



The British Association for Shooting & Conservation

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Rt. Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Department of Education  
20 Great Smith St  
Westminster  
London  
SW1P 3BT

### **Dear Secretary of State,**

I am writing to you to express The British Association for Shooting and Conservation's (BASC) deep concerns regarding the removal of gamekeeping and wildlife management courses (Land & Wildlife) from the T Level provision for 2023. This radical move directly removes the most popular specialist training route required for school leavers to enter this unique land-based area of expertise. This decision contravenes the objectives of the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill and the Prime Minister's new Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

In the 2020/2021 academic year, 1072 students enrolled on 'Land & Wildlife' courses across the two major awarding organisations – City & Guilds and Pearsons BTEC. The current Land & Wildlife course includes sub-routes of conservation, game and fish which are delivered by at least 10 specialist land-based centres across England. From 2023, however, there will be no viable or applicable T Level route for a 16+ learner wishing to become a gamekeeper, deer manager, wildlife ranger or land manager, to name but a small selection.

*The Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care: Habitat Management (Land & Water)* T Level, which will replace current *Land & Wildlife* technical programmes, is not fit for purpose in terms of its practicality for such roles. Equally, the level 2 Underkeeper Apprenticeship route is far too niche for wider, more holistic, wildlife management roles and lacks the progression opportunities to Higher Education.

BASC feels the current T level occupational specialism, *Habitat Management (Land & Water)*, which is supposed to link with our sector's employment options, is woefully inadequate for a significant proportion of students. It contains no links to practical wildlife management, wildlife management legislation, the control of invasive species, sporting estate management or competence with firearms – all of which are minimum standards for our large and growing sector which is worth £2 billion to the UK economy and supports the equivalent of 74,000 jobs.

BASC strongly urges the Institute of Apprenticeships & Technical Education to reconsider the format of the proposed *Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care* T Level and allow the creation of a new occupational specialism, titled 'Wildlife Management', which will meet the demands of our sector and provide prospective students with the knowledge, skills and experience to successfully progress into full-time employment. The creation of this specialism will also help to secure the jobs of those lecturers who teach the current provision. ▶

*Together – for shooting, conservation, the future and for you*

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation Limited  
Registered Society N° 28488R

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President: The Lord Dear, QPM

Until such time an appropriate T Level route is created, as requested above, BASC is calling on the Department for Education to ensure the current land & wildlife technical qualification remains funded and open to enrolment beyond 2023 – this is to secure viable educational routes into employment, but also the security of lecturer job roles.

Given the Government's commitment to the England Tree Strategy to increase tree planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares of trees per year by 2025, the management of the booming UK deer and grey squirrel population will become even more important. The creation of a new, standalone 'Wildlife Management' occupational specialism will ensure the management and protection of these trees are secured.

We welcomed the initial conversations with the Department for Education regarding this matter, but this has unfortunately not resolved the issue. We would like to seek a quick resolution to this ongoing matter to secure the educational future for thousands of school leavers and the employment progression of our sector. BASC would like to offer its full support to the creation of this new occupation specialism and is willing to assist with the process.

Yours sincerely,



**Ian Bell**  
BASC Chief Executive

**The British Association for Shooting & Conservation has full support from the following educational establishments and organisations on this matter:**

Confederation of Forest Industries – Natural Resources Wales – Sparsholt College –  
Duchy College – Myerscough College – Hartpury College



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