Guidance:

UK tree health report submission

UKGSN

IPSN International Plant Sentinel Network

BGCI

Observatree monitoring tree health

PlantNetwork
Connecting gardens, sharing skills

UK Garden Sentinel Network (UKGSN)

Observatree, PlantNetwork and Botanic Garden Conservation International (BGCI) have joined forces to create the UK Garden Sentinel Network (UKGSN). The UKGSN brings together the UK's network of plant collections (PlantNetwork) with the network of citizen scientist already mobilised through Observatree, supported by tree health diagnosticians and other plant health experts, with the aim of engaging and educating garden professionals, volunteers and visitors in the early detection of pests and pathogens that threaten trees in the UK.

The aim of this collaboration is to share readily available tree pests and disease information, provide identification training, diagnostic support and access to reporting system, raise awareness on tree health, and encourage surveillance and reporting of tree pests and diseases.

Tree Health Pilot 2024

The UKGSN is excited to announce the launch of the Tree Health Pilot 2024. During this pilot program, we invite citizen scientists and volunteers to participate in the surveillance of specific pests and diseases (great spruce bark beetle, elm-zig-zag sawfly and European mountain ash ring-spot associated virus) affecting trees across the UK and report their presence or absence via the TreeAlert website. The goal of the Tree Health pilot is to raise awareness of tree health nationwide and to improve our understanding of the distribution of harmful organism throughout the UK.

The Tree Health Pilot will be launched during Plant Health Week, running from the 6th to the 12th of May 2024. **Surveillance activities should take place from May until October.** To follow up, we will be having a feedback session in June open for questions, and an end of season session in autumn.

In the following video, you can watch the recording on the first UKGSN webinar, featuring an introduction to the initiative, a detailed explanation of the Tree Health Pilot, insights into the targeted organisms affecting trees, and step-by-step guidance on the reporting process.

Click to see the video

Pests & Disease of interest

The Tree Health Pilot will focus in three organisms, which their symptoms are easily identifiable, are already present in the UK, but their exact distribution in the country is still unknown.
The pests and diseases of interest are:

Great spruce bark beetle

Primary host: Spruce (*Picea sp.*)

Symptoms:
- tree dieback
- copious resin bleed on truck
- resin tubes like 'volcanoes'
- presence of larvae or 'frass islands' beneath the bark

Click for more information and identification guide

Elm zigzag sawfly

Primary host: Elm (*Ulmus sp.*)

Symptoms:
- zigzag feeding trace between lateral leaf veins
- feeding traces merge and produce leaf-skeletons
- filigree cocoons underside the leaves

Click for more information and identification guide
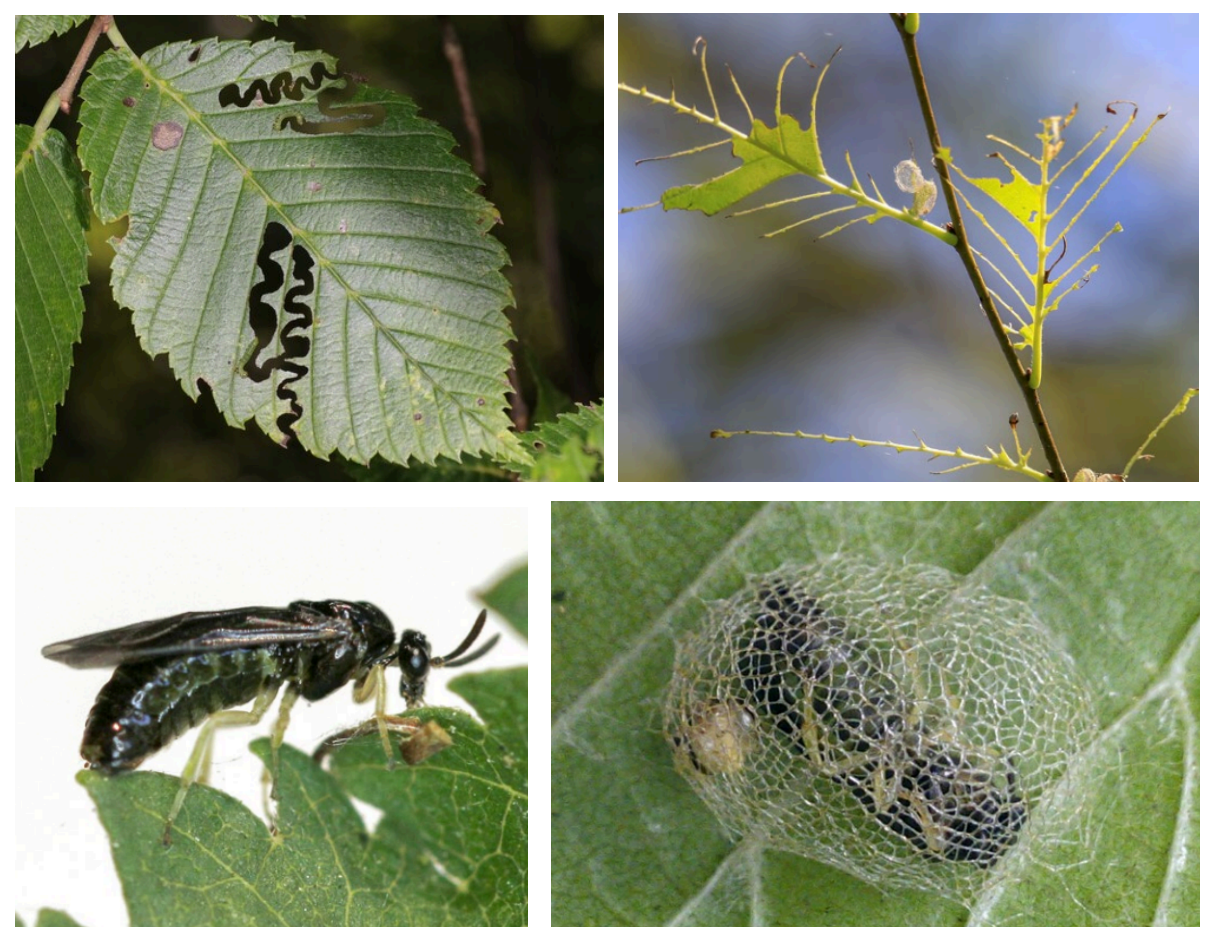
European mountain ash ringspot-associated virus

Primary host: Rowan / Mountain Ash (*Sorbus*)

Symptoms:
- starst with chlorotic speckling on leaflets
- mottling of leaf tissue
- develops into 'oak leaf' patterning and ringspots on leaflets

Click for more information and identification guide

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Tree Alert

Tree Alert is the official tool for reporting on tree health in Britain (Tree Check is used in Ireland).



Scan the QR code or
Click here to access Tree Alert

The system was originally designed to capture reports of tree pests and diseases, and this remains its primary aim. But recent investment in the system also allows registered users to submit information on trees that appear to be free of visible signs of pests or disease and are considered to be 'healthy' trees. These healthy tree data allow us to identify where pests and diseases are thought to be absent, but also tells us where the healthy host trees are located in relation to symptomatic trees. Both pieces of information help tree health professionals to understand the current distribution of pests and diseases, their rates of spread and identify areas either at risk or that remain free of any pest or disease. The ability to record information on healthy trees is only available to someone who has registered with Tree Alert and is logged in.

Registration

Registration with the system is recommended as the user can create a profile that holds basic information about them and provides them with their own Dashboard. This makes future submissions faster, auto-filling information such as any affiliations, unlocks functions such as healthy tree reporting and allows the user to see information on their previous submissions. Personal information provided are only used for the purposes of tree health surveillance, monitoring, and research.
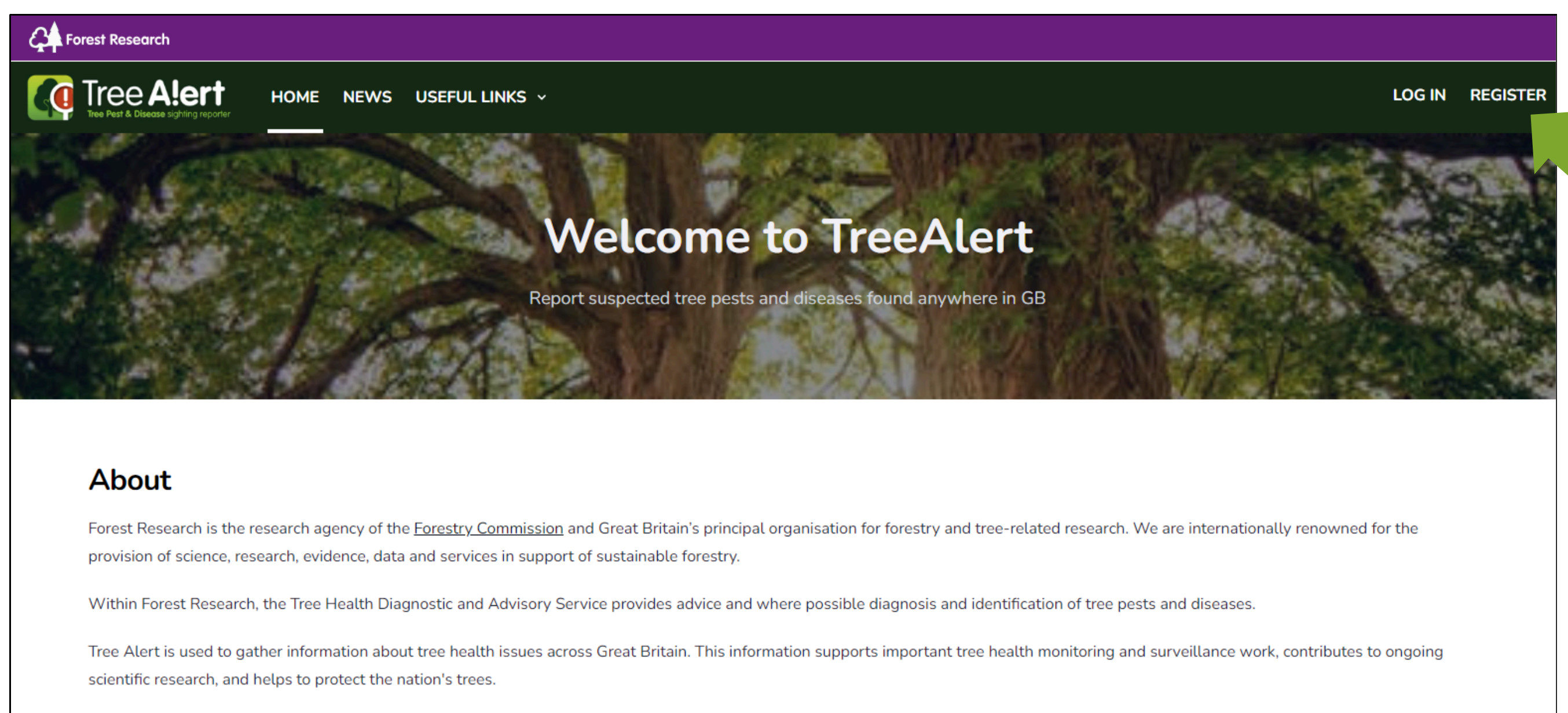
Register

You do not have to create an account to submit a report. However, registering with us is very quick and easy.

By registering with us it means we can remember your contact details and the other information you provided to help speed up the process of making future reports.

Registering also gives you access to a personalised Tree Alert dashboard with the ability to review any previous reports you have made.

Title

First name *

Last name *

Address

Postcode (for addresses within Great Britain only)

Phone Number

Mobile Number

Email *

Password *

In the registration process, users are asked to:
- indicate their level of knowledge about trees and tree health;
- select an affiliation that best reflects their profession, organisation or membership, Please select the Client Affiliation (from the dropdown list) that is most appropriate;
- select a Client Project. Please select **'UK Garden Sentinel Network'** if your submissions via Tree Alert will be as part of this project.

Please indicate your level of knowledge / experience *

○ Private individual (high level of knowledge in trees / natural environment)

○ Private individual (moderate level of knowledge in trees / natural environment)

○ Private individual (limited level of knowledge in trees / natural environment)

○ Work within the forestry / arb industry

○ Work in another environmental organisation

Client Affiliation

Select the option that is the best match for you ⌄

By selecting which group or organisation best represents your affiliation (if any), it will help us to monitor the number of reports submitted on behalf of those groups.

Client Project

Select UK Garden Sentinel Network to make it your default project ⌄

If you are submitting a report in response to a specific project or campaign, please select it from this drop-down list. If you are not, or are unsure, please leave this field as 'Not Specified'.

It is possible to change these affiliations and projects during individual report submissions, but these the choices made in your profile will become your default entries and will be prepopulated for any reports that you submit.

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● Healthy tree submission

If you inspect one of the host trees (i.e., spruce, elm or rowan) and find **NO evidence** of a target pest/pathogen (i.e., great spruce bark beetle, elm-zig-zag sawfly or European mountain ash ring-spot associated virus), submit a **'Healthy Tree Report'**. The report 'healthy trees' is essential to understand the distribution of the pest and diseases.

To submit information of trees that appear to be free of any pests or pathogens, select the "Healthy Trees" option. These records are not verified and are assumed to be correct.

To submit healthy tree information, select to submit a New Report. For the submission the following information a will be necessary:

- Date on which the observation was made

- Location of the tree (select location by clicking map, entering a grid reference or using the location of the smartphone or similar device) and its surrounding environment (such as, garden, hedgerow, woodland, etc.);

- Details of the landowner, if possible

- The species, and basic estimates of its size / age.

- Finally, there is an option to attach photographs of the tree.

Pest or disease submission

If you inspect one of the host trees (i.e., spruce, elm or rowan) and find **evidence** of a target pest/pathogen (i.e., great spruce bark beetle, elm-zig-zag sawfly or European mountain ash ring-spot associated virus), submit a **'General Report'**.

Anyone can submit a report of a tree pest or disease, regardless of whether or not they are registered and logged onto the system. Those not logged in start the submission process from the website's homepage, while logged-in user start from their Dashboard. To submit a report of a tree pest or disease, select the "General Report" option. During the data submission, the user will can update their client details. Please ensure that '**UK Garden Sentinel Network' is used for any submission under this project**. This will allow us to track which data result from this pilot.
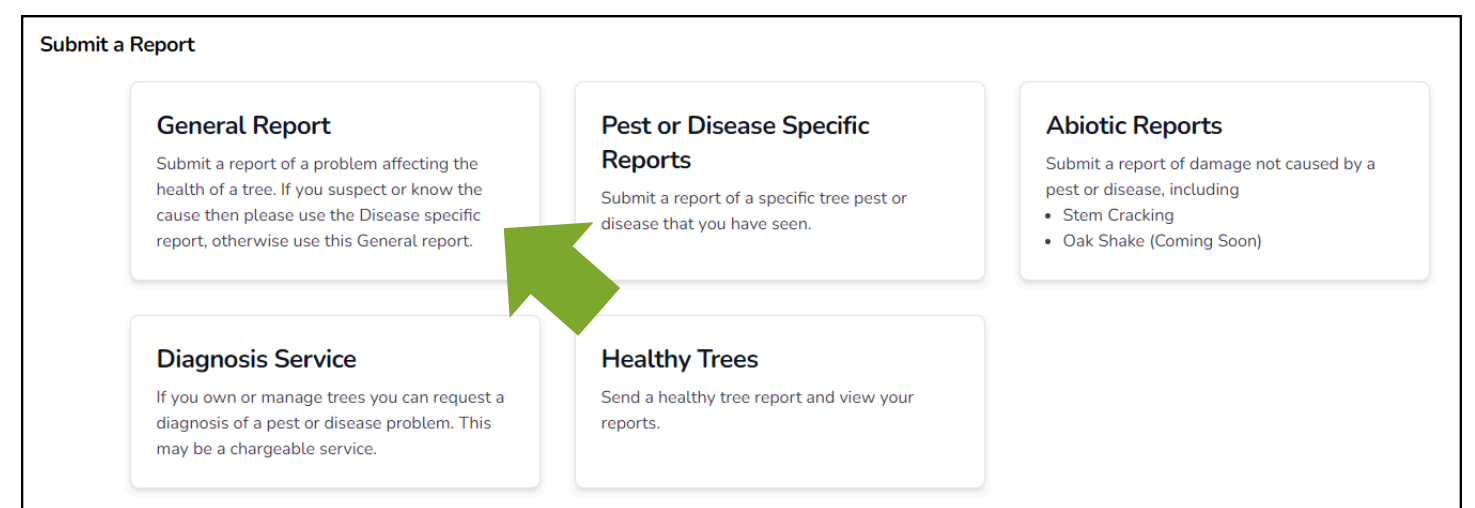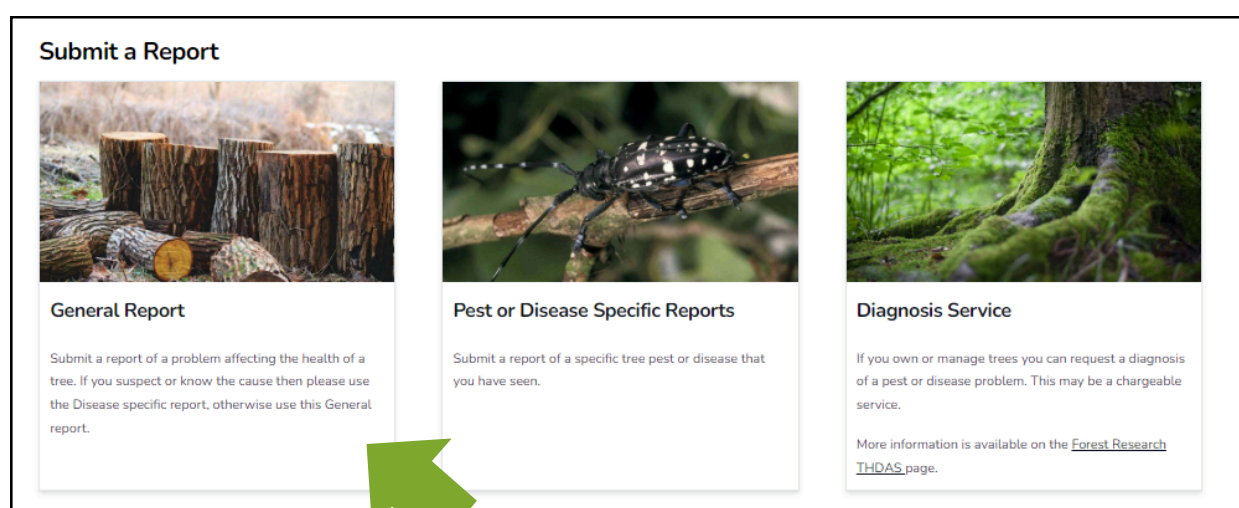
These tree health reports are passed on to diagnosticians within Forest Research who will attempt to confirm any suspected pests or diseases or identify any unknown causes. Please provide as much information as possible to help the diagnosticians. Users will be informed of the findings of their enquiry and registered users will be able to view their previous submissions from their Dashboard.

The following data requirements are similar to those for healthy trees and include:

- Information on the date of observation, tree location, location type and landowner.

- Additionally, information about the tree's approximate age and size are required. It is possible for a report on any individual tree to be used to represent a number of similarly affected trees in the same location.

- The species name, or if not possible the genus are requires. Further information is then required on the signs and symptoms displayed on the crown, steam and base of the tree.

- Finally, three photos are required that show: 1) the tree in context, 2) the signs of ill-health in context, and 3) the signs and symptoms in more detail.

- Diagnosticians may seek to contact you for further information or to request that some samples are taken.

Thank you for participating in the UKGSN initiative.
This document has been created with the aim of helping volunteers
submit their reports for the UKGSN Tree Health Pilot 2024.

For more any questions, please email us:
treealert@forestresearch.gov.uk