



New legislation to reduce the spread of Covid19

The fine weather last weekend resulted in large numbers of people congregating at popular tourist locations throughout Wales including Snowdon, Pen-y-Fan and certain sections of the Wales Coast Path. This widely-publicised behaviour increased the risk of spreading the Covid19 virus and put excessive strain on communities and their emergency services at a difficult time.

To prevent further recurrences of these events, Welsh Government have taken steps to implement new regulations to address the spread of Covid19 by enabling emergency closures of selected paths and area of open access land, as well as pubs, leisure centres and a range of other buildings.

The **Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020** were enacted on Thursday 26 March (n.b. these revoked and replaced Regulations with similar powers enacted on Monday). These regulations impose a duty on Local Authorities, National Park Authorities, National Resources Wales and the National Trust to close certain public footpaths and land in order to protect against the risks to public health arising from coronavirus.

The duty extends to public rights of way or open access land that the authorities consider:

- to be liable to large numbers of people congregating or being in close proximity to each other, or
- the use of which otherwise poses a high risk to the incidence or spread of infection in its area with the coronavirus.

To support these closures, the regulations include duties to:

- Erect and maintain signage informing the public of the closures.
- Introduce a common enforcement regime applicable to all areas covered by the new Covid-19 Regulations which includes a potential fixed penalty notice of £60.
- Keep under review paths and access land which may need closing and amend as necessary.

The closures are aimed at limiting overcrowding in specific areas so as to underline the message that people should not be travelling outside their local area to access the countryside. Widespread closures are not currently envisaged in recognition of the positive effects of accessing the outdoors, particularly under the current circumstances.

Detailed information of closures implemented by each authority are available on their respective websites.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Full copies of the Regulations can be found at:-

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2020/353/pdfs/wsi_20200353_en.pdf

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2020/353/pdfs/wsi_20200353_we.pdf

Alongside these Regulations, we have been working with NRW on guidance for people in respect of outdoor exercise at this time. Our key messages are;

Provided you, or someone in your household, are not displaying symptoms of Covid 19, current advice is that it is safe for you to go outside for exercise **once a day**, so long as you:

- Do not travel – exercise outside close to your home
- Go alone or with members of your household - Keep 2 metres / 6½ feet from others at all times
- Be vigilant with hand washing and hygiene – Be aware that gates, stiles and other outdoor structures are touched regularly
- Do not undertake new or risky activities – Stay safe during this time of increased burden on our emergency and health services
- Follow the Countryside Code - Consider farmers and others who are working hard to keep our shelves stocked and infrastructure running.