

COVID-19 Recovery Planning Guidance

WORKING PRACTICES FOR LANDOWNERS
AND COUNTRYSIDE MANAGERS

MAY 2020



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Foreward

KEN DODD, VSG CHAIRPERSON

No environment or activity can ever be free from risk. Visitor safety management is all about balancing benefits and risks.

Over twenty years ago the Visitor Safety Group (VSG) began looking at ways to achieve this balance. To help, we came up with a series of guiding principles that have stood the test of time.

COVID-19 is a new hazard, but one that can be risk-assessed using our tried and tested methodologies. This means we can identify what control measures may help to reduce the risk to as low as is reasonably practicable.

To produce this guidance, we have called upon the experience of our unrivalled network of people who manage visitors day-by-day, year after year. We have been able to draw lessons from the practical experience of our key member organisations throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland.



Endorsement

FIONA GROVES, OUTDOOR RECREATION NETWORK,
CHAIRPERSON

The Outdoor Recreation Network (ORN) has the vision of encouraging more people to enjoy and engage with the outdoors. Our members from across the United Kingdom and Ireland work in collaboration to help share research, facilitate information exchange and champion sustainable good practice.

Industry research undertaken during the COVID-19 restrictions has indicated a significant increase in those engaging with the outdoors and a frustrated desire to further engage as restrictions are eased. COVID-19 has provided an unprecedented challenge to our industry and therefore the preparation of these guidelines is valued by the ORN membership.

ORN looks forward to working collaboratively with VSG, during and beyond this crisis, giving greater and stronger support to our membership organisations in the future.

[OutdoorRecreation.org.uk](https://www.outdoorrecreation.org.uk)

The Visitor Safety Group

‘We believe that it is possible to protect and enhance our landscapes, encourage public access and achieve levels of risk that are acceptable to society.’

The Group was created in 1997 to develop a consistent approach to visitor safety management. Our members are committed to protecting and enhancing the natural and historic built environment whilst encouraging public access.

The Group was originally called the Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group (VSCG). It includes organisations that own and manage land and property, with day-to-day experience of visitor management, as well as national policymakers and specialist safety advisers. We work together to:

- identify and share good practice
- promote the application of consistent management principles
- develop a model approach to risk assessment that incorporates valuing benefits
- encourage consistency in the choice and application of risk control measures
- seek a balanced and pragmatic approach to dealing with the many and varied factors that affect visitor safety management
- produce sound interpretation of legislative requirements and court decisions

Our fundamental aim is to identify and promote ways to manage visitor safety that sustain the environment and enhance the value to society of our landscapes and special places.

Visitorsafety.group provides further information on our work and benefits of membership.



Introduction

This guidance seeks to cover the key areas all landowners and countryside managers will need to consider and assess when re-opening and managing outdoor public access sites / attractions and associated indoor / enclosed spaces during COVID-19 restrictions.

This guidance should be underpinned by the regulations, guidance and advice from the relevant Government. The approach to lockdown and easing of restrictions differs in each jurisdiction – See Appendix A Useful Links.

This guidance is designed to be read in conjunction with ‘Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside – Principles and Practice’ (3rd Edition).

As an employer, you must protect people from harm. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect your workers and visitors from COVID-19. You must:

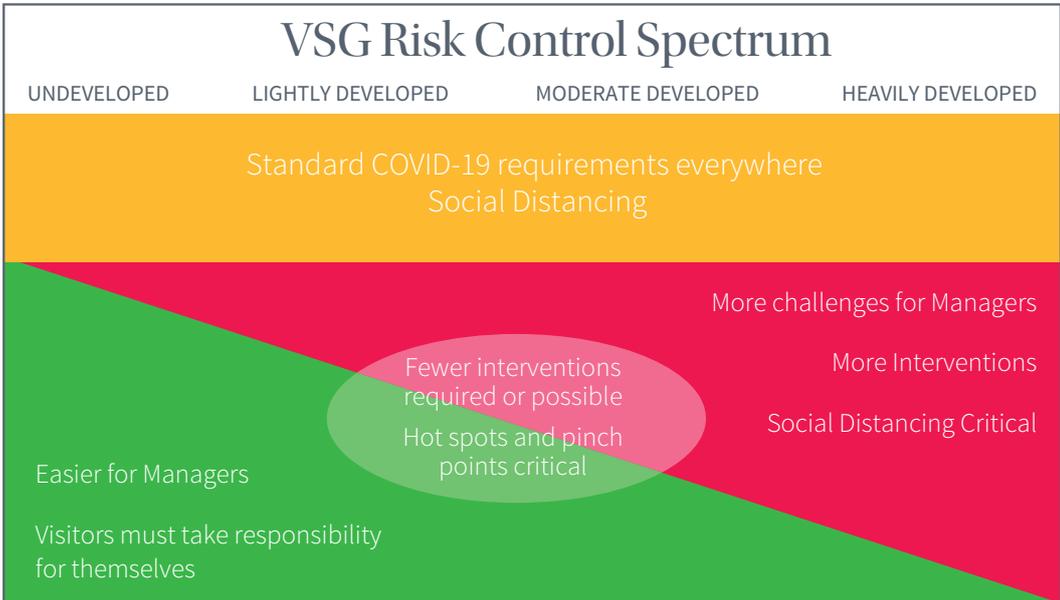
- identify what work activity or situations might cause transmission of the virus;
- think about who could be at risk;
- decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed;
- act to remove the activity or situation, or if this is not possible, control the risk

As no two sites are identical the checklists below are for guidance only. They should, however, identify key risk areas where you may need to consider suitable control measures when carrying out your own specific risk assessments.

The decision to open sites and facilities must always rest with the landowner or manager – only when they feel it is safe to do so for employees, volunteers and visitors - should they proceed. The process must not be rushed. If you cannot reduce the risk to your workforce to an acceptable level then you should not invite visitors in.

When considering the need for, and level of, control measures it is recommended that you first assess your site in terms of the VSG’s Risk Control Spectrum (fully explained in the above publication). The level of staff presence at your site will influence the control measures that are reasonable and practicable to achieve.

The Risk Control Spectrum below illustrates how the response to COVID-19 can be considered:



CAVEAT:

Government guidance on restrictions / working practices regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing and evolving. Therefore, parts of this guidance may become out of date. Please ensure you are aware and following the latest Government best practices.

The term ‘Social Distancing’ used in this document is the terminology used in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. ‘Physical Distancing’ is used in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland, these terms are interchangeable for the purposes of this document.



Guidance

A) GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Ensure you follow latest best practice and guidance from Government – See Appendix A Useful Links
2. COVID-19 is just one of the risks to be considered so do not neglect your normal risk assessment process and control measures
3. Social distancing, presently a minimum of 2 metres, is a key control measure to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and as such needs to be the central thread running through any plans and risk assessments
4. Social distancing is clearly a central pillar of Government communication and therefore managing this needs to reflect the high degree of personal responsibility that lies with the visitor / individual. Any control measures regarding maintaining social distancing should reflect this and need to be reasonable and practicable
5. Managing social distance may lead to increased lone working for staff, volunteers and contractors (even if only for short periods of the working day). Ensure thorough risk assessments and safe ways of working such as 'Buddy Systems' are reviewed, in place and effective
6. Take the time to inform visitors to your sites about your COVID-19 precautions so they know how to behave
7. Remind those who engage in higher risk activities such as climbing, mountain biking or wild swimming that they should stay within the limits of their ability, not push boundaries and risk added pressure on medical professionals

B) TRAVEL TO AND FROM WORK

While the responsibility for safe travel to and from work does not rest with the employer, to protect staff / volunteers / contractors, advice should be provided in terms of safe travel practice.

Where travel is business related and at the employer's instruction the following good practice should be adopted.

1. Avoid journeys with more than 1 person per vehicle unless staff / volunteers / contractors are residing together
2. Avoid using public transport where possible
3. Avoid work involving overnight accommodation until suitable hospitality facilities are available
4. Advise staff / volunteers / contractors to bring sufficient food and drink to last through the working day and travel (unless refreshments are provided / available on-site)
5. Parking arrangements at sites may need to be reviewed to accommodate an increase in staff / volunteers / contractor vehicles. Safe and secure bike storage areas should be provided where needed

C) ASSESSING SITES

Assume that site use and conditions may have changed on sites that you have not visited recently. This should be reflected in the risk assessment for staff / volunteers / contractors making new checks. Review site risk assessments to take account of any changes found.

The number of expected visitors / users is a key part of any assessment. Consider the potential impact of 'pinch / gathering' points on the ability to achieve social distance; the key factor being the likelihood of visitors having to queue and / or encounter others at such points.

SITE CHECKS

1. Ensure that your existing hazard safety checks and risk assessment are up to date and all existing control measures are in place and remain fit for purpose
2. Ensure that fixtures / infrastructure remain fit for purpose
3. For sites that have remained open, do not assume site use / access has remained the same during the COVID-19 restrictions. Check the site as soon as possible and where necessary change the risk assessment to reflect any change in condition
4. Some sites may have suffered from anti-social behavior issues, such as fly-tipping, camping, and fires and these again need to be assessed and steps taken to resolve and / or safeguard visitors / staff / volunteers from their impacts
5. On sites where access has been restricted or was absent during the COVID-19 restrictions wildlife including protected species, may have exploited the relative quiet and be vulnerable. Examples could be new badger setts or nesting birds close to, or even on, access routes. Check sites for any such vulnerable wildlife and put in place suitable control measures before visitor numbers increase
6. In some situations, it is likely that visitors may widen paths through a desire to maintain social distancing. Consider possible impacts on visitor safety (such as moving visitors closer to hazards such as drops / ditches) and the environment (such as increased erosion of paths and damage to unimproved grassland or ancient woodland flora). Action may be needed to limit further widening of paths into sensitive areas
7. There may have been significant changes in the use and condition of sites that have not been recently visited. Therefore, it is important to carry out a personal safety risk assessment before staff / volunteers / contractors go back on site to check its condition. Review lone working practices
8. As per good practice continue to appraise and risk assess the use of a site and to respond to changing conditions, complaints, or reports

VISITOR FLOW ASSESSMENT

9. Identify and map pinch-points and gathering areas where it would be difficult to achieve social distancing. These could include access points from car parks, viewpoints, boardwalks and facilities such as hides and visitor information hubs
10. Introduce practical control measures where possible to facilitate social distancing. These might include:
 - one-way systems
 - creation of wider entrance and exit points
 - movement of obstructions / cutting vegetation to provide more space and visibility to allow social distancing
 - additional signage and social distance markers to promote social distancing (See Appendix B)
 - placement of staff / volunteers (at relevant sites) to manage flow in and through key pinch / gathering points.
 - closing dead-end viewpoints or other bottle necks



D) GENERAL SAFETY MEASURES FOR STAFF / VOLUNTEERS / CONTRACTORS

COMMUNICATION

1. Do not assume all staff / volunteers / contractors are able to return to work at short notice. Early communication as to proposed start dates should take place and opportunities must be provided for discussion as to the ability / suitability of a return to work given their level of personal risk and circumstances
2. Individuals classed as vulnerable should only be invited back if a satisfactory personal risk assessment has been produced for them that enables safe working within COVID-19 restriction and UK government advice. Those classed as medically vulnerable are likely to be shielding and should not be invited back until Government advice authorises this
3. Identify vulnerable staff and volunteers using the risk groups in the **Government Guidance**. Take steps to ensure their health, for many this will mean that they cannot return to work / volunteering role at this time
4. Prior to commencing work, the supervisory member of staff should ensure all the control measures to be applied are clearly communicated to all team members. This must include those applying to social distancing and site welfare provision
5. Utilise HSE (UK) guidance **Talking with your workers about preventing coronavirus**
6. All team members should be briefed, so that they can communicate clearly the reason for any control measures that restrict visitor use of the site, in particular to ensure both safe working practices and social distancing
7. Ensure volunteers have a clear task outline and description of the work required that is compatible with social distancing requirements
8. Review existing and new contracts to ensure that they are compatible with social distancing requirements. Operational risk assessments must reflect COVID-19 control measures
9. Use email or other electronic means, rather than paper documents, to exchange information

FIT FOR WORK CHECKS

10. Supervisory staff should advise all team members that if they have any of the following symptoms, they should report them and not travel to site:
 - any form of cough
 - shortness of breath / breathing difficulties
 - fever (high temperature) or chills
 - loss or noticeable change to sense of smell or taste
11. Once on site during the pre-commencement briefing, supervisory staff should check again that all team members are fit for work and advise them to report any on-set of symptoms during the working day
12. Team members exhibiting symptoms during work should be sent home, and instructed to contact the NHS / HSE (ROI) and follow guidance for self-isolation

13. If team members do not report for work, or need to be sent home, then reassess your operational risk assessment to ensure you have adequate supervision and sufficient team members, suitably trained to allow work to continue safely and provide First Aid cover, when necessary

PPE & WELFARE FACILITIES

14. Check First Aid supplies and PPE available to staff/volunteers and ensure they are still in date / fit for purpose. First Aiders should be given face masks for use when administering First Aid.
15. All First aiders should be familiar the current RESUS guidance on '**CPR during COVID**'
16. If social distancing is observed, then personal PPE should not be required for general visitor management duties. However, if your risk assessment indicates a need, PPE suitable for the activity / role undertaken should be provided
17. If the role / activity involves direct contact with infrastructure / fittings used / operated regularly by team members / visitors, then consider providing suitable disposable gloves where it is operational / task safe to do so
18. Where uniforms are used, they should be allocated to each individual staff / volunteer and not exchanged / swapped
19. Where possible issue radios or other equipment for individuals to use for the working day. They must be thoroughly cleaned at the end of the working day and before any exchange is made
20. Hand-cleaning material such as alcohol-based skin sanitiser and / or soap, warm water and paper towels should be readily available. Where possible this should be a personal allocation. Encourage team members to take personal responsibility for washing and cleaning their hands frequently during the working day, especially if they come into contact with surfaces / equipment touched by visitors or other team members. Washing of hands should also take place prior to work commencing, at refreshment breaks and before leaving site
21. Sharing of any food, cups or utensils must be avoided
22. Collect and double-bag cleaning materials / disposal gloves for disposal at the end of the day
23. There should be sufficient vehicles on-site to allow team members to shelter individually in poor weather or suitable vehicles / shelters that allow for social distancing (2 metre minimum spacing) to be maintained
24. Where a communal welfare facility is provided implement a suitable daily cleaning regime to reflect numbers / level of use
25. Divide rest areas or shelters into allocated personal zones and / or stagger lunch and rest breaks to ensure social distancing. With staggered rest breaks ensure a suitable cleaning regime between allocated rest breaks and at end of day

TASK AREA MANAGEMENT

26. Plan work / tasks to allow a minimum of a 2 metre buffer zone between team members and between them and any site visitors / users
27. Where possible divide up site into personal work areas
28. Practical work activities or roles must not take place if they cannot be completed while maintaining social distancing. For example, two people carrying a heavy log that is less than 2 metres long

ON-GOING PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

29. It is always good practice for staff / volunteers to continually assess risk for situations they face. Managing social distance is likely to require constant readjustments to keep themselves, work colleagues and visitors as safe as possible
30. There are likely to be incidents where visitors will not exercise social distancing. Team members will need clear guidance / training on what their approach should be, how to remain safe and when it is appropriate to call the emergency services





E) SITE WORK SAFETY – ADDITIONAL MEASURES

COMMUNICATION

1. Ensure that operational risk assessments for both existing and new contracts include and reflect any specific COVID-19 working practice requirements and these are agreed between the contractor and supervisory member of staff
2. In particular, ensure compliance with the latest guidance from sector safety and representative groups such as the Arboricultural Association, Forestry Industry Safety Accord (FISA) or Construction Industry
3. Ensure that all sub-contractors / hauliers such as those delivering materials or removing timber are briefed on control measures before they arrive
4. Where qualifications / competence certificates have expired during the pandemic period it should be noted that in the UK the HSE have said that a period of grace is permissible although they must be refreshed as soon as possible. Such cases must be agreed/ documented before work starts and the organization planning the work must be sure that the worker is still competent

PPE & TOOLS

5. Use PPE appropriate for the operation
6. Check the expiry dates of formal inspection on relevant tools (such as electrical tools requiring PAT tests) as these may have expired during the lockdown period

7. Where possible hand / power tools, machinery, vehicles should be allocated to particular staff and not exchanged / swapped during the working day
8. Wipe down hand / power tools with suitable disinfectant before allocation, when moved between staff and at the end of the working day
9. The cab, operating levers, buttons and handles on any machinery should be cleaned / wiped down with suitable disinfectant before allocation, when moved between staff and at the end of the day
10. Ensure all protective clothing is clean at the start of each work period. Replace damaged items promptly. Particular attention should be paid to gloves
11. Always put on, take off, hang to dry and store protective clothing away from rest and eating places, stored personal clothing and the personnel areas of vehicles
12. Staff / volunteers / contractors working to 'catch up' on maintenance such as grass cutting or strimming may be tempted to work longer hours. Standard considerations such as Hand Arm Vibration and Noise should still be managed and the importance of this re-enforced to machinery users. Operator logs and records must be checked regularly by supervisors

WORK SITE MANAGEMENT

13. The work site should be planned to allow a minimum of a 2 metre buffer zone between workers and between workers and any site visitors/users
14. Ensure the delivery of materials can be achieved while maintaining social distancing
15. Where possible divide up tasks within the job to minimise joint working or tool sharing
16. Where possible divide up the work site into personal work areas
17. The direct handling and movement of materials between workers should also be minimised
18. Look to use barrier tape / signage on static / defined work areas to maintain social distancing from visitors
19. Consider barrier fencing and signage for sites where work will spread across a number of days
20. Use barrier tape / signage to define edges of mobile work areas – such as start and end of paths when grass cutting / litter picking etc.
21. Consider using a banksman for mobile work areas or where barrier tape / signage is insufficient to maintain safe working and social distancing

Forestry specific safety guidance is provided by the **Forest Industry Safety Accord**

ON-GOING SITE ASSESSMENT

22. It is always good practice for staff / volunteers to continually assess risk for the situations they face. Managing social distance is likely to be an area which will require constant readjustments by workers to keep themselves, work colleagues and visitors as safe as possible. Where control measures prove insufficient, or too difficult to implement then work should stop, the work site be made safe and vacated as soon as possible.

F) ENGAGING WITH PEOPLE

1. Many roles / tasks traditionally involve direct face to face engagement with members of the public. Where possible avoid direct engagement and use alternatives, such as phone / video meetings. Where personal contact cannot be avoided carry out risk assessment of the roles / tasks and implement risk controls to ensure that social distancing can be maintained. If visitor behavior causes concern – for example refusing to respect social distancing then the staff member / volunteer should be briefed to withdraw from the situation and, if necessary, phone the Police
2. Plan ‘welcoming and greeting’ activities in an area where social distancing can be maintained. This should preferably be outdoors and should avoid existing ‘pinch points’ and / or creating a ‘pinch point’ itself
3. For more formal ‘front of house’ areas (such as receptions or tills) ensure social distancing can be managed as a priority for staff / volunteers and visitors. Use barriers, floor markings or obstacles such as tables to ensure social distancing is maintained. Ensure you have sufficient space and staff to manage queues
4. Use contactless or online advance entry payments wherever possible. Advanced ticketing systems can be used to manage visitor numbers for indoor visitor attractions. Consider using devices such as cabled webcams to check tickets / passes. Install screens to protect ‘front of house’ staff
5. Anyone having items handed to them should wear disposable gloves and be trained to wash or sanitise their hands as soon as the gloves are removed. Payment collection equipment that might be touched by visitors should be included within any enhanced hygiene regime. Hand sanitiser should be available to any users where reasonably practicable – this may not be possible in remote or infrequently managed areas.
6. Visitor information to be presented verbally should be kept to a minimum and if possible leaflet / flyers should be the preferred method to allow visitors to move away and maintain social distancing as they consider the information. Display leaflets and flyers so that they can be picked up easily by visitors and not handed out directly by staff / volunteers
7. Make sure staff and volunteers are easily identifiable with branded clothing or suitable visible ID
8. Do not engage visitors directly with questionnaires or feedback forms. Such activities should be managed online
9. Do not issue physical electronic audio visitor guides. Instead consider providing guides that operate on personal mobile devices, leaflets or on-site signage
10. Face to face meetings with other colleagues, external partners / funders or members of the public should be limited to those that are essential. They should only take place in an environment that will allow for social distancing. Exchange meeting information and documents using e-mail or other electronic means
11. Avoid visiting and entering private homes and premises
12. Staff members working off-site should have access to personally allocated hand-cleaning material such as alcohol-based skin sanitiser and / or soap, warm water and paper towels

G) INDOOR SPACES

Given the wide variety of buildings and indoor spaces used by landowners and managers, this section can only provide high level guidance.

GENERAL

1. Ensure you are complying with the latest Government / HSE guidance on best practice COVID-19 control measures for buildings, visitor attractions and facilities. Staff should still be encouraged to work from home if possible until the pandemic has passed

RE-OPENING BUILDINGS / FACILITIES

2. Where buildings and facilities have been closed for some time. Before re-opening:
 - Check existing hazard specific safety measures are still fit for purpose - take the time to go through your operational risk assessment.
 - Check any lifts present have been serviced by a LOLER approved engineer within the last 6 months
 - Where asbestos is present, check the asbestos register for the building and ensure that any asbestos items have not degraded or been damaged during lockdown
 - Check all fire exits are still functional
 - Check any fire alarms, smoke detectors or gas alarms such as CO detectors are working
 - Check that firefighting equipment is still in good order and within inspection periods
 - Check that emergency lights are functioning (including battery powered torches)
 - Check all electrical equipment still has valid PAT testing certification
 - Check to ensure that gas boilers have been serviced by a GasSafe engineer within the last 12 months
 - Ensure any pressure vessels present have been serviced as required
 - Run all dish washers and washing machines empty, on a maximum temperature wash, at least once before using
 - To help prevent Legionella, open windows and toilet doors, close toilet lids and flush toilets at least twice. Run all taps for at least two minutes at low pressure. Where showers are available run them on high temperature with the shower head in a bucket of water, also for two minutes. In large or complex buildings arrange for a water hygienist to offer advice
 - Clean / disinfect sedentary indoor spaces (such as offices, cafes, or shops) that have been left empty
 - It is highly likely you will need to put in place an 'enhanced hygiene' regime. It is important that you consider whether you will have sufficient and suitably trained staff and stocks of suitable cleaning material to allow you to re-open and meet your hygiene regime

VISITOR FLOW / MOVEMENT AROUND THE BUILDING

3. Consider how you will move visitors through the building while ensuring social distancing can be maintained. Identify key pinch and gathering points and consider how you will manage these effectively; it may be that you need to be quite radical in changing the way visitors have traditionally moved around your building. You should aim to help visitors to 'self-manage' their social distancing. Measures could include:

- Limiting the number of visitors in the building at any one time
- Ensuring / asking visitors to continue to move through the building and not linger
- Putting in place 'one way' systems'
- Clearly marking 'entrance and exit' points
- Leaving internal doors open so that visitors can see others. This has the added benefit of limiting multiple visitors touching the same surfaces such as door handles – the fire risk assessment must be reviewed to ensure this can be managed safely
- Indicating the number of people it is safe to have in any space at one time
- Removing visitor seating to avoid people lingering
- Placing staff near key pinch and gathering points that are not easy for the visitors to self-manage. For example, at narrow stairways / passageways which need to be used in both directions
- Closing areas / rooms / attractions where you are not confident social distancing can be maintained
- Only offering audio / visual interpretation areas if you are confident social distancing can be achieved
- Where possible modify fixed audio / interpretation features away from push button' to timer-based starters
- At points of high interest / attraction putting in social distancing markers / signage to aid visitor self-assessment
- Restricting use of lifts for people with mobility / health issue only. Where a lift is used set a 1-person limit or 2 if a carer / attendant is required. As Government guidance changes, these numbers may increase





HYGIENE

4. A key aim should be to minimise the number of visitors touching / handling points such as door handles, chairs, benches, interpretation materials / objects that need to be handled or that have push buttons / levers.
5. Consider how visitors will flow through the building and remove all avoidable visitor touch points. Then identify the key areas for particular attention within your hygiene regime. These should include:
 - areas such as toilets and hand washing facilities
 - surfaces likely to be touched by multiple visitors such as door handles and bannisters
6. Your hygiene regime needs to reflect the number of visitors and number of unavoidable visitor touch points. It is worth remembering that a high and visible level of hygiene and sight of your cleaning staff will reassure visitors and be a significant influence on how they rate your attraction during this period
7. Where regular, unavoidable and multiple visitor 'touching points' exist consider having hand sanitiser dispensers available for visitors at regular points around the building
8. Hand sanitiser dispensers for visitors should be made available at the entrance and exit point from the building
9. Toilets should be maintained through an enhanced cleaning regime during which they are closed to safeguard cleaning staff. For busy toilets, consider closing them before cleaning begins to allow fresh air to circulate. Staff assigned to cleaning duties must have suitable PPE determined by the activity risk assessment.
10. Toilets should be provided with soap and hand sanitiser dispensers, hot air dryers or disposable paper towels. Do not use fabric towels
11. Visitor toilets are likely to be one of the more difficult areas in which to achieve social distancing. This is one visitor area where signage and social distance markers are most likely to be required. For single person toilets consider the installation of a queuing system with marked floor spots for social distancing. For multi-person facilities, if possible, leave the entrance doors open to aid visitor assessment of social distancing, but only where sufficient privacy can be maintained. In facilities with multiple urinals and basins consider taking every other unit out of use. If the spacing or access arrangements to toilet cubicles could impede social distancing, consider doing the same.
12. You should expect the use of soaps and hand paper towels to be significantly higher than before the COVID-19 outbreak. Therefore you will need to provide more regular checks, emptying of bins and provisioning of soap / hand paper towels dispensers
13. Wherever possible ensure good ventilation by leaving windows and external / internal doors open. Where this could compromise the existing fire risk assessment conduct a formal review to ensure fire safety can be maintained.

CAFÉ / FOOD KIOSKS AND RETAIL OUTLETS

In many cases the re-opening of food outlets and other retail venues will be some of the last to occur due to the complexity of the task and Government restrictions. The following basic principles should be followed during this process.

14. Risk assessment must be updated to include COVID-19 requirements. These must allow staff and volunteers to manage social distancing as far as practicable, protect them from risks when accepting payment or handing over goods and ensure visitors can manage social distancing. For example, measures may include:
 - removing stock or furniture to create space
 - putting queue management markers and systems in place
 - one-way routes around stores
 - enhanced cleaning regimes and waste removal
 - screens at tills and service counters.
 - provide contactless payment where possible
15. Food hygiene requirements must be adhered to as before
16. Retail staff may require additional PPE such as gloves

Full guidance on food hygiene on during the COVID pandemic can be found [here](#)

OFFICES / INDOOR SPACES FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Consider the way your staff and volunteers use their space and encourage them to seek to 'self-manage' their social distancing. Measures could include:

OFFICE SPACE

17. Organise workstations in offices to allow at least 2 metres between seated workers, their neighbours and people using walkways. This may require changes to working practice such as the introduction of rotas
18. Marking one-way systems for walkways and stairs. These can be marked out by floor symbols, barriers and signs
19. Where possible allow staff to have set workstations and avoid 'hot-desking.' Where this is not possible cleaning regimes should be in place to ensure 'hot-desk' spaces are suitably cleaned / disinfected between users
20. Supplying or encouraging staff to have personal, allocated stationery and office equipment such as staplers and pens

COMMUNAL SPACE

21. Staggering any formal lunchtimes or breaks so that mass movement is prevented
22. Cleaning sedentary indoor workplaces at least twice daily with particular attention to communally touched surfaces such as doors, chair arm rests and appliances such as kettles and toasters. Removing from use all 'communal' cups and utensils
23. Closing (or relocating) small communal areas that make social distancing difficult (such as kitchens or print rooms) Ensure users can see into communal areas before entry (propping open doors) and instigate a 'one in – one out' rule. Where this may compromise the existing fire risk assessment conduct a formal review to protect fire safety
24. Wherever possible ensure good ventilation by leaving windows and external / internal doors open – this also aids assessment of social distancing. Where this may compromise the existing fire risk assessment conduct a formal review to protect fire safety
25. Limit the number of users of any lift, preferably to one. If this is not possible, limit numbers to ensure social distancing rules can be followed

EXTERNAL VISITORS AND DELIVERIES

26. For sites that have regular deliveries create a secure acceptance area where goods can be cleaned before being moved into the main building. Provide staff who accept deliveries with guidance / training, disposable gloves and any other PPE necessary for cleaning regimes
27. Ensure staff seek to minimise external visitors through arranging meetings via video or conference calls. External visitors should only be allowed when such calls are not possible and only where there is a suitable and dedicated meeting space that is well ventilated and can guarantee social distancing. This may mean implementing a control on the number and timing of such external visitor meetings by having a centralised approach to external appointments. This space should be cleaned in between meetings
28. Essential tradesperson visits to fix or check essential equipment or assess safety – should be managed such that staff / volunteers are moved out and away from the workspace and the workspace is clearly demarked for the period of the task



HYGIENE

29. A key aim should be to minimise the common touching / handling of points such as door handles and the need to share office equipment / computers
30. Clean sedentary indoor workplaces at least twice daily with particular attention to communally touched surfaces such as doors, chair arm rests and appliances such as kettles
31. Staff / volunteer toilets should receive similar maintenance to those used by visitors, but this will vary depending upon locations and user numbers. As a general principal, toilets should be maintained through an enhanced cleaning regime during which they are closed to safeguard cleaning staff. For busy toilets, consider closing them before cleaning begins to allow fresh air to circulate. Staff assigned to cleaning duties must have suitable PPE determined by the activity risk assessment. Building managers should consider the points raised in the previous visitor hygiene section, regarding ventilation, keeping doors open, taking facilities out of use (where practicable), use of queue management and one-way systems.
32. Toilets should be provided with soap and hand sanitiser dispensers, hot air dryers or disposable paper towels. Do not use fabric towels
33. Place hand sanitising facilities into communally used areas and those with shared equipment such as kitchens and printer rooms.
34. Ensure hand washing and sanitising facilities are well stocked – check regularly during the day



H) OUTDOOR VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Given the range of outdoor visitor infrastructure used by landowners and managers this section can only provide high level guidance. It is aimed at the more typical infrastructure and visitor provision.

The need for control measures for these key pieces of infrastructure is also clearly dependent on visitor numbers and the likelihood of difficulties for visitors to undertake and self-assess social distancing which remains the key control measure.

It is also recognised that on the majority of unstaffed and/or remote sites it would not be reasonable or practicable to implement many of the control measures shown below.

Where the physical infrastructure is part of a Public Right of Way then any changes to the infrastructure should be discussed with the relevant Highway Authority.

1. **Car parks** – It is reasonable to expect visitors to use car parks sensibly - there should be no need to marshal car parking. However, you should consider the management of potential queues at charging points and pedestrian entrance and exit points from the car park through social distance signage and distance markers as part of the ‘pinch point / gathering’ mapping and assessment
2. **Entrance points / gates** – It is recommended that the Countryside Code be followed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that gates should generally be left closed and latched to prevent unauthorized access or risk to live stock. Visitors are expected to leave gates as they find them and follow government hygiene advice to protect themselves. Only consider tying gates open if there are obvious problems such as them becoming “pinch points” AND this will not create further risks. Where practicable gates or styles that are obscured by vegetation should have it trimmed back so that visitors can see each other as they approach
3. **Observation Hides / small scale visitor interpretation hubs** (not including entrance fee collection points or retail / café facilities) – Such facilities are often key to the enjoyment and use of a site and closing should be a last resort. On manned sites, marshalling may be possible and ‘social distancing’ signage and distance markers might provide effective risk control. Consideration should also be given to removing or securing doors in the open position to facilitate easy views into such spaces to aid visitor assessment. Where feasible, promote a ‘one-way’ system through such facilities. Position, mark or sign any seats to comply with social distancing. Open windows to aid ventilation. Interactive interpretation features which involve visitors in direct touching or use should be removed / covered or signed to prevent their use
4. **Outdoor benches / picnic tables** – These should be spaced to ensure a minimum buffer of 3 metres between edges of tables / benches to ensure social distancing. Where such provision is fixed and closer than 3 metres then sufficient benches / tables should be signed and taped off / made unusable to provide the necessary buffer distance
5. **Outdoor play areas including constructed / advertised ‘natural play’ areas** – It is extremely difficult for social distancing to be exercised in such areas and so it is suggested that until social distancing restrictions are fully lifted these areas should remain closed. Ideally use physical barriers but if this is not practicable then through clear signage
6. **Fitness and Trim trails** – These should remain closed until government restrictions on the use of outdoor gyms are lifted
7. **Proactively widening paths or cutting more** – Where it does not conflict with Environmental/Historic conservation, or formal gardening aims / design, consideration should be given to widening narrow paths (<3m) by cutting back edge vegetation / grass to make social distancing easier to achieve. Alternatively create clearly visible wider areas that can act as ‘passing bays’ or, within a garden setting, put in place a one-way system. On larger, more open spaces, it may be possible to increase path numbers as well as path width

8. **Boardwalks** – Boardwalks are often too narrow for social distancing should visitors meet. You might be able to signpost a one-way system or introduce passing bays. If the full length of the boardwalk is visible it may be reasonable to expect visitors to make their own assessment to decide whether or not to use it. In many cases it may not be reasonable or practicable for a landowner to make further physical measures. Use your risk assessment to consider whether the residual risk is acceptable
9. **Welfare provision** - Where standalone toilets / porta-loos are provided an enhanced cleaning regime should be introduced so they are cleaned thoroughly with disinfectant on a regular basis (see previous guidance on toilets.) They should have a means of cleaning hands after use such as hand sanitiser. Where such measures are not feasible consideration should be given to closing the facility until social distancing restrictions are lifted
10. **Water bodies** - The risk posed by water bodies has not changed during the pandemic. Landowners should warn prospective swimmers or paddlers of any hidden or unusual hazards only, such as Blue Green Algae or underwater obstacles. There is no general need to warn of the danger posed by water

IMAGE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Page 5: South Stack Lighthouse, RSPB Reserve, Anglesey, North Wales. © Guy Rogers (rspb-images.com)
- Page 8: St David's Peninsula, Pembrokeshire. © APCAP/PCNPA.
- Page 11: Darkley Forest, Co Armagh. © ORNI
- Page 12: Castlewellan Forest Park. © ORNI
- Page 16: Bluebells at Clatworthy Reservoir, West Somerset. © Wessex Water.
- Page 17: Conic Hill at Balmaha. © Paul Barr
- Page 20: View across the Great Pond towards Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire. © National Trust Images/James Dobson.
- Page 23: Symonds Yat, photographer unknown

Appendices



A) Useful Links

GOVERNMENT COVID-19 GUIDANCE

[England](#)
[Scotland](#)
[Wales](#)
[Northern Ireland](#)
[Republic of Ireland](#)

NATIONAL COVID-19 RECOVERY ROADMAPS

[England / UK - Our plan to rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy](#)

[Scotland – Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis](#)

[Wales – Unlocking our society and economy: continuing the conversation](#)

[Northern Ireland – Coronavirus – Executive Approach to Decision Making](#)

[Republic of Ireland – Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business](#)

GOVERNMENT COVID-19 GUIDANCE - OUTDOORS / COUNTRYSIDE / ACCESS

ENGLAND

[DEFRA – Coronavirus - guidance on accessing green space](#)

[DEFRA – The Countryside Code](#)

[MHCLG – Coronavirus – safer public places – urban centres and green spaces](#)

[DCMS – Coronavirus – guidance on the phased return of sport and recreation](#)

SCOTLAND

[COVID-19: Ministerial statement on access rights](#)

WALES

[Leaving Home to exercise](#)

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

[Sport Ireland Outdoors: Stay Local, Stay Apart, Stay Safe in the Outdoors](#)

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE / AUTHORITY – COVID-19 GUIDANCE

Health & Safety Executive

Health and Safety Executive - Working Safely during the Coronavirus Outbreak

Health & Safety Executive for Northern Ireland

Health & Safety Authority (Republic of Ireland)

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE

British Canoeing

British Cycling

British Mountaineering Council

Forestry England

National Trust

Natural Resources Wales

RSPB

Royal Yachting Association

Scottish Natural Heritage

Sport Ireland

Woodland Trust

B) Example Signage

FORESTRY ENGLAND

Forestry England

In an effort to support safe social distancing this facility is currently closed.

Remember... #BeKind

forestryengland.uk

This sign features a white background with a green Forestry England logo at the top left. The main text is in a large, bold, black font. At the bottom left, there is a small black box with the text 'Remember... #BeKind' in white. The bottom right corner contains the website 'forestryengland.uk'. The background is decorated with small, faint icons of trees and people.

Forestry England

These play facilities remain closed in line with government guidance and we ask visitors not to use this equipment.

Remember... #BeKind

forestryengland.uk

This sign has a white background with a green Forestry England logo at the top left. The main text is in a large, bold, black font. A faint, large-scale illustration of a coronavirus particle is visible in the background. At the bottom left, there is a small black box with the text 'Remember... #BeKind' in white. The bottom right corner contains the website 'forestryengland.uk'. The background is decorated with small, faint icons of trees and people.

Forestry England

Please keep your distance from others.

The key advice is you should stay two metres apart from people outside your household.

Remember... #BeKind

forestryengland.uk

This sign features a white background with a green Forestry England logo at the top left. The main text is in a large, bold, black font. Below the main text, there is a smaller line of text providing specific advice. At the bottom left, there is a small black box with the text 'Remember... #BeKind' in white. The bottom right corner contains the website 'forestryengland.uk'. The background is decorated with small, faint icons of trees and people.

Forestry England

When out on our trails, please keep your distance.

Public Health England recommends trying to keep 2 metres away from people as a precaution.

Remember... #BeKind

forestryengland.uk

This sign has a white background with a green Forestry England logo at the top left. The main text is in a large, bold, black font. Below the main text, there is a smaller line of text. A dashed line representing a trail winds across the sign, with small icons of people walking along it. At the bottom left, there is a small black box with the text 'Remember... #BeKind' in white. The bottom right corner contains the website 'forestryengland.uk'. The background is decorated with small, faint icons of trees and people.

Forestry England

Thank you for keeping yourself and others safe in the nation's forests.

Although there's not as many of us around as usual we are still working hard for you.

Remember... #BeKind

forestryengland.uk

This sign features a white background with a green Forestry England logo at the top left. The main text is in a large, bold, black font. Below the main text, there is a smaller line of text. At the bottom left, there is a small black box with the text 'Remember... #BeKind' in white. The bottom right corner contains the website 'forestryengland.uk'. The background is decorated with small, faint icons of trees and people.

B) Example Signage

NATURAL RESOURCES WALES

Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Wales

Rhybudd: Caead Coronafirws
Warning: Coronavirus Closures

Maes Parcio ar gau

Car Park closed

Rydym yn awyddus i gadw'r cyhoedd a'n staff yn ddiogel.

We want to keep the public, and our staff, safe.

Mae Llywodraethau'r DU a Chymru wedi cau parciau carafanau, meysydd gwersylla, mannau sy'n denu twristiaid a safleoedd prydfferth poblogaidd i ymwelwyr.

The UK and Welsh Governments have closed caravan parks, campsites, tourist hotspots and popular beauty spots to visitors.

Er mwyn cefnogi hyn, o ddydd Llyn, 23 Mawrth ymlaen, rydym wedi cau holl feysydd parcio, ardaloedd chwarae a tholledau Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru (CNC) yn y coedwigoedd a'r Gwarchodfeydd Natur Cenedlaethol yr ydym yn eu rheoli.

In support of this, from Monday 23 March, we have closed all Natural Resources Wales (NRW) car parks, play areas and toilets in the forests and National Nature Reserves that we manage.

Cyngor CNC yw eich bod yn gofalu amdanochi chi eich hun ac eraill. Pan fo'n bosibl, dylech ymlacio a chadw'n actif ond gofalu eich bod yn dilyn canllawiau iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru a'r Llywodraeth ynghylch ymbellhau cymdeithasol.

NRW advice is to take care of yourself and others. When possible, relax and keep active but ensure you follow the Public Health Wales and Government guidance about social distancing.

FFôn / Tel: 0300 065 3000

www.cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk
www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Wales

Rhybudd: Caead Coronafirws
Warning: Coronavirus Closures

Llwybr Beicio Mynydd ar gau

Mountain Bike Trail closed

Rydym yn awyddus i gadw'r cyhoedd a'n staff yn ddiogel.

We want to keep the public, and our staff, safe.

Mae Llywodraethau'r DU a Chymru wedi cau parciau carafanau, meysydd gwersylla, mannau sy'n denu twristiaid a safleoedd prydfferth poblogaidd i ymwelwyr.

The UK and Welsh Governments have closed caravan parks, campsites, tourist hotspots and popular beauty spots to visitors.

Er mwyn cefnogi hyn, rydym wedi cau holl feysydd parcio, ardaloedd chwarae, tholledau a llwybrau beicio mynydd Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru (CNC).

In support of this, we have closed all Natural Resources Wales (NRW) car parks, play areas and mountain bike trails.

Cyngor CNC yw eich bod yn gofalu amdanochi chi eich hun ac eraill. Pan fo'n bosibl, dylech ymlacio a chadw'n actif ond gofalu eich bod yn dilyn canllawiau iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru a'r Llywodraeth ynghylch ymbellhau cymdeithasol.

NRW advice is to take care of yourself and others. When possible, relax and keep active but ensure you follow the Public Health Wales and Government guidance about social distancing.

FFôn / Tel: 0300 065 3000

www.cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk
www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Wales

Rhybudd: Caead Coronafeirws
Warning: Coronavirus Closures

Dim parcio

No parking

Mae angen mynediad brys bob amser

Emergency access required at all times

Yn ôl Rheoliadau Llywodraeth Cymru, y dylai unrhyw ymarfer ddechrau a gorffen yn agos i'r gartref ac na ddylid teithio pellter sylweddol o'r cartref.

According to Welsh Government restrictions, any exercise should start and end near home and not involve going a significant distance from home.

<https://llyw.cymru/coronafeirws>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

Cyngor CNC yw eich bod yn gofalu amdanochi chi eich hun ac eraill. Pan fo'n bosibl, dylech ymlacio a chadw'n actif ond gofalu eich bod yn dilyn canllawiau iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru a'r Llywodraeth ynghylch ymbellhau cymdeithasol.

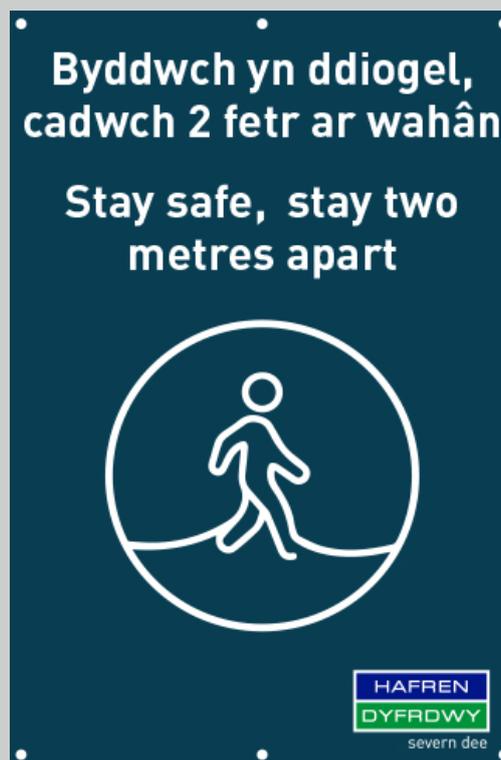
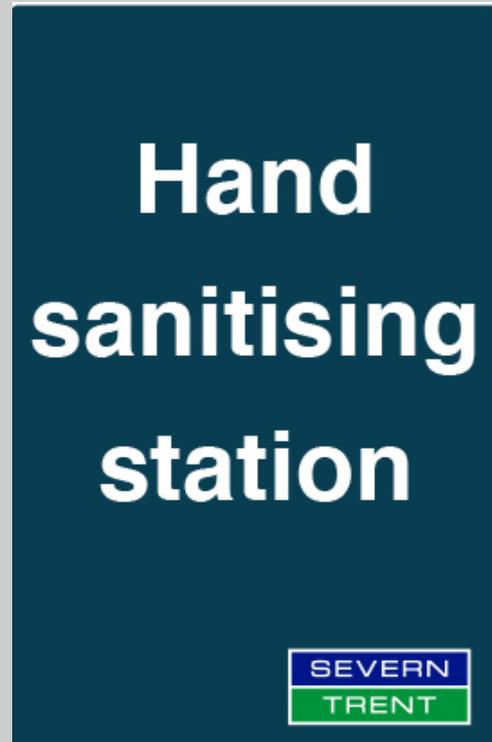
NRW advice is to take care of yourself and others. When possible, relax and keep active but ensure you follow the Public Health Wales and Government guidance about social distancing.

FFôn / Tel: 0300 065 3000

www.cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk
www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

B) Example Signage

SEVERN DEE



B) Example Signage

WOODLAND TRUST

Covid-19

Site name

**You are welcome to enjoy this site,
but please stay safe by keeping a
social distance of at least two metres
and ensure dogs are under close
control at all times.**

**Unfortunately, we haven't been able
to maintain this site to our usual high
standards and still have a large backlog
of jobs. Please keep in mind that it may
take us months to catch-up.**

**Thanks for your patience and
understanding.**

**If you wish to report any urgent or serious
issues please contact us using the name
of the site or call the Police on 101.**



**WOODLAND
TRUST**

Phone: 0330 333 3300

operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk



Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside Publication

How do we balance the benefits and risks from visitors to the countryside?

What techniques can we use to minimise the risks without spoiling the landscape?

How do we meet our responsibilities without taking away people's sense of freedom and adventure?

Members of the Visitor Safety Group (VSG) have developed practical answers to all these questions through years of experience managing large areas of coast and countryside, visited by millions every year.

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