



Frequently Asked Questions on the Access Provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Introduction

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act was passed in 2000. The Act gives a right of access on foot for the purpose of open-air recreation. In Wales, the right given under the Act commenced in May 2005.

The combined total area of CRoW access land, land dedicated as accessible under CRoW and land which has a statutory right of access under other legislation is over 450,000 hectares (about 21% of Wales' total land area). This is in addition to 33,000 kilometres of Public Rights of Way, many beaches, country parks, towpaths and cycle ways, and other significant areas of land where landowners and occupiers allow the public to be on their land.

The CRoW Act does not remove any existing rights of access, nor does it prevent landowners and occupiers from allowing access to other land, or from allowing activities that are not part of the right. On the following pages are answers to some of the most common questions on the access provisions under Part I of the CRoW Act. Where we discuss the CRoW Act in the context of the access rights, this should be taken to mean Part I of the CRoW Act. We have included information about other legislation where it is affected by this Act. These questions and answers are divided into subject areas. The answers given are only a guide and should not be taken as a definitive statement of the law.

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1. Open access rights

Where do the rights apply?

The rights apply to land called 'access land'.

Access land is:

- common land;
- land mapped by Natural Resources Wales as open country; and
- any type of land offered by its owner for use as access land (dedicated land).

Common land is land registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965.

Open country is land that is wholly or predominantly mountain, moor, heath or down.

Where do the rights of access not apply?

Part I of the CRoW Act does not apply to any areas that already have a similar or better right of public access for the purpose of open-air recreation. Those rights will continue under previous legislation: for example on urban commons, land with similar rights under local and private acts and land covered by access agreements under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act.

The CRoW Act does not apply to areas classed as excepted land. The types of excepted land are specified in Schedule 1 to the Act and are listed below:

- Buildings and the land immediately surrounding them.
- Land within 20 metres of a house or a permanent building that is used for housing livestock, unless you have to use a gate, stile or public path to get onto access land.
- Pens while they are being used for handling livestock.
- Parks and gardens.
- Active quarries and surface mineral workings.
- Railways and tramways.
- Golf courses, aerodromes, racecourses.
- Land used for training racehorses but only between dawn and midday, and at other times when the land is actually being used for training racehorses.
- Land covered by works used for a statutory undertaking or telecommunications and the boundaries of this land (public utility structures such as electricity substations and telephone masts).
- Land regulated by byelaws under the Military Lands Acts of 1892 and 1900.
- Land that is being developed so that it falls into one of the categories above may itself be classed as excepted.

It is important to understand that, even though the CRoW Act does not give any rights to such areas, some of them may have public access under other statutory or permissive arrangements. Whole fields of improved or semi-improved grassland or crops are not mapped as access land, unless these are common land or have been offered as access land by dedication. The Act also suspends the right of access on open country or common land if it is being cultivated and for 12 months after any cultivation. This is to prevent trampling.

Are woods and forests access land?

Woodland is only access land where it is also common land, is a small part of an area that is predominantly open country, or has been dedicated as access land by its owner in accordance with the CRow Act. The majority of the freehold estate that Natural Resources Wales manages has been dedicated. Other public, private or voluntary bodies may dedicate their woods, but the decision rests with them. The public may have access to other woods and forests under other Acts, or because the landowner or occupier allows it.

Do the rights of access include lakes and rivers?

Where access land includes water bodies, people are entitled to access those areas on foot. The rights of access do not include the right to bathe, fish or take boats onto non-tidal lakes or rivers, even where such areas are within access land. Access to water for these purposes usually requires the permission of the landowner. An owner may decide to relax such restrictions on the right, and other rights of access to such areas may already exist. A landowner or occupier may also continue with, or make, any other arrangements for public access that they wish to allow.

What is an access dedication?

Under the CRow Act, landowners can voluntarily give (dedicate) their land as access land whether or not it would otherwise be access land. One reason for dedicating land that is already access land would be to allow extra activities, such as horse riding or cycling. Dedication is permanent even if the land changes hands (or, if applicable, until a lease ends.)

2. Users' rights and responsibilities

What is the right of access?

The right is to be able to go on foot onto access land for open-air recreation. The right of access includes activities such as climbing, running, birdwatching and picnicking. There may sometimes be certain restrictions to access, as outlined below and in section 3.

What activities are not part of the rights of access under Part I of the CRow Act?

The right to go onto access land does not entitle people to carry out the activities listed below unless allowed by the landowner or occupier:

- Driving or riding any vehicle (other than invalid carriages.)
- Riding a horse or bicycle.
- Camping.
- Hang-gliding or paragliding.
- Using or carrying a metal detector.
- Organised games.
- Activities organised or undertaken for any commercial purpose.
- Bathing, swimming in, or using a boat or sailboard on, non-tidal water such as lakes or rivers.
- Taking any animal other than a dog.

- Lighting or doing anything that might cause a fire.
- Hunting, shooting or fishing or carrying anything associated with these activities.
- Damaging the land or damaging anything on the land, like plants, trees, crops, fences or walls.
- Taking anything away from the land.
- Disturbing livestock or wildlife.
- Feeding livestock.
- Blocking the flow of watercourses and drains.
- Leaving gates open (except where it is reasonable to assume that a gate is meant to be left open).
- Posting notices.
- Leaving litter.
- Obstructing, disrupting or annoying people who are involved in a legal activity.
- Committing a criminal offence.

It is important to understand that the Act does not ban these activities if they are allowed by the landowner or occupier. For example, some landowners and occupiers already allow legal activities such as camping, riding, organised and commercial events and the Act does not change this situation. Landowners may also ask Natural Resources Wales or the National Park authority to remove or relax any of the restrictions listed above provided that they are not illegal activities.

Under the CRoW Act do I have the right to bring my dog onto access land?

Yes, normally, but there are a number of restrictions on dogs to ensure they do not harm livestock or wildlife. Dogs must be on short fixed leads (of no more than two metres) between 1 March and 31 July to protect ground nesting birds, or at **any time** when they are near livestock.

Remember, the rules for dogs (to be kept under close control) on rights of way crossing access land still apply. However, the rules for access land would apply if a person strayed off a Public Right of Way that crosses access land. There are other restrictions on dogs that landowners and occupiers can enforce (see section 3). These restrictions do not apply to guide dogs for the blind or hearing dogs for the deaf. People should keep dogs under close control at all times in the countryside, even if a lead is not required by law.

Does the Act entitle people to ride a horse or cycle across access land?

Rights such as horse riding or riding a bicycle still apply on bridleways, restricted byways, and byways open to all traffic that cross access land, but people must keep to the right of way. The Act also allows landowners or tenants to ask for restrictions on use to be relaxed so that people can do other things, such as horse riding, on access land. The Act does not change the situation where such activities are allowed.

What organised or commercial activities are not included?

The Act entitles people to carry out non-commercial activities which are organised, such as walks, climbs or picnics. The right does not include activities organised or undertaken for any commercial purpose. Natural Resources Wales interprets a commercial purpose as something that has profit as a primary aim. Natural Resources Wales believes that the activities of the not-for-profit outdoor education and training centres do not fall within the

scope of this. However, the position may not always be clear and, as with all legislation, it will be for the courts to interpret the precise meaning of this restriction as and when disputes reach the courts. For this reason, Natural Resources Wales cannot give definitive advice. However, we do suggest that people seek legal advice if they think their activity may have a commercial purpose. Where there is doubt people should seek the necessary permissions from landowners and occupiers.

Does access on foot include access for gorge walking?

Access land includes water bodies such as gorges within it and access to those areas of water is permitted on foot for the purposes of open-air recreation.

Does access on foot include pot holing and caving?

No. As the CRoW Act covers access for the purposes of open-air recreation, pot holing and caving are not included in the right.

Does the right of access include being allowed to carry canoes and hang gliders across access land?

Canoeing and hang gliding and carrying canoes and hang gliders are not activities covered by the CRoW Act. Some landowners allow people to hang glide or carry canoes or hang gliders across their land.

Are other rights of access affected?

No. The CRoW Act does not affect rights of access under other laws such as the Law of Property Act 1925, private acts, and access agreements under Part 5 of the National Park and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Rights under these acts still apply instead of the CRoW Act rights. Other recreational uses of land that are allowed by the landowner or occupier also continue unaffected. The open access provisions of the Act do not change responsibilities for rights of way.

How do people get onto access land?

In many places existing Public Rights of Way lead to and cross open access areas. Access land should only be reached using access points. An access point is:

- a stile or gate;
- a bridge or stepping stones for crossing watercourses; or
- a clear opening in a wall, fence or hedge.

Note that a clear opening means a clear space between the remnants of a boundary feature, such as a derelict wall. It does not mean stepping over a remnant of a wall or a broken fence.

The Act did not create any rights for people to cross land to reach access land. Therefore people do not have a right to climb or force their way through boundary features where there are no access points. However, the local authority can negotiate with landowners to create a right of way (a creation order) where there is a need for one.

What about areas of access land that have no right of way leading to and from it?

People do not have a right to reach access land other than by using a right of way or by moving directly from any other place with a right of access. People may be allowed to use other routes that have been agreed voluntarily by the owner or occupier. Where there is no legal right of way to an area of open country or common land, the local authority may negotiate with landowners to create a right of way (a creation order) where there is a need for one. Natural Resources Wales may also apply to the Highway Authority asking them to consider creating a right of way onto access land.

What should I do if I find access to access land blocked?

If a means of access is blocked you should report this to the access authority (the local authority or National Park authority).

Will access points and the boundaries of access land be marked on the ground?

The local authorities and National Park authorities will have powers to manage access on the ground and can therefore mark access land and access points.

3. Landowners' and occupiers' rights and responsibilities

Are landowners and occupiers compensated for having access on their land?

There is no general right to compensation. The access provisions of the Act do not include limits on the use or development of access land. In order that the rights of users do not interfere with land management, there is also provision for landowners to close access land for land management reasons, and for up to 28 days a year for any reason. There are also provisions for landowners to restrict access for dogs. (See below in this section).

Is land worth less because it has been mapped as access land?

There is no evidence that land is worth less as a result of the CRoW Act.

What are the restrictions on change of use of land designated as access land?

The CRoW Act does not restrict development of land simply because it has become access land.

Does the CRoW Act prevent landowners and occupiers from erecting fences on access land?

No. Landowners and occupiers can still erect fences on access land provided reasonable access is maintained through the fences. However, landowners and occupiers should check that there are not other restrictions on fencing, such as those that apply on common land.

Who pays for stiles and gates on access land?

Local authorities or National Park authorities often provide stiles and gates on access land.

Is there a requirement for a stile or gate to be provided in any fence or wall crossing an access area?

The access authority has a power (not a duty) to provide stiles and gates.

Who is responsible for keeping stiles and gates in working order?

The main responsibility for keeping stiles and gates in working order is with the landowner. However, the access authority has a power, but not a duty, to help with any works and associated costs.

How are existing management agreements affected?

Where land becomes access land, any voluntary open access agreements or payments will continue in line with the terms of the agreement or until the agreement runs out or until the next review or break point.

What happens if I need to carry out work on my land that may conflict with public access?

Natural Resources Wales has developed guidance on access management with the help of the National Park authorities, Wales Local Government Association, National Farmers Union Cymru, Farmers Union Wales, Country Land and Business Association, British Association for Shooting and Conservation and the Ramblers. The guidance was developed in association with Natural England to ensure the approaches in Wales and England are consistent. The guidance sets out a framework for identifying when conflicts with access may arise and for deciding the most appropriate management. It also helps to identify when the only solution is to exclude or restrict access.

The Act allows **landowners or agricultural tenants** to close land or restrict access to it for any reason for up to 28 days in the year (but not on certain days). You will not need permission for these closures but must tell Natural Resources Wales or the National Park authority beforehand. If there is an agricultural tenant, the tenant has use of all 28 days. No area of land can be closed for more than 28 days in a year without permission. In dedicated woodlands, landowners and tenants must tell Natural Resources Wales about 28 day closures or restrictions.

Can I close my land for land management reasons, such as shooting, for more than 28 days?

As well as the 28 days allowed to prevent or restrict access outlined above, **landowners and agricultural tenants** may apply to Natural Resources Wales or the National Park authority for an order preventing or restricting access to their land for land management reasons, to prevent danger to the public, or to prevent a risk of fire in exceptional weather conditions.

How do the public know about restrictions on access land?

Where possible, Natural Resources Wales publishes this information on their website. There will also usually be signs at entrance points.

Who is responsible for putting signs up where access is restricted?

Generally, it is the responsibility of landowners and occupiers to manage access in areas where access is restricted or not allowed. This includes informing the public on the ground. Where access is restricted for more than 6 months, it is the responsibility of Natural Resources Wales. Local authority and National Park authority warden services may be able to help tell people about closures and restrictions. Note that it is a criminal offence under Part I of the CRow Act to put up a misleading sign on or near access land deterring access.

Can I keep dogs off my land?

People who do not comply with the rules about keeping their dog on a lead on access land will be trespassing and can be required to leave the land. The CRow Act gives landowners the right to ban dogs altogether all year round on moors managed for rearing and shooting grouse.

Landowners and agricultural tenants have the right to ban dogs for any six week period in a calendar year for lambing in an enclosure of up to 15 hectares.

Landowners and agricultural tenants can use their powers to restrict access to ban dogs on up to 28 days on any area of access land. You do not need permission for these closures or restrictions but you must tell Natural Resources Wales if you are planning to use them.

Landowners and agricultural tenants may also apply for permission to restrict dogs under the provisions for extra closures and restrictions. Natural Resources Wales or the National Park authority may consider making such a restriction where the rules about leads would not address the particular problem that prompted the application. Natural Resources Wales also has a power restrict dogs for nature conservation purposes where the rules about leads are not enough.

These restrictions will not apply to guide dogs for the blind or hearing dogs for the deaf.

What about diseases carried by dogs?

Some farmers may have concerns about the hydatid tapeworm. Farm dogs should be wormed regularly. Natural Resources Wales is aware of a concern that visiting dogs could possibly carry the parasite's eggs to access areas, which would put a farm assurance accreditation at risk. Dogs can get these worms by eating sheep carcasses or other dead animals.

However, the life cycle of the parasite can be broken by vaccinating dogs. Sheep carcasses may contain hydatid cysts which are eaten by the dog, so it is also important to prevent dogs from getting access to sheep carcasses. It is unlikely that dogs living away from farms will get these cysts because it will be very rare for them to eat sheep carcasses. Visitors should make sure that their dogs do not eat any type of dead animal, including dead sheep, while they are in the countryside.

Other diseases may infect dogs and walkers while they are out in the country, for example, the sheep tick can carry viruses.

4. Occupiers' liability

What is Occupiers' Liability?

Under the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957, the occupier owes a duty of care towards people who are invited or permitted to be on his or her land. The Occupiers' Liability Act 1984 extends the duty of care to people other than visitors, including trespassers but only if:

- the owner or occupier knows, or ought to know, of the dangers on his or her premises;
- he or she knows or suspects that people might come near that danger;
- the risk is one against which he or she might reasonably be expected to offer protection.

This duty of care does not extend to people who willingly accept risk.

Who is the occupier?

It may not always be obvious who the occupier actually is. It is usually the tenant or the owner-occupier. But, if contractors are being used on land, and the contractor has control over entry to the work site as during tree-felling or drainage works, the contractor may be the occupier. On land occupied by, for example, an electricity sub-station or water intake works, the occupier is the utility undertaker.

How does owners' and occupiers' liability change because land is accessible under the CROW Act?

Occupiers are liable for the safety of people on their land under existing legislation. However, the CROW Act changes the law so occupiers have no duty of care in respect of risks that arise from natural features, rivers, streams, ponds, cliffs, ditches, or misuse of walls, fences or gates on their land, unless they deliberately created the risk or recklessly allowed it to arise. In determining what duty of care is owed by the occupier in respect of access land, the following factors have to be taken into account:

- The fact that the existence of the right of access ought not to place an undue financial or other burden on the occupier.
- The importance of maintaining the character of the countryside, including historic or archaeological features.
- Any relevant guidance given in codes of conduct by Natural Resources Wales.

How is liability for trespassers affected if I close my land?

The reduced duty of care in respect of natural features, water and misuse of boundary features described above only applies while the public have a right of access to access land. The normal duty of care to a trespasser applies while the right of access under the CROW Act is excluded or restricted.

How is occupiers' liability affected in relation to mines and quarries on access land?

Under the Mines and Quarries Act 1954, all abandoned mines and quarries, with few exceptions, must be plugged or fenced so that the entrances to shafts are closed off. Some types of quarry that have not been worked since 1872 are excepted from this requirement unless they are by, or on, land accessed by the public. The requirement applies to all coal mines for which the Coal Authority will take over responsibility for safety. Land containing active mines and quarries, including their spoil heaps, is classed as excepted land and there will not be access rights over it.

The CRoW Act does not change things on land which is already open to the public – Section 151 of the Mines and Quarries Act 1954 already applies and an occupier should make the abandoned workings secure. But on access land, the introduction of public access may mean that S151 will apply, because the land becomes a ‘place of public resort’. As a result, an obligation might arise. Under Section 42 of the CRoW Act, the Government has the power to introduce regulations to prevent S151 applying on Access Land. If it decides to use this power, then the status quo will be retained and this obligation may not arise.

Do owners and occupiers have a duty of care under Health and Safety legislation towards the public on access land?

Health and safety legislation generally applies in relation to the work place. Owners and occupiers who are also employers have responsibilities under the legislation not only to their employees but also to the general public. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1999 are the most relevant regulations. Failure to comply with them is a criminal offence; a civil liability may also arise if there is an accident to a member of the public caused by a business’s activities. These regulations require employers (and the self employed) to assess risks from their business activities and take action to reduce any unacceptable risks. The action an employer is required to take can depend upon:

- the time, trouble and expense of taking precautions relative to the risk involved;
- and
- how effective the precautions will be.

The requirement to undertake risk assessments applies (under the MHSWR) and there is a lot of advice on how risk assessments can be undertaken e.g. the NFU’s Model Risk Assessment for Agriculture and Horticulture, and HSE publications such as Five Steps to Risk Assessment. But, existing assessments should be reviewed where access is created. Where risks are identified (or existing risks are increased), the employer may need to act. In most cases, no additional action will be necessary. In others, simple precautions or warnings may be appropriate whilst elsewhere use of restrictions may be the only option. In most situations, requirements of health and safety legislation take priority. On access land, the business operator may want to restrict public access. But note that, where exclusions are applied, anyone entering the land would do so as a trespasser, and the reduced level of occupiers’ liability would not apply.

Are landowners advised to take out extra public liability insurance if they own land where access rights apply?

It is not compulsory for landowners to have insurance. We understand from several insurers that the risks for people walking in open country are low and that although

insurance premiums are increasing due to the general increase in claims this is not happening due to the CRoW Act. Generally, research has concluded that, despite the range of potential hazards in the countryside, the hazards do not normally pose a significant threat to access users, especially with current good practice by the land manager and common sense from users. The low level of risk to members of the public is reflected in the level of claims made to insurers. In 2002, the Association of British Insurers (ABI) believed that accidents in open countryside would form a very minor proportion of the total claims and so would not be categorised separately. In 1998, the NFU Mutual gave evidence to a study on behalf of the then Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) prior to the CRoW Act's introduction that they "do not, in general, have a serious claims history in respect of members of the public on farm land". The brokers who provide cover for British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) members have reported that they have no evidence of reports leading to claims for injury from the public over incidents occurring when pursuing a legal right of access over land where BASC members exercise their sporting rights, or any other BASC activities.

Are landowners and occupiers liable if a pregnant walker miscarries after coming into contact with sheep faeces/urine?

Health workers should and do warn pregnant women of hazards associated with activities which involve contact with soil. Landowners and occupiers ought to expect visitors to either avoid or accept such risks.

Are landowners and occupiers required to ensure that livestock that is on access land is not likely to be potentially dangerous, as is the case along Public Rights of Way?

There is nothing in the CRoW Act that is as specific as the law relating to Public Rights of Way on this. Under the Animals Act 1971, owners of livestock may be liable for injury to people caused by livestock where they know that the stock will react dangerously. The landowner or occupier would need to consider the risks and potential liability to the public when putting stock that is known to be dangerous in places and circumstances that may place the public at risk.

How is trespass dealt with under the Act?

People who do not observe any exclusions or restrictions imposed on access land are trespassers and may be asked to leave by the landowner, occupier or someone empowered by any byelaws that may also apply to the land (e.g. a warden). Their right of access to the land in question and to any other land in the same ownership is automatically suspended for 72 hours. Trespass on access land continues to be a civil wrong. However, breach of any byelaw, which can be enforced by wardens, would be a criminal offence with small penalties.

5. Mapping access land

Can I object if my land is mapped as access land?

Natural Resources Wales has a duty to review the maps at least every 10 years. Maps are produced in draft, provisional and conclusive forms. People have a chance to tell us if land has been mapped incorrectly as common land or open country. Anyone can comment on the first '**draft**' maps showing the boundaries of open country and common land (taken from common land registers). We then issue '**provisional**' maps which take account of the views given on the draft maps. At this stage, people with a legal interest in the land can appeal to the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Welsh Government) if they think that their land has been shown incorrectly as open country or common land. The Planning Inspectorate will then decide on appeals and tell us to issue a final '**conclusive**' map.

What area of *ffridd* land or *coed cae* is included as open country?

Natural Resources Wales only mapped land known or used as *ffridd* or *coed cae* where it fulfilled our published criteria for identifying open country. Therefore, we tended not to map the more intensively managed and smaller areas, because these usually have semi-improved or improved grassland, or are not open in character. However, some larger, open areas, with heath, mire, bracken or unimproved acid grassland, are mapped where they meet our criteria for identifying mountain, moor, or heath. Although Natural Resources Wales considered *ffridd* and *coed cae* as land types during our pilot mapping in 1999, the Act does not refer to them and we are, therefore, not able to use them. Also, we are able to apply our objective criteria for identifying open country consistently across Wales. *Ffridd* and *coed cae* mean different things to different people across Wales and it is impossible to use such terms consistently, especially because the vegetation, location and size of such land are so variable.

Is land around wind farms excluded?

Wind farms may occur in open country and on common land. Each wind turbine would be regarded as a building. So the turbine and the developed land immediately around it would be excepted land under Schedule 1 of the CRow Act.

What happens to common land which is removed from the register of common land?

Registered common land will only be removed from Natural Resources Wales's 'conclusive' maps if:

- the application to de-register was made before 30 November 2000 and the application was successful;
- the land is subject to a compulsory purchase, appropriation or sale;
- other land is registered as common in place of the land that is taken off the register.

Do maps show woodland where there is a right of access?

Natural Resources Wales's website and Ordnance Survey Explorer maps do show this. However, Natural Resources Wales's conclusive maps must show all registered common land and all open country but do not distinguish between areas which are woodland and those which are not.

Is the percentage of land mapped as open country and registered common land higher in Wales than in England?

Wales has a higher percentage of open country and common land than England.

How often are the access maps to be reviewed?

Maps are required by law to be reviewed at least once every 10 years. Natural Resources Wales completed reviewing the original conclusive map in September 2014.

Where can I find out more about Natural Resources Wales's work on access maps?

You can find out more on the Natural Resources Wales website.

6. Nature conservation

How does access affect nature conservation?

We believe that the right of access rarely conflicts with nature conservation. Natural Resources Wales and the National Park authorities have the power to restrict access if necessary. Access to sensitive heritage sites can be excluded or restricted if necessary with the approval of the Welsh Government.

7. Wardens

Are there extra wardens to manage access on access land?

Under the CRow Act, local authorities and National Park authorities have the power to appoint wardens on access land. Wardens are able to work with owners and occupiers to manage access and help visitors enjoy the countryside responsibly. Wardens are also able to advise people visiting access land and owners and occupiers on access issues. One of their roles is to make sure that everyone using the countryside is aware of their responsibilities. Wardens also have the power to make sure that everyone keeps to bye-laws. Bye-laws are laws made by local authorities to deal with local issues. Breach of a bye-law constitutes a criminal offence and carries a small penalty.

8. Access forums

What is the National Access Forum for Wales?

The National Access Forum is a non-statutory advisory body on which a wide range of interests such as landowning/managing, recreation and nature conservation are represented. The Forum is administered and chaired by Natural Resources Wales. Its main purpose is to advise Natural Resources Wales about countryside access issues in Wales.

What are Local Access Forums?

The CRoW Act gave local authorities and National Park authorities a duty to set up Local Access Forums (LAFs).

These forums advise Natural Resources Wales, local authorities and National Park authorities on ways in which local access can be improved. The statutory purpose of LAFs is the improvement of public access to land for the purposes of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area. LAFs must have regard to the needs of land management, natural beauty, flora, fauna, and geological and physiographical features. The following bodies must have regard to any relevant advice given by the LAF: the National Park authority, the highway authority, Natural Resources Wales, the Welsh Government and, for matters to do with defence or security, the Secretary of State.

Members are appointed by the local highways authority or National Park authority. The forums must have a balance between:

- users of access land and local rights of way; and
- landowners and occupiers of access land and land with rights of way.

People with other interests especially relevant to the area will also be represented. Although the Regulations say that generally there should be no more than 22 members, including the Chair and the Deputy, the Chair can invite other individuals and organisations to observe and give advice. An annual report is produced for each LAF as soon as possible after 31 March each year. These are available from relevant local authorities and National Park authorities.

What are the boundaries of the Local Access Forum areas?

In most cases, Local Access Forum areas are based on unitary authority and National Park boundaries.

9. Publicity

How do I know where I am allowed to go?

You are able to look at maps showing access land and other features that may be of interest such as promoted routes and National Trails on Natural Resources Wales's website. The Ordnance Survey shows all land on which the public have a right of access on their 1:25,000 Explorer maps.

Are access points shown on maps?

The Ordnance Survey decided that showing access points would compromise the clarity of maps by showing too much detail. However, they do show the main access information points.

What steps have been taken to inform and educate the public about their rights and responsibilities?

Information and education underpin each of the issues above. Steps taken have included:

- Revising and re-launching the Countryside Code (Summer 2012.)
- Showing accessible land and land where the right of access has been restricted or excluded on our website.
- Providing information to the Ordnance Survey so that access land is shown on their Explorer Maps.
- Creating a symbol for access land.
- Working with Natural England to ensure consistency.