Access management - FAQs

How is management of the new rights funded?

Local authorities may apply for funding through the Access Management Grant Scheme (AMGS). However, they will have to make a contribution towards the costs. The AMGS is designed as an incentive for authorities to use their new powers to manage access.

What is the role of local access forums and who sits on them?

Local access forums have a wide role in advising access authorities and other bodies on the improvement of public access to land mapped under the CROW Act. They also advise on wider recreation issues more generally. Local access forums must also be consulted by relevant authorities about applications to restrict access to land for periods of six months or longer, as well as on the need for wardens.

Members of the forums are appointed to represent users of the right of access and rights of way and owners and occupiers of access land or land crossed by rights of way, as well as any other interests particularly relevant to the local area such as tourism, sport or nature conservation. Members are appointed in a personal capacity to be representatives of fields of interest rather than particular organisations, but are often also members of groups with an interest such as the NFU, CLA, Ramblers etc. Members of the forums are appointed by the local highway authority, which must advertise the posts. The posts are open to anyone with an interest to apply for. The authority must ensure there is a balance between representatives from user groups and from landowners and occupiers.

For more information on Local Access Forums

What is the Access Management Grant Scheme / what does it fund?

The Access Management Grant Scheme (AMGS) is managed by Natural England and is open to all access authorities (outside National Parks, which are funded separately). It provides funding for access management planning and for on-site management and infrastructure, such as signage, fencing, gates, volunteer costs and vegetation cutting. Access authorities receive funding at a rate of 50-75% and are required to consult locally in drawing up their funding bids.

Who will pay to manage the restrictions other than nature conservation?

Access authorities have powers to manage restrictions on the ground. There is some local flexibility to help those land managers who are experiencing high use. The local access forums work with access authorities to advise them on where need is highest.

What are the scheme's priorities?

This is a targeted scheme that supports those areas where the new rights have been introduced. This scheme will help where there are especially sensitive sites either on grounds of nature conservation or high visitor numbers. It can also address issues with mines and quarries and pilot a rapid response service. For other sites, we expect there to be minimal requirements for anything more than simple interpretation and signposting.

What if need isn't minimal?

Local access forums should advise access authorities on where need is greatest and should plan for this. Some additional support will be available to access authorities to assist land managers where disused mines and shafts may pose a risk to the public. Natural England also has a rapid response service to assist access authorities respond quickly to emergency situations raised by land managers. This helps to promote a more positive and responsive approach to access management, and reduce the need for restrictions and potential conflict.

What powers do access authorities have?

Access authorities are key to the success of the new right of access. They have a number of powers under the Act including:

- power to put up notices providing information
- power to improve the means of access to land which has been opened up and to deal with obstructions
- new byelaw making powers to preserve order, to prevent damage, or to avoid undue interference with the enjoyment of the land by others
- appointment of wardens to, among other things, secure compliance with byelaws, restrictions and exclusions, and advise and assist the public and land managers

How will the access rules be enforced?

The law of trespass still applies if people are exceeding their rights of access under CROW or ignoring restrictions. Local access authorities have the power, under section 18 of the Act, to appoint wardens to assist and advise walkers and land managers, and to help manage access at the local level. Many authorities already have countryside wardens or rangers. Authorities may also decide to appoint volunteer wardens and, in exceptional circumstances, Natural England can fund authorities to appoint paid-wardens under the Access Management Grant Scheme.