensure a focus on priority locations, across the six priority action themes.
- This priority action theme is supported by a dedicated post within the NPAP structure, namely the Data and GIS Officer.

National monitoring and activity capture

Increasing stakeholder and wider engagement in peatland restoration and its value to society

- Peatlands are one of Wales' main environmental assets, providing an exemplary aspect of the principle of employing nature-based solutions to deliver Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) in Wales.
- This cross-cutting theme works to increase engagement in peatland restoration on the part of stakeholders and the wider community.
- This priority action theme is supported by a dedicated post within the NPAP structure, namely the Communications and Partnerships Engagement Officer.

2. Programme Resourcing

The total spent by the Programme in 2024/25 was £3,467,523 Capital and £347,949 Revenue. 100% funding was provided by Welsh Government:

- £3,467,523 capital provided by the Rural Investment Scheme
- £347,949 revenue provided from the Climate Change & Environmental Sustainability budget.

2.1. Funding mechanisms used to deliver the 2024/25 Programme

To ensure effective delivery of the allocated budget within a challenging timescale, NPAP made use of a variety of funding mechanisms to both reduce project risks and maximise diversity of delivery, also to enable delivery across different organisations in Wales.

NPAP used the following mechanisms to fund and deliver capital projects:

- grants,
- direct procurement, and
- land management agreements.

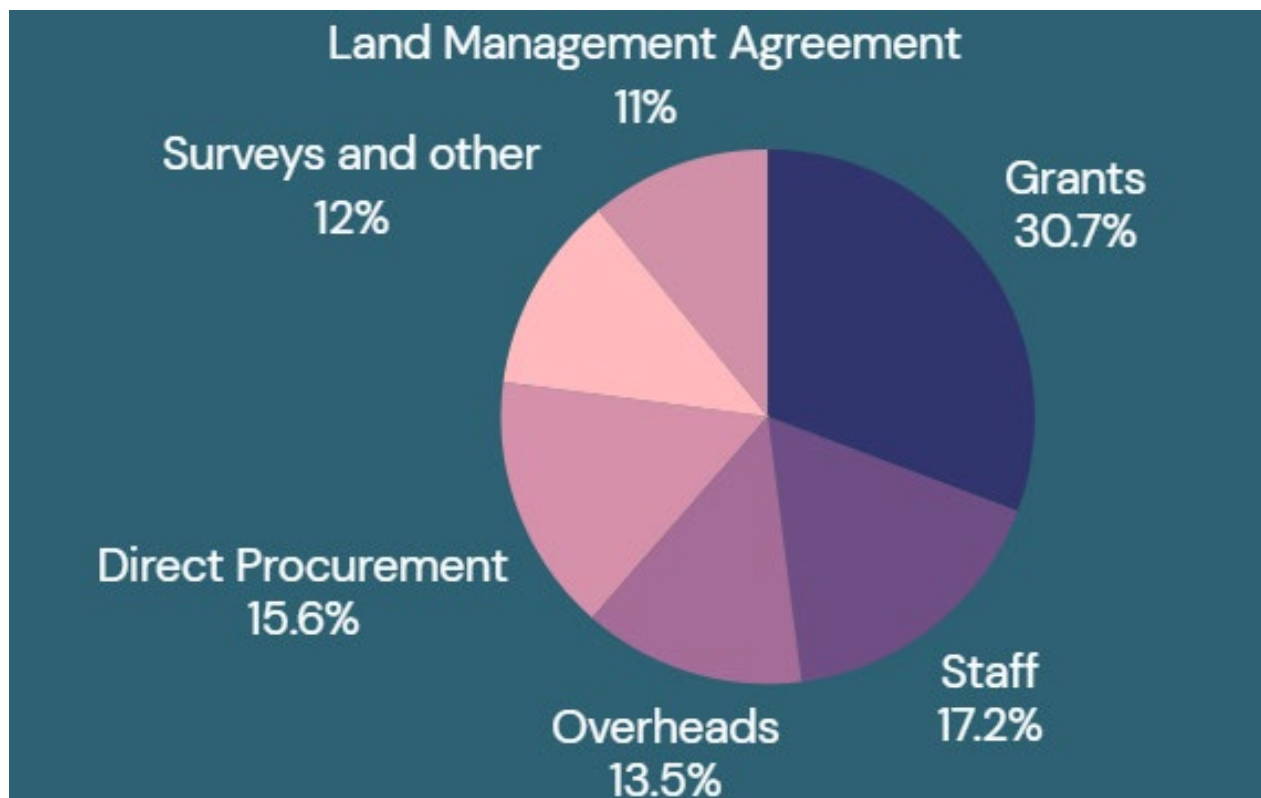


Figure 1. Pie chart showing breakdown of spend areas for 2024/25.

2.2. Grant aid

Delivery of the National Peatland Action Programme requires the concerted and coordinated input of a wide range of partner bodies, many of whom have significant expertise in peatland restoration.

Grant aid represents a key means of partner engagement, enabled by NRW's grant mechanism portfolio. NPAP allocated a total of £1,152,532 across 14 recipients via 3 separate grants in 2024/25.

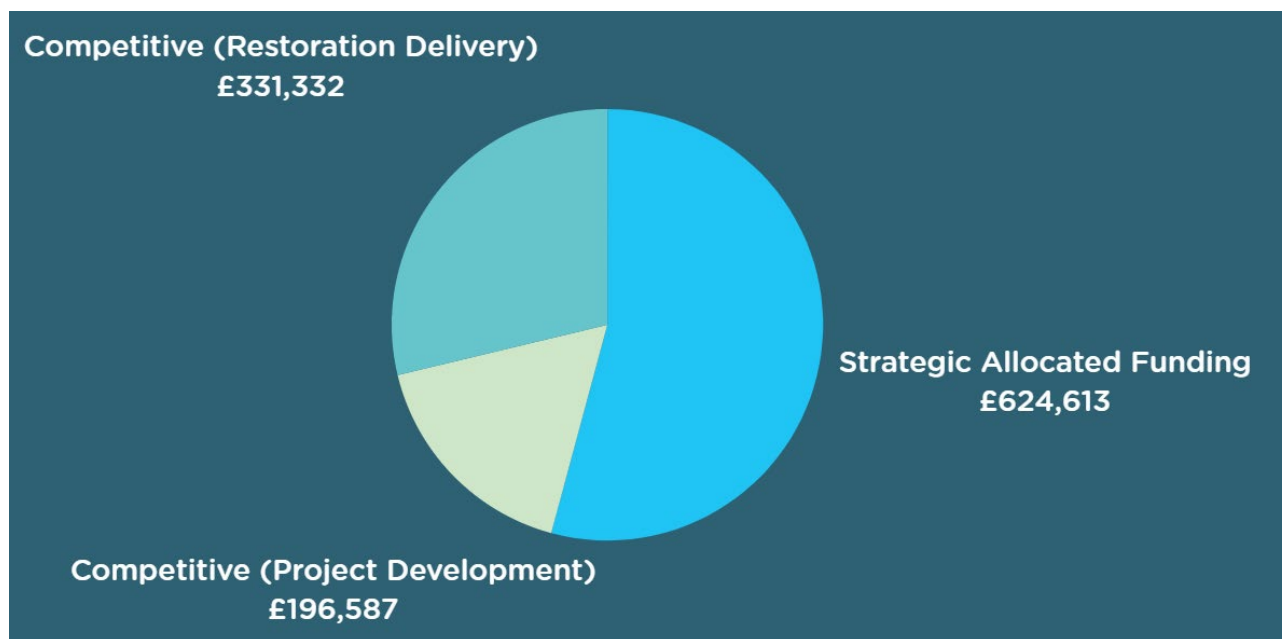


Figure 2. Pie chart showing total value awarded under each of the three separate grants 2024/25.

2.2.1 Strategic Allocated Funding

The Strategic Allocated Funding (SAF) mechanism is designed to enable delivery of NRW priority work by strategic partners, with budgets allocated between partners according to a formula based on objective criteria. In 2023/24 NPAP used SAF to allocate grants to a range of grant recipients over two years (2023/24 and 2024/25), with nine accepting the SAF offer.

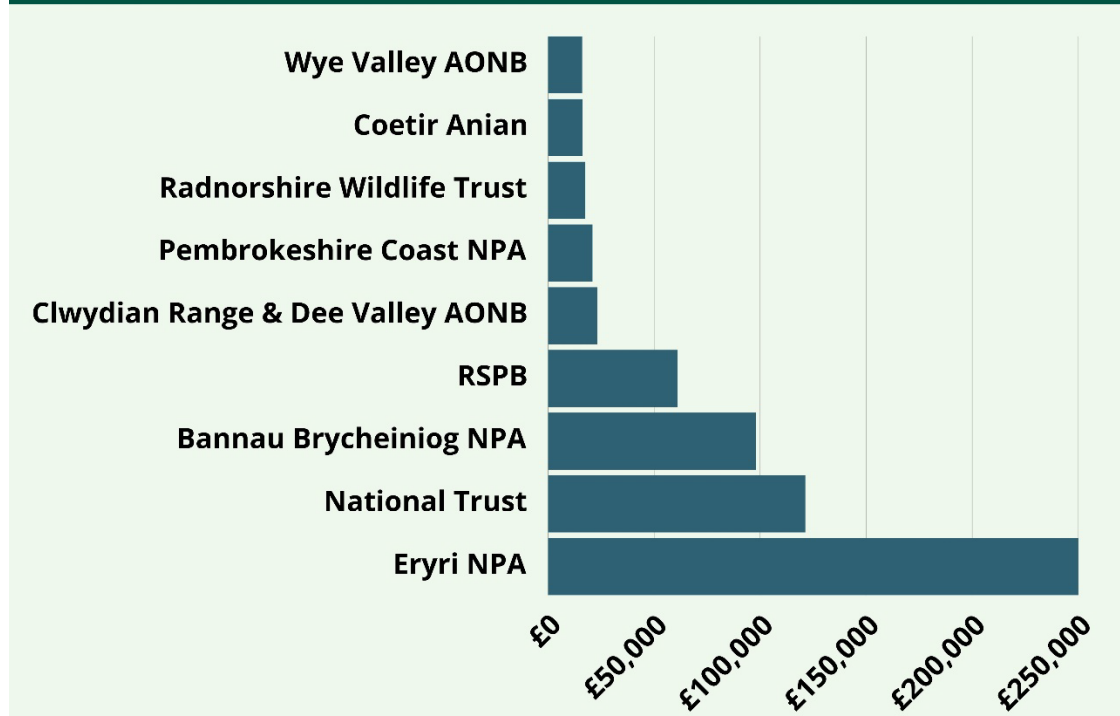
Work was undertaken in 2024/25 to seek approval for a grant strategy for 2025 to 2028. Approvals were given by December 2024. SAF allocation letters were issued to six partners in December 2024. A competitive Peatland Restoration Grant (enabling development and/or delivery action) was launched on 18 December 2024. Following application assessments and processing, SAF grants were awarded on 1 April 2025. The competitive Peatland Restoration Grant awards are expected in May 2025.

Figure 3. Both chart and associated table below show peatland restoration funded through the Strategic Allocated Funding (SAF) Grant in Year 5 (2024/25). The total allocated to partners through SAF being £700k for 2024/25, the total accepted was £624,660 and the total spent by partners coming to £597,719.

Peatland Restoration funded through the Strategic Allocated Funding (SAF) Grant

Total accepted by partners through SAF: **£624,660**

Total spent by partners through SAF: **£597,719**



Strategic Allocated Funding	Allocation in 2023/24	Allocation in 2024/25
Wye Valley AONB	£16,122	£16,122
Coetir Anian	£16,309	£16,309
Radnorshire Wildlife Trust	£17,596	£17,596
Pembrokeshire Coast NPA	£20,985	£20,985
Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB	£23,218	£23,218
RSPB	£61,064	£61,064
Bannau Brycheiniog NPA	£98,041	£98,041
National Trust	£121,325	£121,325
Eryri NPA	£250,000	£250,000

2.2.2. Competitive grants

Development Grants (2024/25)

A new round of Development Grant was awarded in early 2024 to nine successful applicants. Grant values ranged from £10k to £30k. This Development Grant helped partners take key steps in assessing their peatland/s before submitting an action plan to support future restoration. Examples of actions taken to prepare for shovel-ready peatland restoration included gathering data on sites including GIS data on peat depth and artificial drainage, preparing to re-establish sphagnum moss, and community liaison and securing permissions.

Total allocated through Development Grant: £196,586
Total spent by partners through Development Grants: £193,209

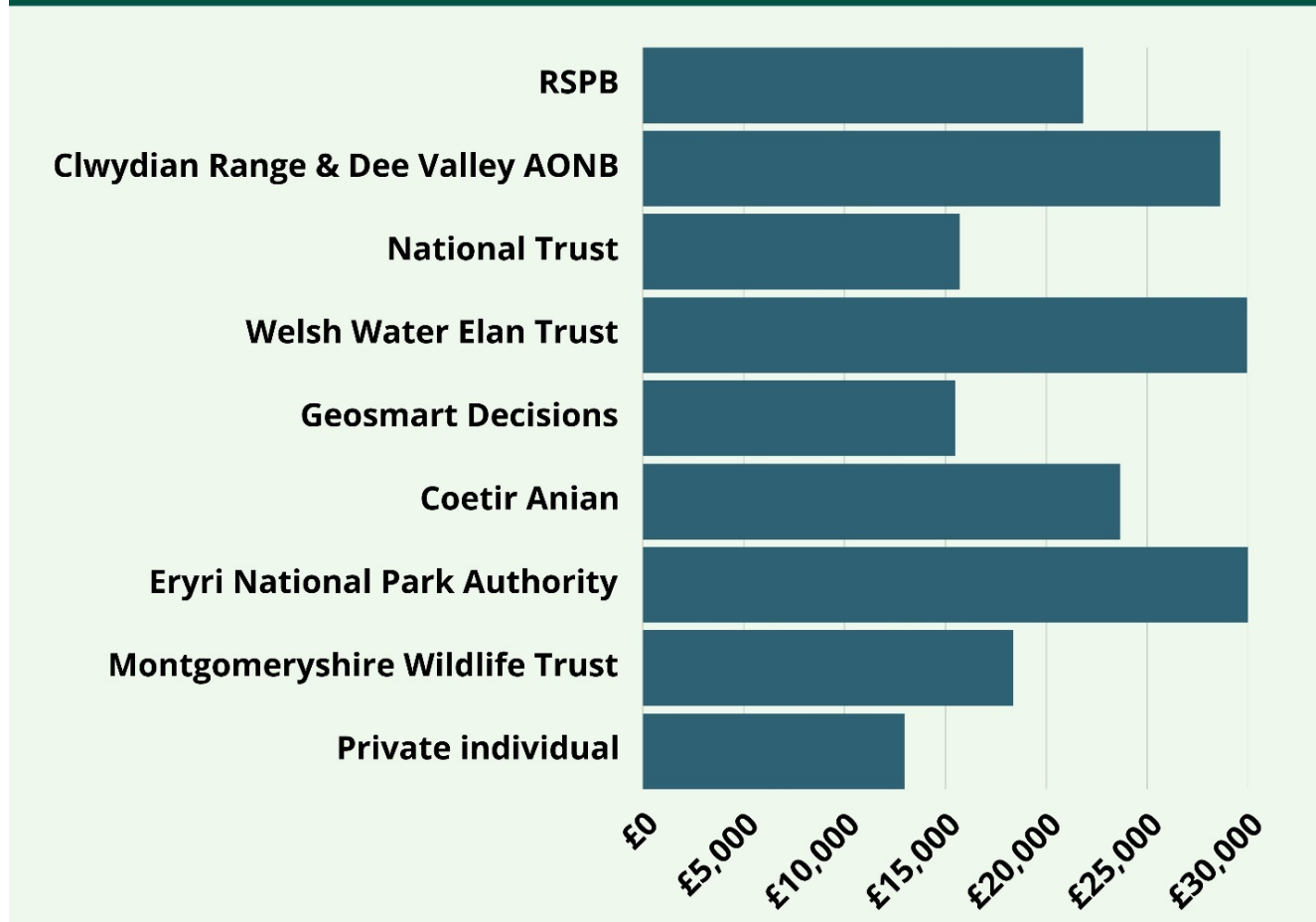


Figure 4. Awards of the Peatland Development Grants to develop plans for shovel-ready restoration.

Delivery Grants (2023/24 – 2024/25)

A competitive grant for restoration Delivery was also launched in March 2023 and awarded to four successful applicants in September 2023, with completion by January 2025. Recipients of the Delivery Grant include existing partners and private landowners. The restoration Delivery grant delivered ~218ha or restoration activity by four recipients.

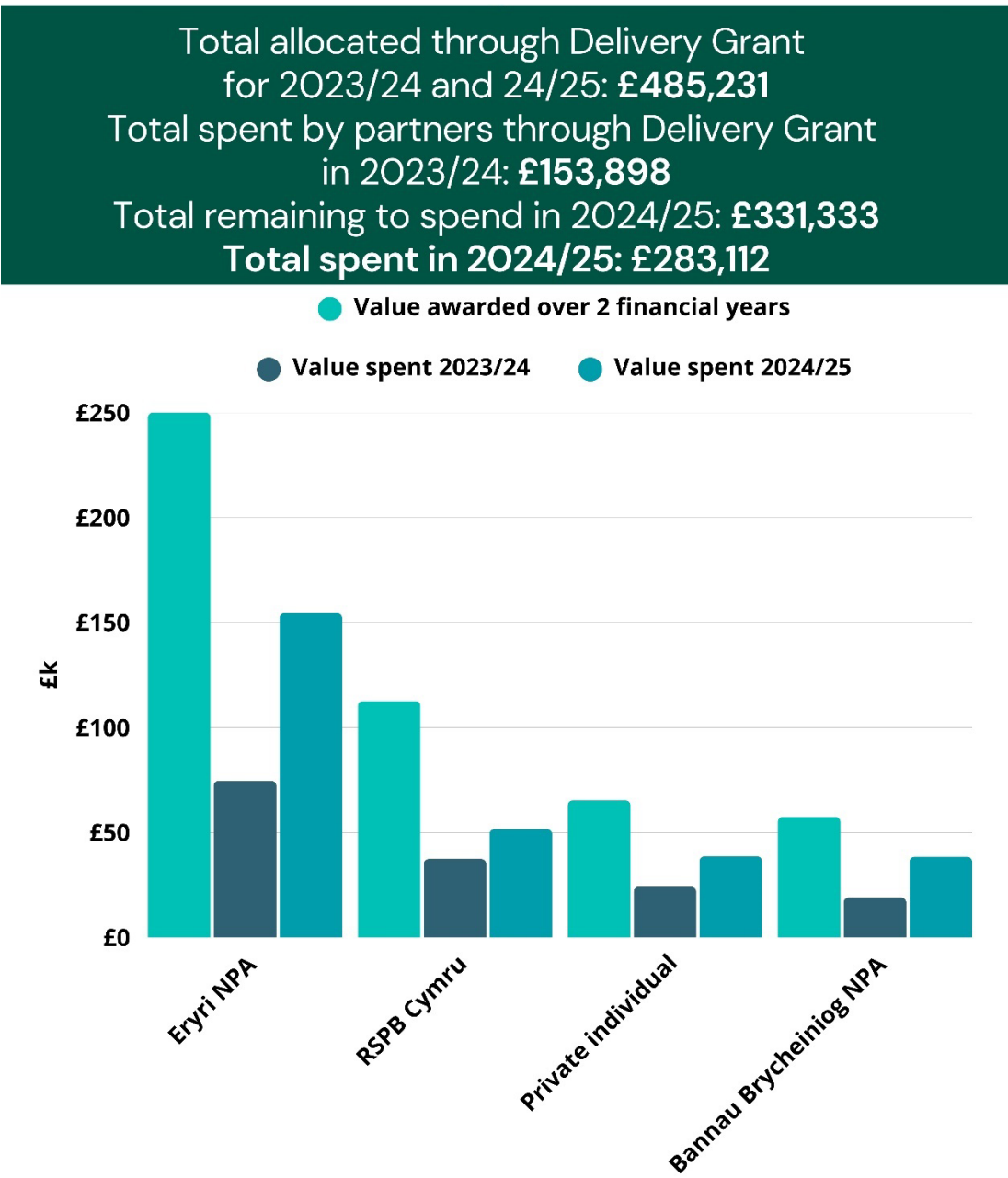


Figure 5. Awards of the Peatland Delivery Grants to deliver peatland restoration.

Proactive engagement has continued between NPAP and all 14 grant recipients. Engagement focused on supporting grant recipients with the grant process, resolving any issues that might arise, facilitating knowledge sharing between partners, and developing NPAP's understanding of how different grant partners interact with peatland restoration. Engagement has taken the form of regular meetings, reviews, and site visits.

2.2.3 A new Grant strategy moving forward

A three-year grant programme (subject to annual confirmation of funding) has been established to run from 2025/26 to 2027/28. This includes a three-year SAF grant (total value of up to £2M p.a.) to a reduced number of strategic partners (six). These partners will receive a higher allocation than previously because 1) the increased funding/upscaling of NPAP/Wales Peatland Action, and 2) confidence they have capacity to manage this scale of funding.

2.3. Direct procurement



Figure 6. Image of Hafod Elwy (phase 3 works), Alwen, Welsh Government Woodland Estate.

Direct procurement of restoration groundworks again focused on areas of the WGWE. Afforested peatland sites were selected following discussion with NRW's National Forest Planning Team and direction from the Land Stewardship Department to focus on areas of low yield class (<10) and existing open ground (as defined through the Forest Resource Planning process).

NPAP has also funded works on Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) National Nature Reserves (NNRs) supported by local NNR and integrated workforce teams. NPAP directly purchased works through NPAP's framework agreements.

2.4. Section 16 Land Management Agreements

Direct funding by NRW of restoration or management activity on third-party land is generally governed by a Section 16 Management Agreement (S16 LMA).

In 2024/25, restoration works were funded via three separate Land Management Agreements.



Figure 7. Large-scale upland blanket bog restoration on Abergwngu, Cwm Elan Valley.

2.4.1 Other Land Management Agreements

NPAP also funded peat restoration requests from other NRW teams delivering across Wales. A total of 11 projects (less than £30k each in value) were funded, including work at Llyn Llech Owain in Carmarthenshire.

3. Overview of work delivered during Year 5

Following are some key project summaries with figures illustrating key areas of Programme delivery achieved in 2024/25.

3.1. Peatland restoration through capital delivery

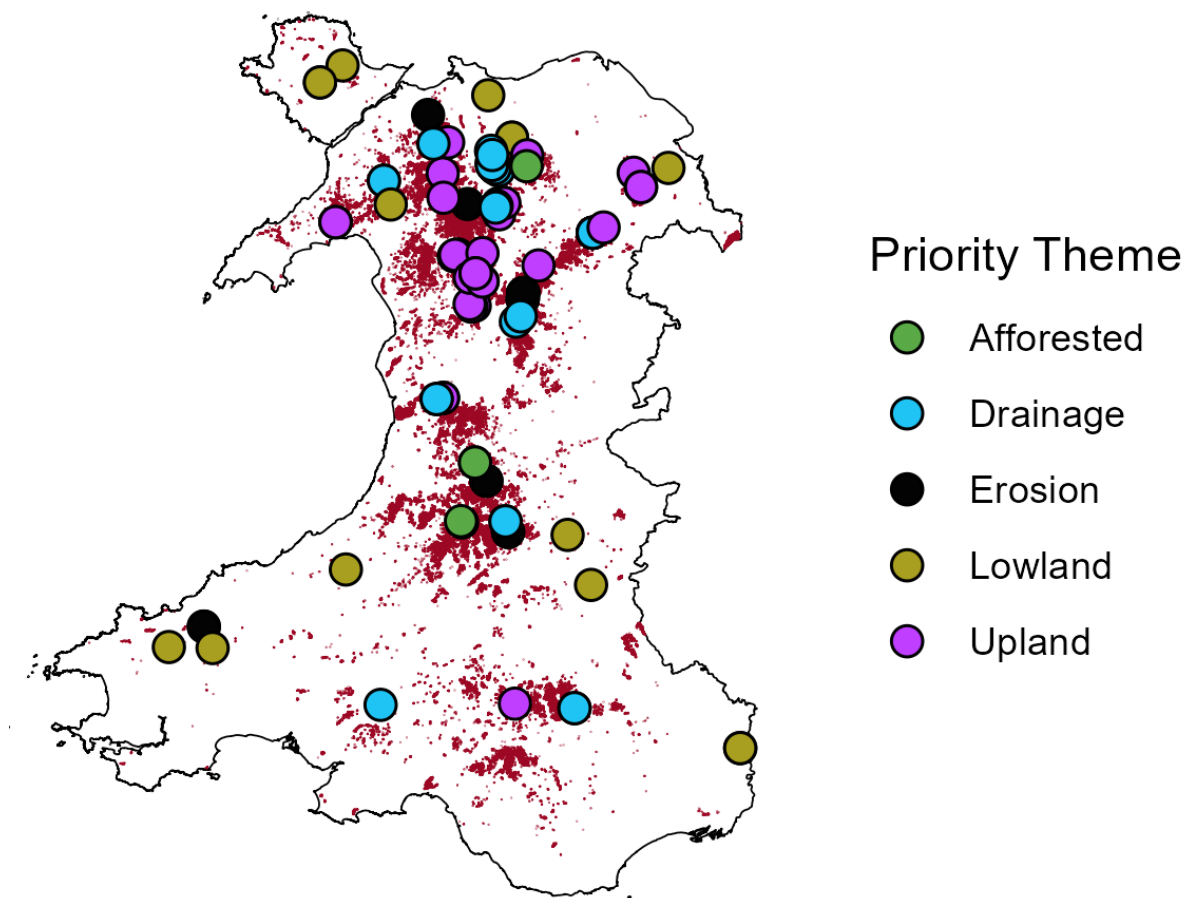


Figure 8. Map layer showing the location of restoration activity in 2024/25, and the main priority theme addressed at each, overlain on the Wales Peatland Map.

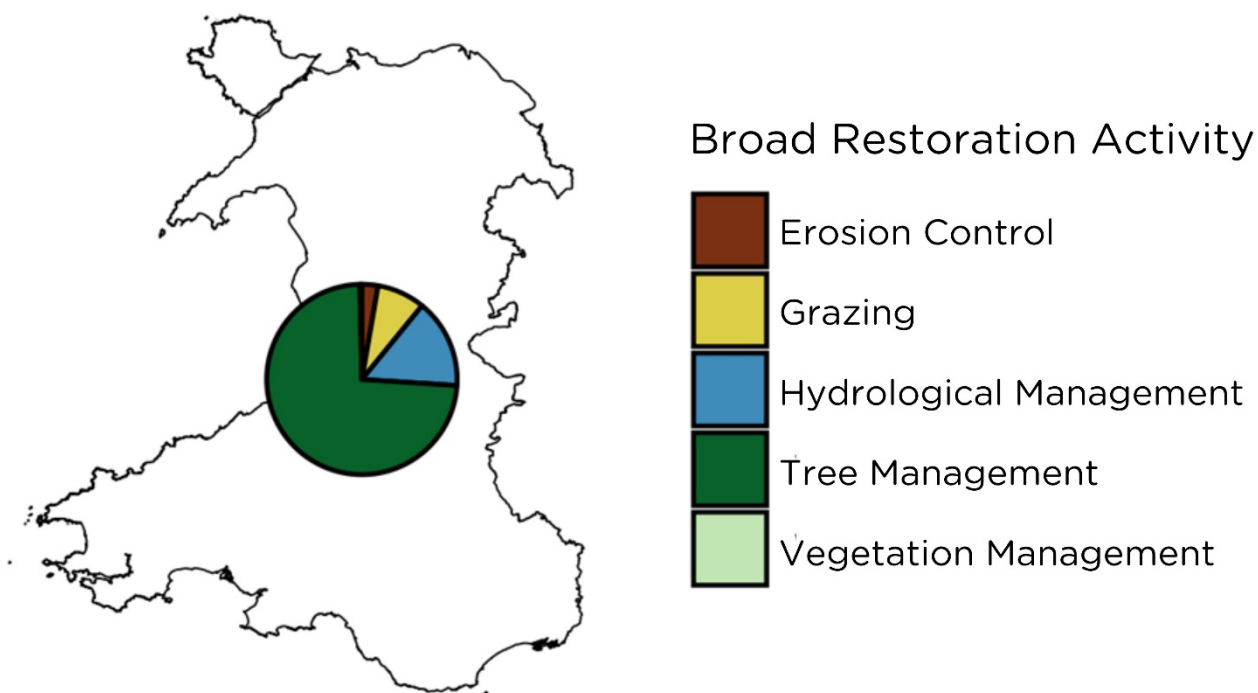


Figure 9. Pie chart on a map, and linked table below, show summary of broad restoration activity types targeted in 2024/25.

Restoration activity:	Ha*
Hydrological Management	445.18
Erosion Control	81.38
Vegetation Management	11.14
Tree Management	2404.47
Grazing Management	260.6

* Figures are conservative, based on best available data at the time of reporting until the GIS data is fully quality assured and published on the Wales Peatland Data Portal.

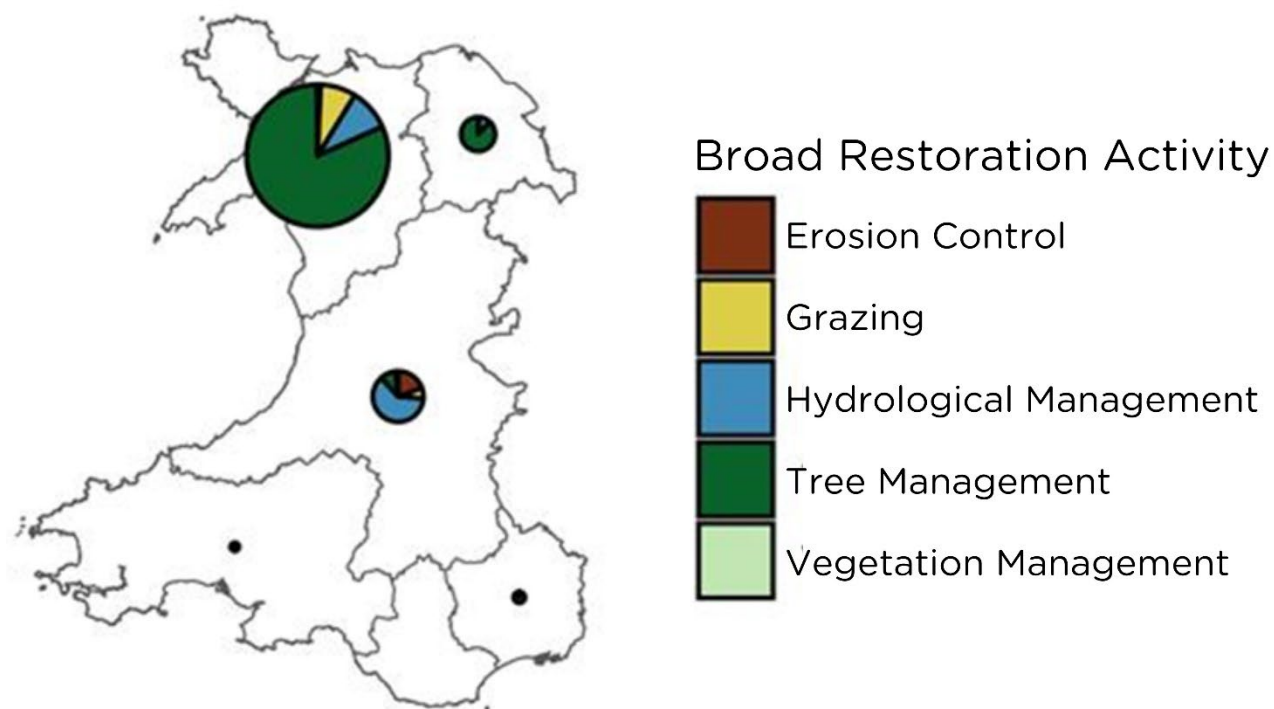


Figure 10. Pie charts on a map, and linked table below, show summary of broad restoration activity types, by operational area, in 2024/25.

Operational Area	Erosion control	Grazing	Hydrological management	Tree management	Vegetation management	Total Ha
Mid Wales	61.49	23.67	162.93	36.03	5.02	289.14
North East Wales	0.91	0	17.86	141.2	0	159.97
North West Wales	18.98	224.04	261.81	2227.27	3.38	2735.48
South East Wales	0	8.73	0	0	0	8.73
South West Wales	0	4.16	2.58	0	2.74	9.48

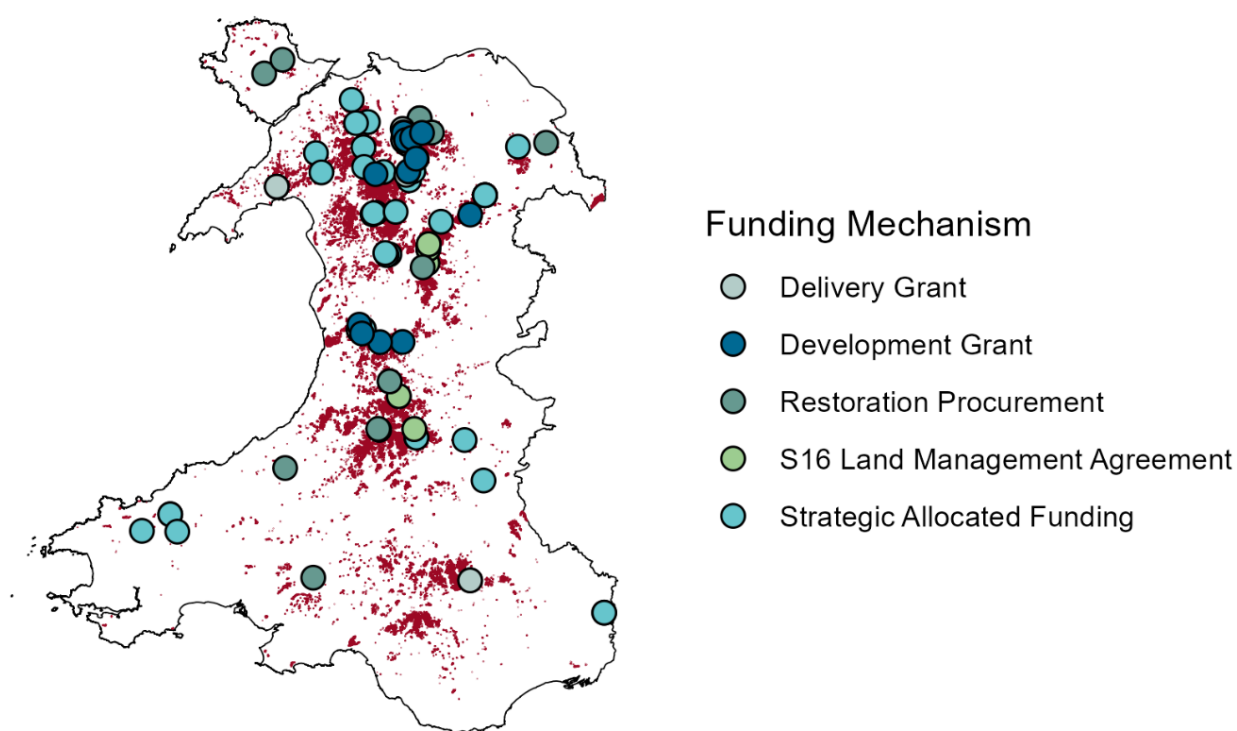


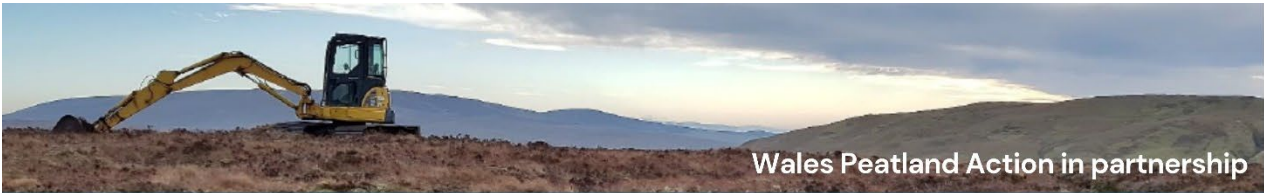
Figure 11. Map layer showing the location of restoration activity in 2024/25, and the funding mechanism used for each project, overlain on the Wales Peatland Map.

Table 2. Breakdown of the ground delivery against mechanism used 2024/25.

Mechanism	Reported ha*	Main priority themes addressed
Strategic Allocated Funding Grant	2396	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peatland drainage Peat erosion Sustainable management of upland peatland
Delivery Grant	38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peatland drainage Peat erosion
Section 16 Land Management Agreement	209	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peatland drainage Peat erosion Sustainable management of upland peatland
Direct procurement of groundworks	151	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Afforested peatlands Sustainable management of lowland peatlands

* Ha figure is subject to review to bring it in-line with NPAP recording methodology and has some missing data. Figures in this table, reported for SAF grants includes substantial hecтарages where the main activity has been *sitka* seed-in removal.

3.2. Eryri National Park SAF



**Funded
by NPAP
through
SAF grant**

>2456ha

of restoration activity*



*NPAP is working to improve consistency of reporting ha under restoration activity

3.3. Bannau Brycheiniog NPA SAF



**Bannau
Brycheiniog**

**Funded by NPAP
through SAF grant
12ha**

of restoration activity*



*NPAP is working to improve consistency of reporting ha under restoration activity

3.4. National Trust SAF



Wales Peatland Action in partnership



**Funded by NPAP
through SAF grant**

16ha of restoration activity*



*NPAP is working to improve consistency of reporting ha under restoration activity



3.5. RSPB SAF



Wales Peatland Action in partnership

12ha
of restoration activity*

**Funded by NPAP
through SAF grant**



*NPAP is working to improve consistency of reporting ha under restoration activity

3.6. Restoration work funded through the SAF grant (all less than £25k in value)



Wales Peatland Action in partnership

**Funded by NPAP
through SAF grant**
(all less than £25k in value)

~80ha
*of restoration activity




Brynau Clwyd a Dyffryn Dyfrdwy
 Clwydian Range and Dee Valley
Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Coetir Anian  **Cambrian Wildwood**




Radnorshire Wildlife Trust
 Ymddiriedolaeth Natur
Sir Faesyfed



wye valley dyffryn gwy
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Ardal o Harddwch Naturiol Eithriadol




Parc Cenedlaethol Arfordir Penfro
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

*NPAP is working to improve consistency of reporting ha under restoration activity

3.7. Land Management Agreements


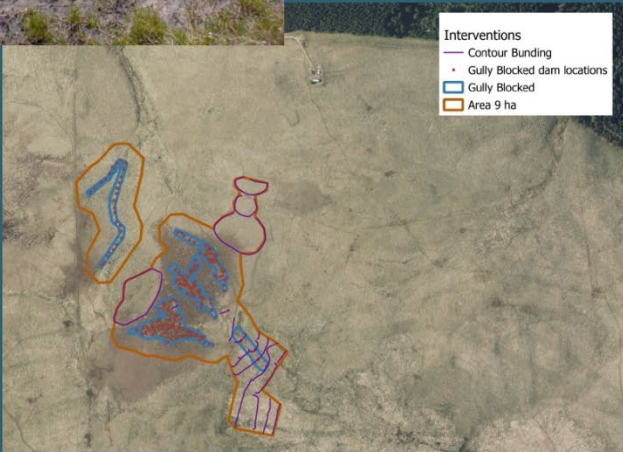

3.7.1 Cwm Elan Valley

Wales Peatland Action in partnership

**Funded by NPAP through Section 16
Land Management Agreements**

Ymddiriedolaeth
Cwm Elan
Elan Valley
Trust

28ha
of restoration activity*



*NPAP is working to improve consistency of reporting ha under restoration activity

3.7.2 RSPB



**Funded by NPAP through Section 16
Land Management Agreements**

140ha
of restoration activity*



3.8. NRW direct procurement



3.9. Resource Protection

Planning Casework

Development, including of renewable energy schemes in the Welsh uplands, poses the potential to damage or destroy both peat soils and peatland habitats.

Planning Policy Wales

During 2024/25 NRW implemented edition 12 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) concerning the avoidance of impacts to irreplaceable peatland habitat and its underpinning peat soil resource. The position is summarised as:

- Developments should avoid peat soils and peatland habitats on peat soils as a matter of principle. Any further loss or damage to our most carbon-rich ecosystems in Wales should be avoided given the twin and interdependent imperatives posed by the Nature and Climate emergencies. NRW will therefore object/raise concerns to any impact on peat soils and peatland habitats on peat soils. The judgement concerning whether an impact on irreplaceable peatland habitat could be justifiable on “wholly exceptional”^[1] grounds is a matter for the decision-maker rather than NRW, though NRW would advise on the significance of impacts. This principle also applies, in the case of peat soils, to situations where “other significant material considerations” might justify approval of a damaging development, although here again NRW would only advise on the significance of impacts.
- Impacts on shallow peat soil and peat habitat on shallow peat soil: NRW advises that it is good practice to also apply the mitigation hierarchy to assess and seek to avoid impacts on shallow peat soils where these (i) support semi-natural peatland habitat, and/or (ii) are functionally significant for contiguous deeper peat deposits.
- Compensation: In view of the specific past environmental conditions and the time required for the development of peat profiles and peatland ecosystems, NRW will advise that compensation for impacts resulting in the destruction (e.g. by development footprint) of peat soils and peatland habitats is not generally regarded as feasible.
- Minor residual impacts: Exceptionally, direct minor residual impacts on peat and peatland habitats, and indirect impacts on adjacent peat and peatland habitat, may be acceptable, provided applicants can demonstrate that:
 - every effort has been taken to minimise impacts through avoidance (including at the site selection stage) based on a detailed understanding of the location of peat resources at a site
 - effective mitigation for minimised impacts can be applied through evidenced best practice and design detail
 - compensation amounts to a significant multiple of the impact, and
 - proposed compensation measures are capable of being secured for the long-term.

Planning Casework – Developments of National Significance (DNS)

Across the reporting period, a number of cases were appraised. These included proposals at all stages in the DNS process. NRW officers made representations and gave evidence at the Pen March DNS Hearing in November 2024.

[\[1\]](#) PPW ed. 12.

4. Coordinating and supporting delivery

The distinction between NPAP's strategic role and delivery role is shown in Figure 12. NPAP delivery informs strategy as does the communication with external and internal partners. Conversely, the strategic role allows NPAP to provide cohesion and facilitate best practice in delivery and reporting by internal and external partners.

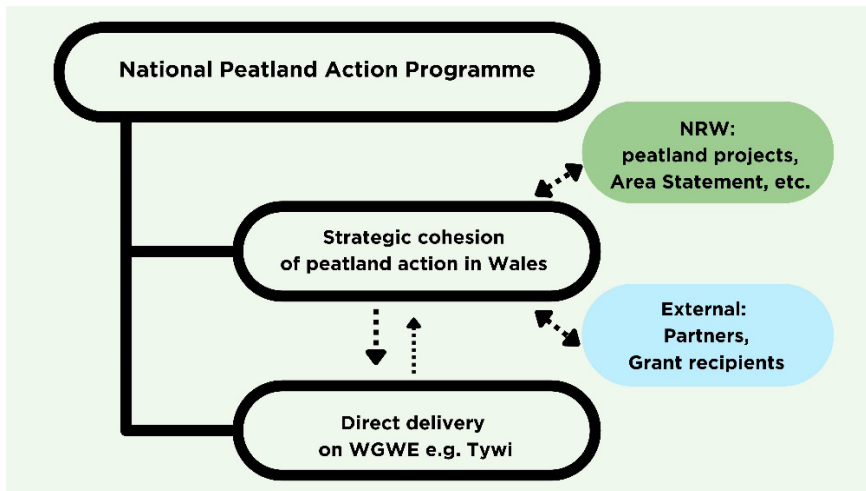


Figure 12. Figure showing two distinct roles for NPAP – strategic lead and direct delivery.

Although external partners function under different organisations, they are integrated through the delivery and coordination structure of NPAP (see Figure 13). Therefore, as well as the direct delivery of NPAP, the success of this wider Wales Peatland Action in partnership is reflected in this report.

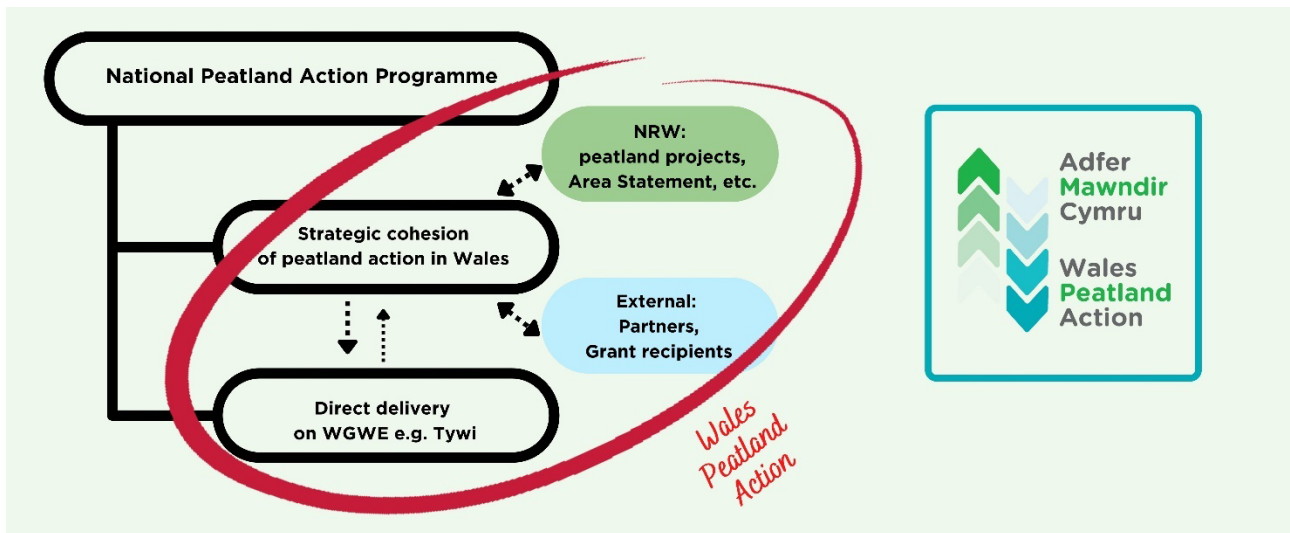


Figure 13. Figure showing that Wales Peatland Action is a partnership approach and includes all peatland restoration action funded by Welsh Government.

4.1. Strategic partnerships

To maximise both time and cost effectiveness, and the long-term impact of peatland restoration action, NPAP has mapped out key partnership or network groups.

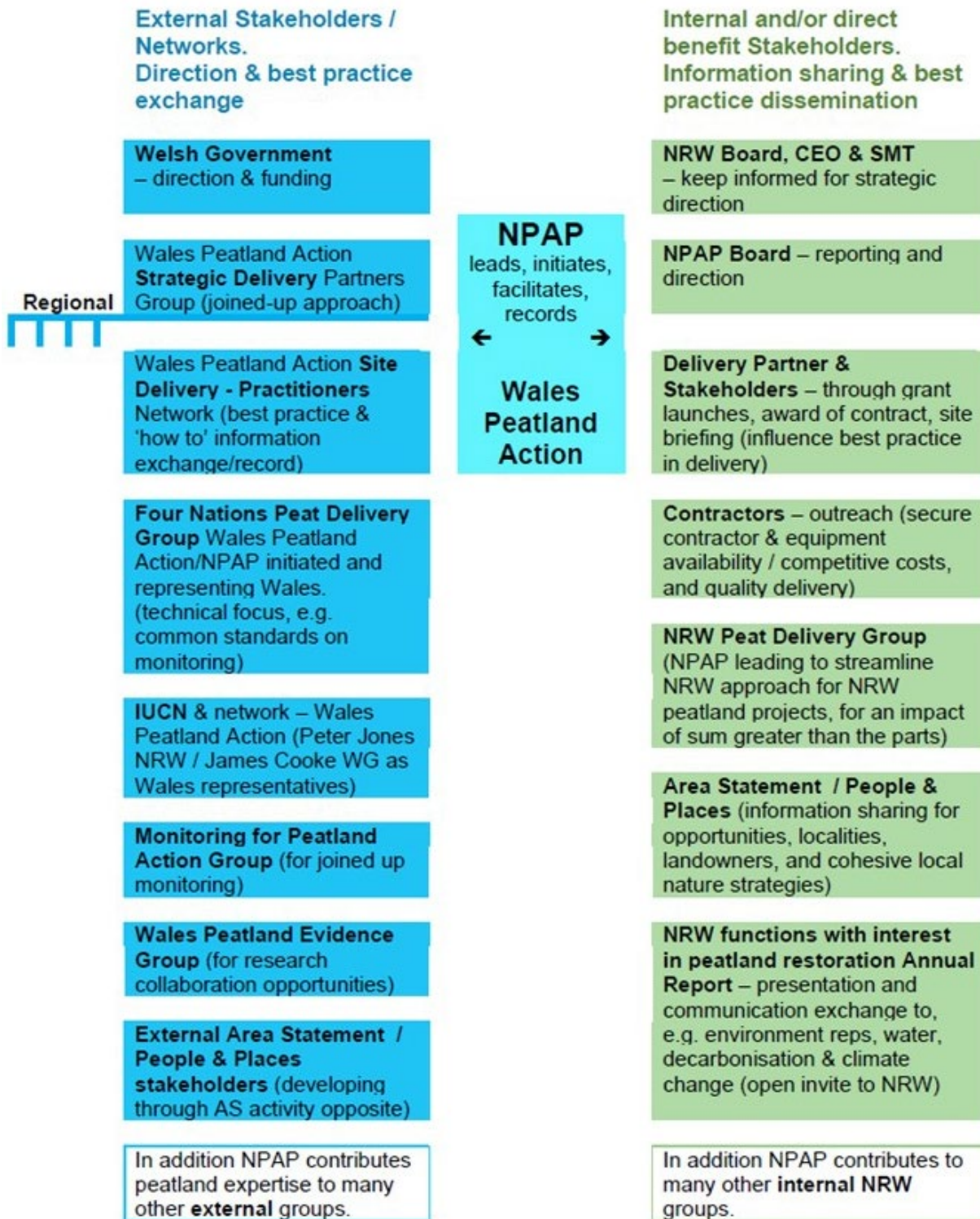


Figure 14. The relationship chart and the linked tables following provide an overview of NPAP's strategic role. They map the External and Internal partnerships, stakeholder groups and networks convened or contributed to by NPAP.

External partnerships, stakeholder groups and networks		
Name	Aim	Dates / regularity
Welsh Government liaison	NPAP reports and WG provides strategic direction and funding.	Regular as per need.
Wales Peatland Action Strategic Delivery Partners Group	Joined up strategic approach. Support information exchange, joint recognition of priorities, strong partnership working and identify other funding opportunities.	Every 6 months: 13/6/2024 12/12/2024.
Wales Peatland Action Site Delivery – Practitioners Network	Best practice on-site learning with 'how to' practical information exchange of what worked, and lessons learnt.	2-day event in south Wales 2023. 1-day event in north Wales April 2024. 2-day event planned in mid-Wales May 2025.
Four Nations Peat Delivery Group (Wales Peatland Action/NPAP initiated and representing Wales)	Address common challenges through collaboration, with initial priority focusing on reporting standards and methodologies.	As per need, annual.
IUCN UK Peatland Programme Steering Group (Dr Peter Jones NRW/NPAP and James Cooke WG as Wales representatives)	Support work of IUCN UK Peatland Programme. Provide input to wider IUCN engagement through articles / presentations or at conferences.	Membership of Programme Steering Group (PSJ) and attendance at quarterly meetings.
Wales Peatland Action Monitoring Group	Develop & gain from peatland restoration monitoring with view to sharing best practice and standardising.	Every 6 months: 5/6/2024 22/1/2025.
Wales Peatland Action Evidence Group	Develop & gain from peatland research, identifying research gaps, funding, as well as opportunities for partner collaboration and dissemination.	Every 6 months: 25/9/2024 26/3/2025.
External Area Statement / People & Places stakeholder meetings	Relationships developed with external groups through the internal NPAP & AS teams' collaboration.	As required, following opportunities identified by AS teams.

Name	Aim	Dates / regularity
Soils Policy Technical Advisory Group	Ensure collaborative working between NRW/Welsh Government. NPAP provides updates.	4-6 weekly
Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (LULUCF) – Peat Data Sub-group	Ensure peat restoration activity can be used for national greenhouse gas inventory reporting.	Annually
GGR-Peat (Greenhouse Gas Removal by Accelerated Peat Formation) Expert Advisory Group	Project is examining the potential for accelerating carbon accumulation in certain types of highly modified peatland.	6 months
Peatland & Historic Environment Group	Identify overlap and dovetail common issues to be addressed.	Occasional
Peatland Code Technical Advisory Board	UK approach to Peatland Code – feedback on development in Wales.	6 months

Internal stakeholder groups and networks

Name	Aim	Format / regularity
NRW Board, CEO & Senior Management Team	Keep informed for strategic direction & support.	Reports, presentations, and site visits.
NPAP Board	Reporting and oversight.	Every 2 months. In 2024 this transitioned into the NPAP Board for upscale.
Delivery Partners & Stakeholders	Ensure best practice and quality delivery on all NPAP-funded peatland restoration.	Ongoing in conjunction with funding awards, contract management, site briefings, and reviews.
Contractors	Secure contractors & equipment availability. Verify competitive costs and quality delivery.	Ongoing in conjunction with procurement framework, contract management, site briefings, and reviews.
NRW Peat Delivery Group	Foster a cohesive NRW approach to peatland restoration interventions and opportunities.	Every 3 months, with option of interim contact of sub-groups.
Area Statement / People & Places	Cohesive local peatland nature strategies. Information sharing on People & Places/NPAP projects, opportunities, localities, and landowner interest. Leading to engagement with external stakeholders as per Area Statement recommendation.	With individual Area Statement teams. In 2024/25 with the areas with the highest peatland coverage, the Mid Wales and North West Wales teams.

Name	Aim	Format / regularity
NRW functions with interest in peatland restoration (e.g. environment, water, decarbonisation & climate change)	Effective communication across NRW functions with a catch-all opportunity for any employee in NRW who has links or an interest in peatland restoration to join a presentation and Q&A on NPAP's work.	Recording of 2024 webinar and Q&A available on the internal webinar series library. Webinar on upscale planned for 2025/26.

NPAP also supports other teams and colleagues across NRW, typically with advice relating to peatland management and restoration.

4.2. Highlighting some key Wales and UK partnerships

NPAP has continued to develop and deliver its ambitions communication, engagement, and partnership approach in 2024/25. Figure 15 summarises key engagement events across three main theme areas. Below is an overview of some of 2024/25 highlights.

2024/25 Ongoing group, partnership, and engagement events by type

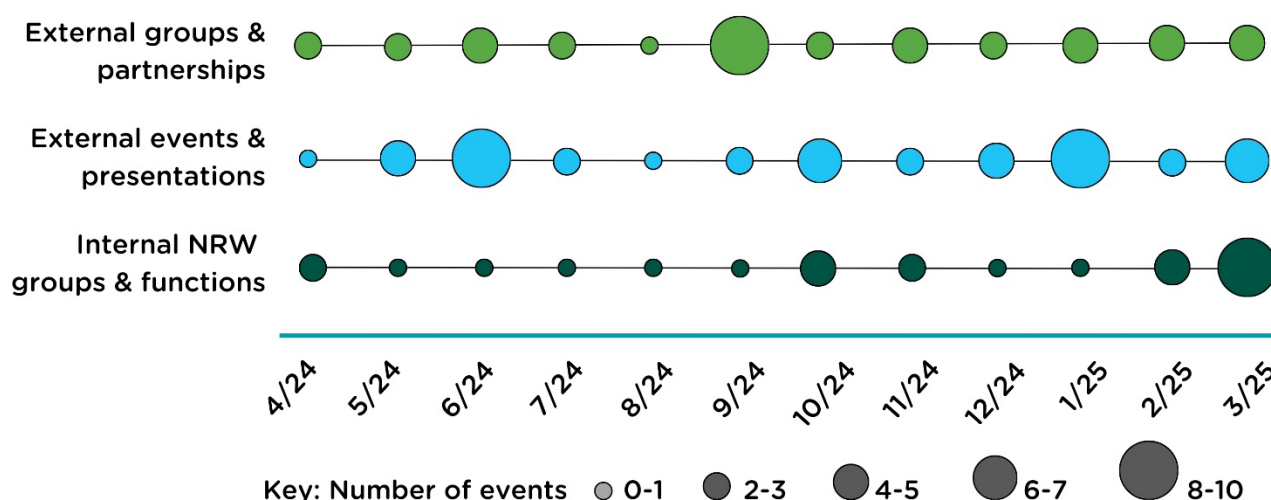


Figure 15. 2024/25 Summary of group, partnership, and engagement by event type.

Wales – Area Statement Partnerships place-based engagement

Coordinating, supporting, and helping to enable restoration delivery by partners features as one of the three cross-cutting themes of NPAP. The importance of Area Statements is recognised in WG's Natural Resources Policy and is enshrined in legislation as Section 11 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The Area Statement (AS) approach underpins NPAP's work in this area. The six terrestrial AS partnerships (see Figure 16) provide existing groupings of stakeholders NPAP can use to ensure a collaborative approach to the development of restoration programmes at the

most appropriate scale and at the right locations within the overall guiding framework of the national Programme.

This place-based approach is a cornerstone of the AS philosophy and helps to ensure NPAP builds capacity and capability in those parts of Wales or in those sectors where relatively little activity is taking place to-date.

2024/25 initiatives between NPAP and the AS teams include project development with the NW Wales and Mid Wales teams around engagement, restoration opportunities, and exploring grazing interest on peatland. The NW Wales AS' Conwy Llifo Group is an example of a forum where NPAP can discuss peatland restoration planning with regional partners.

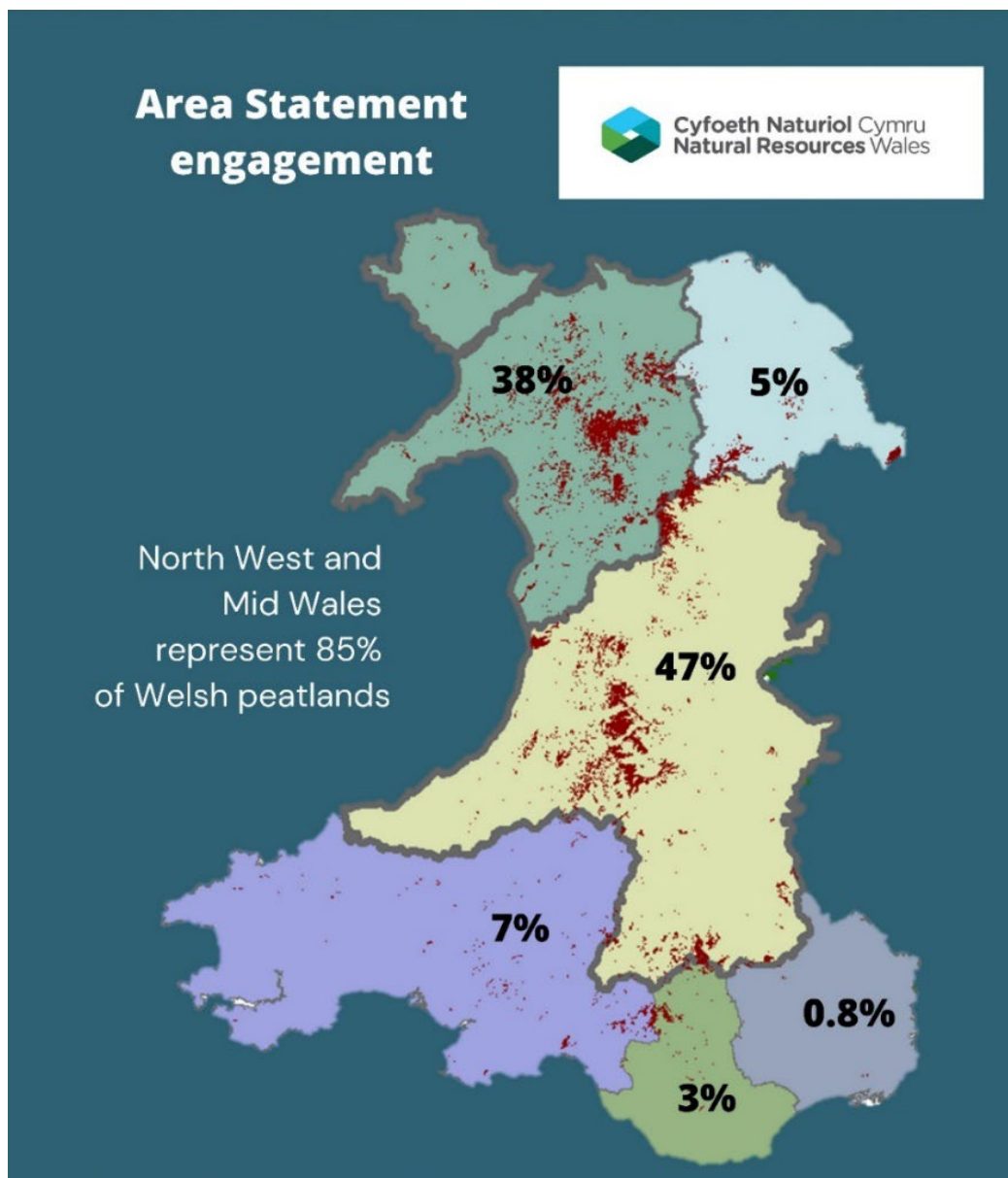


Figure 16. Welsh peatlands are well represented in the Mid and North West Wales Area Statements where NPAP's main focus of engagement has been.

Wales Peatland Action Strategic Delivery Partners Group

Aim:

The aim of this top-level partnership group is to ensure a joined-up strategic approach enabled through information exchange, joint recognition of priorities, and identifying other funding opportunities. The group provides a means of supporting the identification, enablers, and resolution of key blockers to delivery.

Activity Summary:

Two meetings were held in June and December 2024. Priority topics included:

- grant windows, feedback, plus development and refinement of processes
- briefing on the Strategic Allocated Funding and competitive funding aims
- the role of the Sustainable Farming Scheme in the management and maintenance of peatlands
- delays to NPAP capacity building due to NRW's temporary recruitment freeze
- hypermodified peatland
- combined habitats of peatland and Atlantic rain forests
- the new restoration layer on the Wales Peat Map
- the bilingual glossary of interventions
- Bannau Brycheiniog Mega Catchment Area
- St David's Day Awards for the Environment
- the upscale of NPAP and new posts
- planning developments affecting peatlands
- the IUCN Strategy Report and Conference.

Furthermore, collaboration on a regional or landscape level feeds back into this Strategic Group, to provide a better overview of all-Wales activity.

Wales Peatland Action Practitioners Group

Aim:

To develop the capability and exchange of knowledge for peatland practitioners from across Wales. Restoration delivery is reliant upon partner organisations. The sharing of best practice and a network is essential to develop the confidence and techniques to tackle a wide range of land-use contexts and deliver value for money.

Activity Summary:

The 2024 Practitioners' Event was over-subscribed with >30 attendees, representing 15 organisations / projects.

Site visits:

- Bwlch y Groes: restored by Eryri National Park (ENP) in conjunction with the landowner who shared her experience of entering into the Peatland Code.

- Gadfa: RSPB-managed and restored to include interlocking pools aimed at emulating a naturally functioning blanket bog site – a feature now all but lost from blanket peatland landscapes in Wales.

The site visits were complemented by professional networking opportunities and presentations by a NPAP team lead, and the ENP and RSPB project managers. Practitioners delivering on-the-ground action could share common challenges, learn about different ways of working, discuss approaches that work and do not work in different contexts, and build relationships for on-going practical peer support.

Feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive, here are a few examples:

“Good organisation, good balance between listening inside and experiencing outside. Good presentations from experts.”

“Well organised, great presentations beforehand, field trip had lots of time built in for discussions and questions. Really interesting restoration sites and well presented by Parc Eryri and RSPB staff. Having the landowner present was the highlight for me – being able to ask them questions whilst on their land was very valuable. More of this in future if possible.”



Figure 17. Photo of NPAP’s all-Wales peatland restoration Practitioners Event, visiting Bwlch y Groes and Y Gadfa blanket bog sites in north Wales, hosted by the landowners and restoration managers, Eryri National Park and RSPB.

Wales Peatland Action Monitoring Group

Aim:

The aim of this Group of practitioners, representing the key delivery partners, is to develop and gain from peatland restoration monitoring with view to sharing best practice and standardising.

Activity Summary:

Meetings to explore issues faced in achieving standardisation were held in June 2024 and January 2025. Topics for discussion included the reporting Activity Layers on the [Wales Peatland Map](#), the Peatland [Restoration Glossary](#), bioacoustics, peat mapping, NPAP's Hydrological Monitoring Plan, and updates from projects.

Wales Peatland Action Evidence Group

Aim:

The aim of this Group is to develop and gain from peatland research, identify research gaps and funding opportunities, as well as opportunities for partner collaboration and dissemination.

Activity Summary:

Meetings with eminent peatland academics and specialists were held in September 2024 and March 2025. Members discuss current and proposed evidence programmes. Prospects for collaboration and funding opportunities are also identified. NPAP ensures cross-referencing of relevant information discussed in the Monitoring and Evidence groups.

UK – IUCN

Aim:

NPAP's input aims to support the wider International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) UK Peatland Programme and to identify issues and events that are relevant to peatland restoration in Wales.

Activity Summary:

NPAP provides the strategic Wales input to support the role of the IUCN UK Peatland Programme. Involvement is through meetings, conferences, and updates and news for the IUCN's website. NPAP contributed to the IUCN UK Peatland conference at Aviemore in September 2024, with input to the Country response panel discussion, performance lecture as an example of engagement through the arts, and a presentation at the lowland peat workshop. NPAP contacts were also enhanced by having a stand at the three-day event.

4.3. Contractor framework

Peat survey framework

A new Peatland survey framework that allows procurement of key surveys was developed and put out to tender. The framework allows procurement of works across four key areas: 1) Peat surveys (Afforested peat toolkit surveys and peat depth surveys), 2) Habitat condition/monitoring surveys, 3) Hydrological condition/monitoring surveys, and 4) Water vole/protected species surveys. The framework will be finalised in June 2025 and will be in place for four years.

Peat groundworks framework

In 2024/25, NPAP prepared for the new contractor framework to be launched 2025/26. NPAP plans to capitalise on the new opportunities provided by the new Procurement Act 2023 that came into force on 24 February 2025. Preparations are underway to launch a new groundworks open framework in 2025/26 with plans to undertake supplier outreach events for existing and potential new entrants to help inform and shape the new approach. Further detail on the development and establishment of this framework will be provided in the 2025/26 report.

4.4. Communicating

Extensive engagement to convey the benefits and opportunities of peatland restoration is important for the Programme's strategic role. NPAP coordinates over 10 key partnerships, groups with interest, or networks, and contributes peatland expertise to over 10 associated groups. Individuals contact the Programme directly through npap@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk and NPAP benefits from strong delivery partner relationships with increasingly collaborative engagement activities.

In addition to engagement with peatland restoration delivery sites, NPAP has held over 118 engagement meetings, presentations, and in-person or digital outreach events in 2024/25. Of these, 90 involved external engagement. NPAP is both proactive with offers of engagement and responsive to requests. The diversity of the events and activities reflect the range of parties with an interest in peatland restoration, very broadly summarised as follows:

- Public interest – through public events such as the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show (where NPAP had a stand at the inaugural 'Dysgubor'), media events, and special outreach activities. The latter included an online presentation during [Wales Climate Week](#), a pilot [scoping project](#) to map local history in the Tywi restoration area, and preparing a bilingual animation video with infographics to be used for public events.
- Landowners, farmers, communities, anyone with potential interest in peatland restoration – directly as individuals, in outreach events, and through publicity around new grant launches, including online guidance webinars. The new Peatland Restoration Grant (£10K-£250K) was launched December 2024. Dual language webinars were produced to support this outreach: [Guidance webinar \(English version\)](#) and [Gweminar arweiniad arlein \(Welsh version\)](#). There were 102 views on of the uploaded webinars as well as the 41 individuals who attended in-person

online. Other outreach events included a farmer-organised meeting at Cletwr, Cardiganshire, to present restoration opportunities where farmers showed a progressive interest.

- Existing delivery partners – through the partnership groups outlined previously but also through direct contact and online guidance webinar for the Strategic Allocated Funding grant applicants held in January 2025. An additional resource, namely the [Activities Glossary](#), was well received in 2024. It enables standardisation of reporting restoration methods.
- Professional experts and academics – through partnership groups outlined but also proactively and directly to share best practice, recent research, new technological advances, etc. Links with universities have been strengthened through the Wales Peatland Evidence Group. As NPAP also liaises the Wales Monitoring for Peatland Action Group, a strategic bridging mechanism is in place to enable monitoring to reflect research priorities in Wales.
- Policy makers and officials – through data, reports, and meetings, NPAP feeds into the collective Welsh Government aims to tackle the Nature and Climate emergencies. Particularly welcome to policy makers was the news in 2024 that NPAP achieved its restoration [targets one year early](#). The [Wales Peatland Map](#) and the new ‘activity layer’, showing the restoration undertaken with tabs for further information, has proved useful to elected representatives and public alike. It has been appreciated as a good practice mechanism in a user-friendly format for accountability on a publicly funded programme.
- NRW colleagues – through strategic and delivery groups outlined previously but also through direct contact with specialists working across the organisation on peatlands, species, forestry, hydrology, etc. Communication processes also feature in internal engagement, as NPAP is supported by key NRW internal functions that enable the Programme’s success.

Events & Presentations: As outlined, NPAP regularly provides presentations on location or on-line, the most notable platforms used to share messages around Wales Peatland Action in 2024/25 were as follows.

- Wales-wide: the webinar presentations, local engagement, national events such as the Royal Welsh Agriculture Show, and online events such as Wales Climate Week.
- UK-wide: IUCN UK Peatland Conference response for Wales in the panel discussion, peatland communication through the performance lecture, and lowland peatland workshop input.

Messaging, channels, and data

To ensure understanding around the need for, and benefit of, peatland restoration, clear public messaging was shared:

- The 4% of the surface of Wales that is peatland has the capacity to hold 30% of our land-based carbon.
- Unfortunately, around 90% of Welsh peatland is in a damaged state and in this condition is accelerating climate change by releasing greenhouse gases.
- The solution is relatively simple and cost-effective: restoring peatland to a functioning water-retaining biodiverse landscape for future generations.

- Besides addressing the Nature and Climate emergencies, peatland restoration can also help mitigate other impacts of climate change, such as flood and fire risk.

The messaging is simplified in two social media hashtags as #WalesPeatlandAction #HighNatureLowCarbon (#AdferMawndirCymru #NaturUwchCarbonIs).

To complement the in-person partnership and public engagement, other key communication channels are the webpage, social media, media, and videos. Analytics data from these sources shows continued growth in interest and engagement in peatland restoration topics during 2024/25.

5. Monitoring programme

5.1. NPAP's monitoring strategy

Our approach to monitoring is based on being able to demonstrate change in relation to two core sets of outcomes, namely ecological change (which is expected to mainly comprise biodiversity improvement) and predicted changes (generally reductions) in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This approach is summarised in Figure 18.

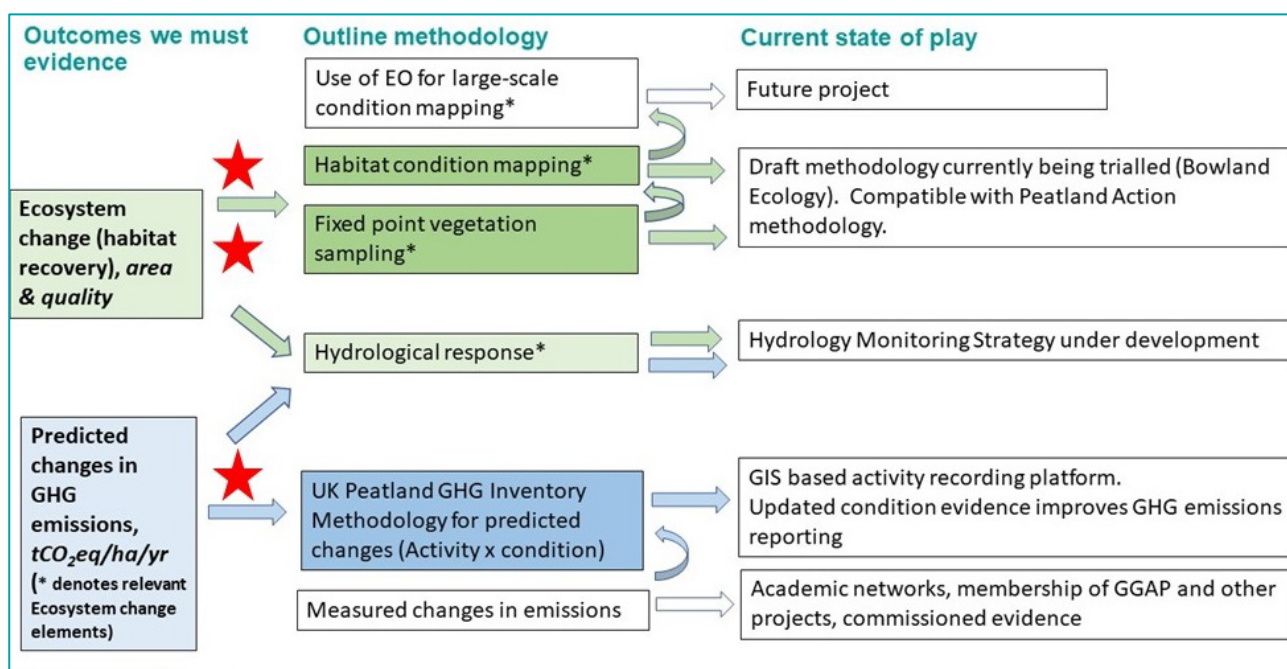


Figure 18. Summary of NPAP's approach to monitoring the outcomes of peatland restoration. Only elements marked with a red star are current areas of work.

Assessment of predicted changes in greenhouse gas emissions is covered by NPAP's work to develop a comprehensive restoration activity recording system – see the annual report for 2022/23, 6.2.2.

Hydrological monitoring

NPAP's work to assess hydrological responses to restoration in 2024/25 focused on the development of a methodology which provides users with standardised approaches to deploying water level monitoring, coupled with standardised monitoring designs for the main categories of restoration. A final draft of this work was completed in 2024/25 ((Low & NPAP, 2025) and has been reviewed by both the Wales Peatland Action Monitoring Group and the Wales Peatland Action Evidence Group. NPAP expects this output will continue to evolve based on best practice.

In terms of monitoring the hydrological outcomes of restoration, NPAP began a comprehensive and structured programme of instrumenting NPAP restoration sites, in accordance with the Hydrological Monitoring Plan.



Figure 19. A newly installed dipwell being surveyed into OS and height datum by Dr Rob Low, consulting hydrologist to NPAP, at Cors Gerwyn, Tywi Forest.

Condition monitoring

In 2024/25, targeted condition monitoring was undertaken on three sites, including a site to be restored by NPAP partners. In total, NPAP's ecological outcome monitoring methodology has now covered a total of seven sites amounting to 215ha subject to baseline condition assessment, with 329 baseline plots established.

Invertebrate monitoring

During the fifth year (2024/25), NPAP funded a study to investigate the response of aspects of the invertebrate fauna to the rewetting of a formerly afforested site (Gallon, 2025). This study reported that even within three years of restoration, the studied elements of the invertebrate fauna were beginning to resemble those of near-natural bog surfaces. This indicates significant potential for future monitoring and also for the planned development of a biodiversity metric to help assess the benefits of restoration in terms of nature recovery.

5.2. Peat surveys

Peat surveys on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate

The fifth year of the Programme continued the surveying of afforested peat on the WGWE to inform the Forest Resource planning process (as described in the [Year 2 Report](#)). Every 10 years, NRW reviews the long-term management plans for each forest area. These are compiled in a new Forest Resource Plans or used to evidence a need to change plans if required.

Peat survey data collected as part of this process will also feed back into the updates of the Peatlands of Wales maps series, to improve mapping of the peatland resource in Wales. In 2024/25, four additional forest blocks were surveyed using the Peatland Toolkit methodology, covering a combined area of 683ha.

Hypermodified Peat Surveys

In preparation for updating the Peatlands of Wales data series, a survey campaign was devised to address some of the key data gaps. Hypermodified peatlands were identified as a priority area due to their severe under representation on the current maps. Being the highest emitting peatland type makes them a priority for future restoration. As hypermodified peatlands have vegetation resembling improved grassland it is significantly harder to identify them remotely, therefore, field sampling of these habitats is required.

A desk-based assessment was undertaken to identify areas of improved grassland (B4 class of the Phase 1 habitat survey) on the Welsh national Phase 1 Habitat layer. This was then cross referenced with NPAP's understanding of the surrounding peatland from both local knowledge and the Peatlands of Wales layers, to determine a list of suitable sites to survey further.

Three sites were identified for survey. They were Ynys-Hir RSPB Reserve, Dyfi National Nature Reserve – Cors Fochno, and Cors Caron National Nature Reserve.

The survey work identified significant areas of hypermodified peatland, [Figure 20](#) shows the results from a survey area that is predominantly improved grassland on the national phase 1 map. However, NPAP's work shows that there are significant peat stocks below the surface. This work can be used to inform a schedule of work looking at restoring hypermodified peatland which is a key priority theme for NPAP.

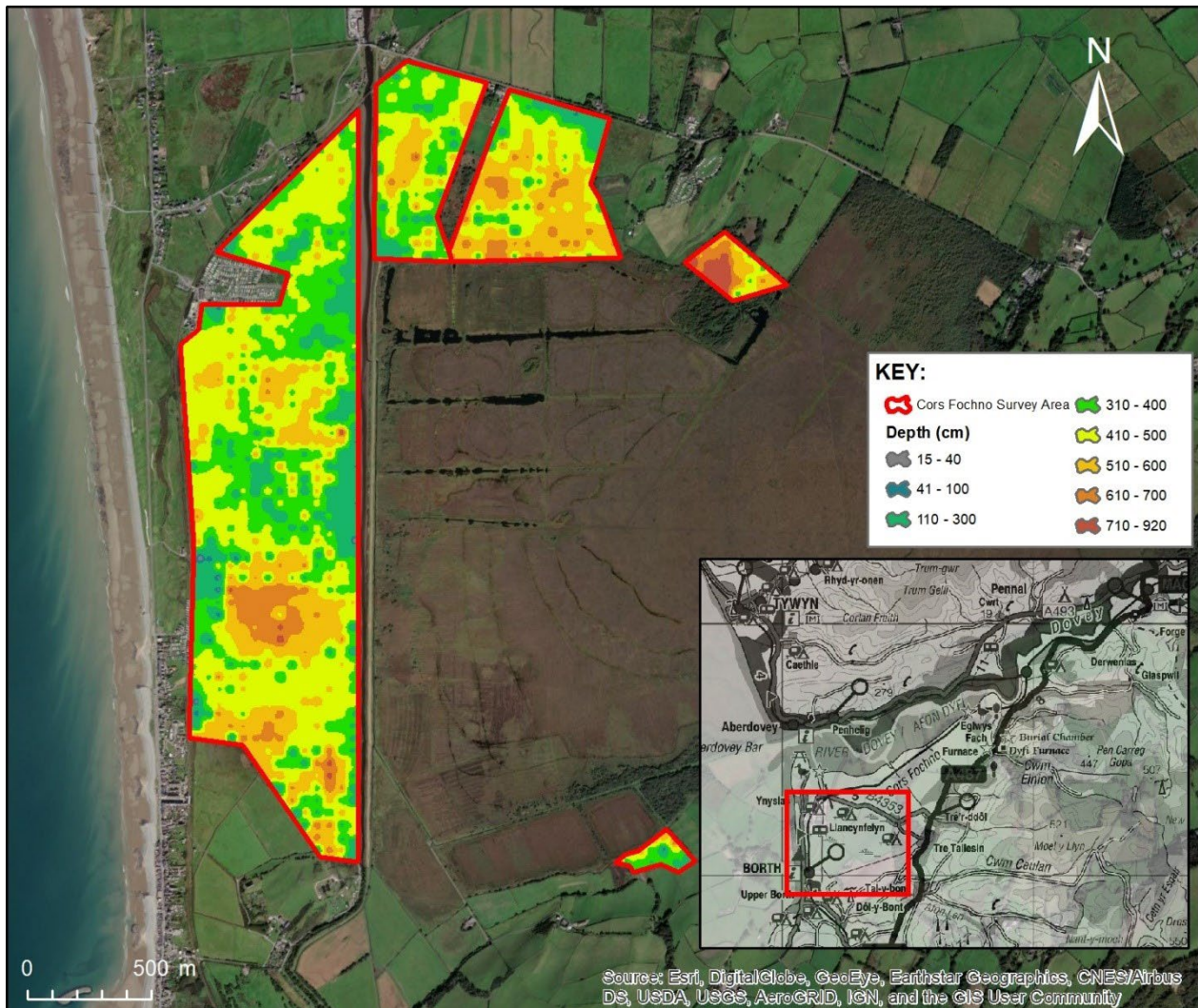


Figure 20. An example of the data outputs from the hypermodified survey work at Cors Fochno.