



Roles and responsibilities - FAQs

Who was responsible for delivering the Government's Public Service Agreement target to implement the new right of access?

The key organisations and their principal roles in delivering the target:

Defra has overall responsibility, with specific responsibility for making regulations and issuing guidance to local authorities and others

The Countryside Agency mapped open country and registered common land. As a "relevant authority", it was also responsible for managing the restrictions and exclusion regime (outside national parks). The Countryside Agency also provided information, guidance and advice to land managers and the public on how the new right of access will operate. These duties have now passed to Natural England

Natural England has now taken over all CROW responsibilities from the Countryside Agency and English Nature. It is responsible for managing the restrictions and exclusion regime (outside national parks), it provides information, guidance and advice to land managers and the public on how the new right of access operates, and it provides relevant authorities with advice about whether it is necessary to restrict or exclude access to conserve any flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features on the land in question. Natural England will also be responsible for undertaking the mapping at decadal review

The Forestry Commission is responsible as a "relevant authority" for managing the restrictions and exclusion regime in areas of woodland that have been dedicated for access

National park authorities are responsible, as "relevant authorities" for managing access including the restrictions and exclusions regime in national parks. As "access authorities" they also enable and manage access in their areas

Local highway authorities are "access authorities" with powers to enable and manage access in their areas outside of national parks. They can apply for funding from the Access Management Grant Scheme administered by Natural England for help with this

The Planning Inspectorate was responsible for deciding appeals against mapping. It is now responsible for deciding appeals against decisions regarding restriction or exclusion of access; and on appeals against the issuing of notices related to the means of access

The Ministry of Defence has powers to restrict or exclude access to CROW access land for the purposes of defence.

English Nature was appointed to provide relevant authorities with advice about whether it is necessary to restrict or exclude access to conserve any flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features on the land in question. The duty has now passed to Natural England

English Heritage has been appointed to provide relevant authorities with advice about whether it is necessary to restrict or exclude access to conserve a scheduled monument, or any other site of historic, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest

Ordnance Survey has produced a new series of Explorer maps to provide clear information on the location and extent of land that is available for public access, including under the CROW right of access.



Who are the relevant authorities and what are their roles?

Natural England is the relevant authority for land outside national parks; national park authorities are relevant authorities for land inside national parks and the Forestry Commission is the relevant authority for dedicated woodland.

The relevant authority is responsible for determining applications for a restriction or exclusion of access. It may also restrict or exclude access on its own volition for reasons of fire prevention or danger to the public. The relevant authority can, by direction, exclude or restrict access on the grounds of nature conservation or heritage preservation, and receive advice from Natural England and English Heritage about this.

Who are the access authorities and what are their roles?

National park authorities are the access authorities in national parks. In relation to any other land, the access authority is the local highway authority. Access authorities have a statutory duty to set up local access forums for their areas. They also have a range of powers to enable and manage access in their areas. These powers are to:

- make byelaws on CROW access land in relation to public order, the prevention of damage to the land or anything on or in it and to control walkers behaviour while they are on the land
- appoint wardens
- erect and maintain notices indicating the boundaries of CROW access land, as well as the effect of the restrictions to the right of access set out in schedule 2 to the Act (for instance excluding camping from the right of access) and any other issues which the access authority finds to be appropriate.

What is the Open Access Contact Centre, and what is its role?

The Open Access Contact Centre is the point of contact for land managers and the relevant authority officers regarding the new right of access. It provides the following services:

- processes applications and notifications relating to restrictions to public access; and forwards them to the appropriate relevant authority;
- distributes the "Land Managers' Guidance Pack"; and
- handles general enquiries regarding the new access rights and their implementation.
- takes orders for copies of the conclusive map at a scale of 1:25,000.

The Contact Centre is open for business from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday to receive emails and telephone calls.

E-mail: openaccess@countryside.gov.uk

Telephone: (0845) 100 3298

Web address: <http://www.openaccess.gov.uk/>