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OHAS & PHCS: Alignment FAQs

Q1: OHAS is a known and respected scheme, so why is the new Plant Healthy Certification Scheme (PHCS) necessary, aren't they offering similar things?

A: The requirements of the Plant Health Management Standard 1.0 have been integrated into the OHAS Grower Standard 4.0. This was carried out with a view to improve the plant health and biosecurity requirements of the OHAS Grower Standard and to save auditing costs for OHAS members, should they choose to become a member of PHCS. So, by design, the two schemes have similarities, but each fulfils a somewhat different role. The sole focus of PHCS is plant health and biosecurity. It was developed to be industry-wide to help improve the biosecurity of entire plant supply chains which include growers, retailers, landscapers, public gardens, arboriculturists, the forestry sector. The aim is to ensure the PHCS scheme is accessible to all sizes of businesses, from sole traders to PLCs, including growers, retailers, landscapers, public gardens, arboriculturists and the forestry sector. The OHAS requirements cover a much broader scope of operations of relevance to the Ornamentals sector – such as H&S, sustainability, efficiency, best practice.

Q2: We are with the OHAS scheme, are we obliged to be audited for PHCS too?

A: No. Individual OHAS members can choose if they wish to be part of PHCS as well. There is no obligation for OHAS members to join PHCS.

Q3: If a business becomes PHCS certified can they become an OHAS member?

A: Yes, the PHCS is aligned to the OHAS Grower Standard version 4.0 & is a pathway into it.

Q4: If we want to do both OHAS and PHCS, what additional work is required?

A: Once you have completed an audit for OHAS Grower Standard version 4.0 you will need to complete a short extension against additional criteria, lasting approximately 30 mins (subject to final confirmation by NSF). This will cover additional criteria from within the PHCS, and all that is needed for you to become PHCS certificated – the emphasis of this element is on pest risk analysis, contemporary plant health issues, and a quality control requirement for the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme.

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Q5: If most of the PHCS is covered within OHAS Grower Standard version 4.0, can we use the Plant Healthy logo?

A: Regardless of your OHAS status, you need to complete the short extension, as referred to in Q4, if you wish your business to be certified as Plant Healthy, to receive the Plant Healthy certificate and to use the Plant Healthy logo.

Q6: If we decide to do the PHCS, how much will it cost?

A: You will have to pay the PHCS membership fee which is relative to the turnover of your business. (for PHCS membership fees see Annexe 1.) The main advantage of already being an OHAS grower member is that there will be a considerable saving on auditing costs. It is anticipated that the short additional audit should, in most cases, fit within the total time allotted for your OHAS audit. As long as both your OHAS audit and the additional PHCS audit are carried out on the same visit ie a combined audit, there should be no extra audit fee.

Q7: Why is a PHCS membership fee required?

A: PHCS is a separate scheme, albeit symbiotic with OHAS, so a separate fee is needed. The membership fee that your business pays contributes towards the considerable costs of developing and establishing PHCS and its running costs. As plant biosecurity threats are constantly changing and developing, this will mean on-going work as new elements need to be included in the Plant Health Management Standard. Like OHAS, PHCS will benefit the horticulture industry as a whole, not only by enhancing the UK's plant biosecurity but also by generating business development opportunities, such as import-substitution, as the demand for UK-grown plants increases. The PHCS illustrates clearly that the sector is very aware of biosecurity and the precautions necessary to mitigate the constantly evolving risk. The PHCS Governing Body aims to keep scheme fees as low as possible as it is a not-for-profit scheme that is actively striving to make PHCS affordable for all.

Q8: We have only just been audited for OHAS, so does this mean waiting nearly a year before we can have a PHCS audit?

A: If your business has been audited recently, it will not have been audited to the new OHAS standard which has been benchmarked against PHCS ie the Grower Standard version 4.0. This means you will need to align the timing of your PHCS audit with your next OHAS audit.

Q9: Our OHAS audit is due in a few months, can it be delayed so that it can be aligned with the PHCS audit?

A: It should be possible to delay your OHAS audit for up to six months so that the two can be aligned.

Q10: We have decided to become PHCS certified, but the business has several sites, will this mean several membership fees?



A: No. The membership fee for PHCS covers all your business's sites as the membership fee you pay will be determined by the business's total turnover.

For more information about the PHCS visit www.planthealthy.org.uk

For more information about the OHAS visit <https://hta.org.uk/assurance-compliance/ohas.html>

Annex 1: PHCS Membership fees 2021

The table below sets out the membership fees for the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme.

Turnover bands Annual membership fees

Band	Turnover range	Fee £
1	Below £100,000	40
2	£100,000<£500,000	137
3	£500,000<£1M	269
4	£1M<£5M	443
5	£5M<£10M	671
6	≥£10M	894
Membership fees for businesses with a turnover more than £10m to be advised		

Membership fees are exclusive of VAT.