

Unlocking our Society and Economy

Coronavirus (Covid 19): Guidance for reopening natural and outdoor cultural sites for recreation

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Version 1

Note: Due to the developing situation, this guidance may need to be updated regularly. Please ensure that you check NRW's [website](#) of the latest version.



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Executive summary

Collectively, natural and outdoor cultural sites play a significant role in providing spaces for people to exercise, learn and relax. As managers of these sites, and the wider countryside, we all want to make sure that this resource is available for people, as they recover and move back towards a more usual pattern of life, but recognise the absolute necessity to ensure it doesn't have a negative effect on our communities and the containment of the Covid-19 virus.

This advisory guidance complements the wider suite of information published by Welsh Government in preparation for the gradual reduction in restrictions on public movement. It has been developed by managers of public access to natural and outdoor cultural sites, giving a common understanding and sharing best practice. It is intended to supplement individual organisation's established protocols and processes.

The guidance is split into 3 sections, covering the when, how and who of opening natural and outdoor cultural sites as restrictions are lifted. The guiding principles are:

When to open sites as restrictions are lifted:

- The higher the profile of the site as a visitor destination, the later through the traffic light phases it will be reopened.
- Once restrictions are lifted beyond just '*local travel*' for '*outdoor leisure and recreation*' to a situation where more widespread travel is permitted, it may be sensible to reopen car parks to avoid pressure on local communities from unregulated on-road parking.
- Decisions about amending legal access restrictions imposed by Relevant Authorities will be made at a local level but will follow the principle that the highest profile sites will likely be the last to be released.
- Site managers will need to be confident that external operators using their sites can run their activities in accordance with safety protocols.
- Site managers should prepare plans for re-closing sites in the event of further national or regional outbreaks of Covid-19.

How to open sites as restrictions are lifted:

- Lead in preparations for some sites could take around 14 days from the announcement of changes in the Welsh Government regulations and accompanying guidelines.
- In the context of the Visitor Safety Group principles, managers would only need consider facilitating social distancing in areas, or 'pinch points' where people naturally congregate in large numbers (e.g. car parks, viewpoints).

Who needs to be involved and informed as sites are opened:

- Communications should be fully consistent with Welsh Government Covid19 [Regulations](#) and [Guidance](#): site managers should not develop their own interpretations.
- National communication and local or site-based communications should consider referring to current Welsh Government guidance, respect for local communities, responsibility for personal safety, social distancing and hygiene measures.

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Scope of the guidance

This document should be read alongside Welsh Government's Covid-19 [Regulations](#) and [Guidance](#) and should defer to these at all times. It is **advisory guidance**, intended to complement the wider suite of information published by Welsh Government to help prepare for the gradual reduction in restrictions on public movement. It has been developed by managers of public and third sector **natural and outdoor cultural sites**, to develop a common understanding and share best practice on managing **outdoor recreation**. This guidance may also be of use to the private owners who manage natural and outdoor cultural sites that are open to the public.

As managers we all want to make sure that these sites are available for people, as they move back towards a more usual pattern of life, but recognise the absolute necessity to ensure that reopening sites doesn't have a negative effect on our communities and the containment of the Covid-19 virus.

Definition of natural and outdoor cultural sites

In the context of this guidance, natural and cultural sites are **outdoor spaces** managed for public access, usually by public and third sector organisations. This includes among, others, Local Authorities, National Park Authorities, Natural Resources Wales, Cadw, the National Trust, the Wildlife Trusts, the Woodland Trust, RSPB and Dwr Cymru Welsh Water. These public and third sector managed sites include parks, gardens, woodland, nature reserves, beaches and upland areas. Much of the visitor infrastructure (car parks, toilets, visitor centres etc) at these sites were closed when Wales went into lockdown to help deal with the Covid-19 crisis.

There are also 56,136 km of Public Rights of Way and 743,918 hectares of Open Access Land in Wales. The majority of this has remained open for local access through the lockdown. However, some of these public rights were withdrawn under the *Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020*, mainly at high-profile National Park destinations, to signal the destinations were closed and avoid the unprecedented crowding by long-distance visitors that occurred on the weekend of 22nd of March 2020. This guidance also looks at these high-profile destinations, and how they will be reopened.

Definition of outdoor recreation

In the context of this guidance, outdoor recreation involves general leisure activities, outdoor exercise, group activities and organised events.

Guiding Principle

Each of the organisations that have contributed to this document have their own protocol and processes for reopening sites. This document is not intended to dictate the actions of local managers but presents a collective understanding of the key factors that govern decision making, and to share best practice.

Interdependencies

This guidance supports and complies with the Welsh Government's [Unlocking our Society and Economy](#) traffic light system, in particular the following aspects:

- **Exercise, playing sport and games:** As restrictions on activity types and events lift, there will be more competition for space and resources at natural and outdoor cultural sites.
- **Getting around:** As restrictions on travel lift, there will be greater demand for access to natural and outdoor cultural sites and the wider countryside.
- **Seeing family and friends:** As restrictions on people meeting lift, it becomes possible to carry out more group and social activities at natural and outdoor cultural sites.
- **Relaxing and Special Occasions:** More natural and cultural sites will be able to open as restrictions lift.
- **Working or Running a Business:** Commercial operations will be seeking to resume as restrictions lift.

This guidance also ties in with the guidance on Sport, Recreation and Leisure, the guidance for Tourism and the guidance on Culture and Heritage Venues. These documents are available [here](#).

Structure

This guidance is split into 3 sections, covering the when, how and who of opening natural and outdoor cultural sites as restrictions are lifted:

- **Section 1: When** to open sites as restrictions are lifted
- **Section 2: How** to open sites as restrictions are lifted
- **Section 3: Who** needs to be involved and informed as sites are opened

A provisional summary of this sector's intended activity during each stage of Welsh Governments outlined 'traffic light' phases is available in [Appendix 1](#).

Section 1: When to open sites

In response to lockdown restrictions on travel, most managers of natural and outdoor cultural sites closed their car parks and other visitor facilities. Timing is a fundamental principle for re-opening after lockdown.

Demand to re-open sites will increase as restrictions on travel are lifted. However, there will be a balance to consider between more opportunities for local communities to access natural and outdoor cultural sites and increasing the risk of viral transfer between areas. To keep in step with Welsh Government's traffic light approach, we recommend that site managers consider the status of their sites as they plan for reopening, based on the following spectrum:

- 1. Local Access:** Public access that connects communities with their natural environment.
- 2. Regional Profile Destinations:** Locally or regionally popular nature and cultural destinations.
- 3. National Profile Destinations:** Sites that have a broader cross-border visitor base and are often promoted at a national level.
- 4. World-Renowned Visitor Destinations:** The highest profile and most promoted sites in Wales. Internationally recognised.

A few exceptions span several of these types, such as the Wales Coast Path and the National Trails, which are world-renowned visitor destinations with both incredibly busy sections (e.g. Abereddi) and much quieter lengths.

Guiding Principle

The higher the profile of the site as a visitor destination, the later through the traffic light phases it is likely to be reopened. This is mainly about the number of visitors the site attracts, but also considers whether the symbolism of opening a site could trigger the mass movement of people through Wales.

This is a general principle, but it is important that decisions and plans for reopening are made at a regional level being sensitive to known community views. This is particularly important in areas around higher profile sites. Some key factors in planning are:

- The [Guidance](#) from Welsh Government on the restrictions to travel and activities.
- Advice of the Police, as the enforcing authority.
- Ability for organisations to put in place measures to facilitate social distancing.
- Impacts that keeping the site closed have on the community (i.e. problem parking and anti-social behaviour caused by visitors arriving at a site without knowing it is still closed).
- Communication with other managers of natural and outdoor cultural sites to ensure that sites open 'in step' with each other to avoid additional burden being placed on the sites that open first.

The key **trigger points** that will affect the timing of site reopening are the easing of people's ability to drive for sport, recreation and leisure:

- When “*local travel*” is allowed for “*outdoor leisure and recreation*”, local and regionally popular natural and outdoor cultural destinations can start to be reopened. **Red**
- When there is “*travel for leisure or access non-essential retail and services*” most natural and outdoor cultural sites are likely to be opened. **Amber**
- It is likely that some of the world-renowned visitor destinations will remain closed until there is “*unrestricted travel subject to ongoing precautions*”. **Green**

(The quotes above are taken from the *Getting Around* section of the [Unlocking our Society and Economy](#) guidance.)

Guiding Principle

Once restrictions are lifted beyond just ‘local travel’ for ‘outdoor leisure and recreation’ to a situation where more widespread travel is permitted, it may be sensible to reopen car parks to avoid putting pressure on local communities around sites (e.g. irresponsible parking on small lanes, litter etc).

Specific duties on public access

The *Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020* places a duty on Local Authorities, National Park Authorities, Natural Resources Wales and the National Trust to close certain public footpaths and land which 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 inform the public of the closures and introduce a common enforcement regime applicable to all areas. Closures under this duty are to be kept under review by Relevant Authorities and amended as necessary. This has only been applied in some parts of Wales (e.g. Snowdon, Pen Y Fan), where there is concern about large numbers of people congregating leaving as much public access open as possible so that people can exercise from their doorstep.

Guiding Principle

Decisions about amending restrictions imposed by Relevant Authorities under the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Wales) Regulations 2020 will be made at a local level but will follow the principle that the highest profile sites are likely to be the last to be released.

Businesses, clubs and charities that use sites

Natural and outdoor cultural sites with public access are used by many businesses, clubs and charities to carry out group or commercial activities. This can range from educational visits, to guided activities, to mass participation events.

Some local club activity may be possible in the **Red** stage if it is undertaken by individuals, but it is likely that most will remain restricted. During each phase of the lockdown, managers should be mindful that changes may influence the number of businesses, clubs and charities seeking to use their sites. For example, the following sections of the [Unlocking our Society and Economy](#) guidance:

- **Exercise, playing sport and games:** “Small group activities and some outdoor events with limited capacity” **Amber**. “All sports, leisure and cultural activities open, with social distancing, and all events resume with limited capacity” **Green**.
- **Working or Running a Business:** “Non-essential retail to reopen with social distancing”, “some personal services under appointment” and “accommodation businesses open without shared facilities”. **Amber**. “All businesses and workplaces open under new protocols” **Green**.
- **Education and Care of Children:** “Priority groups of pupils to return to school in a phased approach” **Amber**. “All children and students able to access education” **Green**.
- **Getting around:** Some business also needs travel restrictions to be fully lifted before they can be viable once again.

There is also a key interdependency here with Welsh Government’s [Education and Childcare](#) guidance, the guidance on Sport, Recreation and Leisure [here](#), and the guidance for Tourism [here](#).

Guiding Principle

Natural and cultural site managers may have a duty of care for groups, events or commercial activities operating on their sites. The site managers will need to be confident that the operators can run their activities in accordance with safety protocols, including social distancing, before deciding whether activities can resume.

Planning for rapid reversal

Site managers need to consider how easy it will be to close a site rapidly. The Welsh Government traffic light system should be seen as a **two-way process**, outlining the easing of restrictions when appropriate, but preparing organisations to respond if the situation worsens once more.

Guiding Principle

Site managers should prepare plans for reclosing sites in the event of further national or regional outbreaks of Covid-19.

Section 2: How to open sites

Site managers need to put in place plans to reopen sites as lockdown is lifted. Organisations with furloughed staff will need to plan around the furlough rules for bringing staff back into work. There is a particular issue where funding for staff depends on opening up commercial services on sites (shops, cafes etc). Therefore, some organisations may not be able to respond as fast, especially those with particularly bad financial impacts from Covid-19.

Guiding Principle

*It could take around **14 days** from the announcement of changes in the Welsh Government regulations and accompanying guidelines to the point where a natural and outdoor cultural site is able to reopen, if it can at all. Organisations should only open their site when they have prepared to welcome visitors back.*

Risk and recovery planning

Irrespective of the type of organisation, preparations need to be made before the car parks and other visitor infrastructure can be re-opened. This includes carrying out a risk assessment to identify sensible measures to manage risks at a site, or from the services provided there. Your risk assessment will help you decide whether you have addressed all necessary points.

This guidance uses the work of the Visitor Safety Group (VSG) to underpin the suggested approach. The VSG is a UK and Ireland based not-for-profit organisation, created in 1997, to develop a consistent approach to visitor safety management. Its members are public and third sector organisations committed to protecting and enhancing the natural and historic built environment whilst encouraging public access. For more details please see the [Visitor Safety Group](#) website.

VSG advocate a proportionate approach to managing risk in outdoor spaces, with the following principles that are supported by the Health & Safety Executive:

- It is important to strike a balance between visitor self-reliance and management intervention.
- It is reasonable to expect parents, guardians and leaders to supervise people in their care.
- It is reasonable to expect visitors to exercise responsibility for themselves.
- It is reasonable to expect visitors not to put others at risk.

VSG have created a [Risk Control Matrix](#) as a way of explaining their proportionate approach to risk management at natural and outdoor cultural sites. It is a simplified model to aid managers thinking about the level of management intervention appropriate for the type of site. It is important to note that it does not cover all eventualities and can vary within a site.

We recommend that managers of natural and outdoor cultural sites consider the VSG [Recovery Planning Guidance](#) as they prepare their sites for reopening. Please remember that **the application of these measures should be proportional to the nature of your site** (as outlined above).

The [Recovery Planning Guidance](#) is split into the following sections:

- **Section A: General Considerations**
Contextual information about Covid-19 as a specific risk factor.
- **Section B: Travel to and from Work**
Good practice for travel that is business related or at the employer's instruction.
- **Section C: Assessing Sites**
Processes for assessing site suitability and preparedness for reopening. There is specific mention here about how to facilitate social distancing measures at 'pinch points' on sites.
- **Section D: General Safety Measures for Staff / Volunteers / Contractors**
Measure for protecting staff, volunteers and contractors including social distancing whilst carrying out operational work and a section on adaptations to emergency procedures.
- **Section E: Site Work Safety - Additional Measures**
Recommended Covid-19 specific protocol for carrying out site operations.
- **Section F: Engaging with People**
Best practice for welcoming visitors onto site. Reference to the 'face to face' element of site management responsibilities.
- **Section G: Indoor Spaces**
Suggested approaches for managing indoor visitor facilities. Useful reference to hygiene measures at toilet facilities.
- **Section H: Outdoor Visitor Infrastructure**
High level advice on control measures that can be adopted by managers of natural and outdoor cultural sites.

Guiding Principle

In the context of the VSG principles, managers would only need to consider the potential for facilitating social distancing through guidance or practical on-site interventions in areas, or 'pinch points', where people naturally congregate in large numbers (e.g. car parks, viewpoints). This is not always consistent over a whole site. It is reasonable to expect visitors to act responsibly, and in compliance with social distancing requirements.

Applying a proportionate approach

As this is a new and quickly evolving virus, very little is known with certainty about the way it is transmitted in outdoor environments. The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) [advise](#) that "*the risk of infection outside is significantly lower than inside*". Therefore, site managers should have confidence that measures can be applied in a proportionate manner, in line with the VSG matrix approach and [Recovery Planning Guidance](#).

It is up to the individual site manager to decide how best to apply social distancing measures, considering their organisational protocol and knowledge of the local community and use of the site. However, a basic interpretation of the proportionate nature of the VSG guidance could be:

- **Highly developed areas (or at specific ‘pinch points’)**
Signage and social distancing measures in place: It would be reasonable for visitors to expect measures to be put in place to help facilitate social distancing. These could involve the control measures outlined in section C.10 of the VSG Recovery Planning Guidance (e.g. one-way systems, creation of wider entrance and exit points, movement of obstructions to provide more space and visibility) as well as additional *Local or Site-Based Communication* to promote social distancing. Site managers may also consider closing off areas where it would not be possible to facilitate social distancing measures (e.g. bird hides, natural play areas, picnic areas).
- **Moderately developed areas**
Signage and some social distancing measures: It would be reasonable for visitors to expect some measures put in place to help facilitate social distancing (as above) but for them to follow *Local or Site-Based Communication* and exercise more responsibility for social distancing for themselves and the people that they are caring for.
- **Lightly developed areas**
Signage Only: It is reasonable to expect visitors to follow *Local or Site-Based Communication*, and exercise responsibility for social distancing for themselves and the people that they are caring for, in line with *National Communication*.
- **Undeveloped areas**
No intervention needed: It is reasonable to expect visitors to exercise responsibility for social distancing for themselves and the people that they are caring for, in line with *National Communication*.

Further guidance

In addition to the guidance from the Visitor Safety Group, we advise that managers review the guidance from UK Government on [Safer Public Spaces](#), which has examples of social distancing measures in urban and green spaces.

Welsh Government has also provided detailed guidance on managing indoor Culture and Heritage Venues, with information about indoor locations at natural and outdoor cultural sites (e.g. toilets and visitor centres). See also guidance from Welsh Government on Sport, Recreation and Leisure, in particular the phased process of recommencing sport and recreation businesses. These two documents will be available [here](#).

The [UK Hospitality Guidance](#), is also useful to reference for catering operations.

Site managers should also consider how visitors with protected characteristics will be using the sites. This guidance on [Least Restrictive Access](#) is a good resource to draw on.

Section 3: Who needs to be involved and informed

Effective communication at a national and local level is an essential component of reopening natural and outdoor cultural sites. The concerns and views of local communities should be a factor in decision making about when and how to reopen a site. Communities need to be kept informed of any changes to access to sites, and messaging about visiting sites needs to be tailored accordingly for local and national audiences.

Community engagement

Limiting travel has been a key method for stopping the spread of Covid-19. Local communities, particularly those living in the vicinity of high-profile visitor destinations, may still have concerns about how relaxation of the movement of people between areas will impact on them. It is important that managers of natural and outdoor cultural sites are sensitive to community views as preparations to reopen sites get underway. There may be specific concerns that can be addressed by visitor management (e.g. traffic controls) and by facilitating social distancing measures. Most managers will already have good links in place with their local community. Other forms of engagement could be carried out through town councils, Local Resilience Forums and local business partnerships.

Core messages

We need a **strong and consistent** message for those visiting the outdoors, to give the public clarity about what they are allowed and not allowed to do, as well as their personal responsibilities. This falls into the following categories:

Travel, activity type and group size

The specific restrictions imposed by the stages of the lockdown are the most changeable, yet most crucial for the public to understand. These messages come directly from Welsh Government and are updated as part of their **21-day** review cycle. The latest guidance can always be found on the Welsh Government [website](#). There have been examples of groups developing their own interpretations of Welsh Government guidance. It is important to remember that Welsh Government will be working with Public Health Wales and the Welsh Police Forces to shape their official guidance, in order to ensure that it is in line with the latest scientific evidence and is possible to enforce.

Guiding Principle

Communications should be fully consistent with Welsh Government Covid19 [Regulations](#) and [Guidance](#); site managers should not develop their own interpretations.

Social distancing and hygiene measures

Although some aspects of the [social distancing rule](#) may change during the phases of the lockdown (e.g. the number of people allowed to congregate in one place or exercise together), the basic principles of social distancing are likely to be in place for the duration of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the context of the outdoors this involves being cautious when using built features, such as gates or railings, and users ensuring they have an effective means of hand washing or sanitising. This is particularly important in more remote locations, or where visitor infrastructure has not been able to reopen due to organisational resourcing issues. Toileting in the outdoors may also present a specific Covid-19 hygiene issue, particularly at sites where visitor facilities are still closed.

Responsibility for personal safety

Part of Welsh Government's core messaging around what activities people should be undertaking in the outdoors is based on the potential burden they could cause to the NHS in the event of an accident. It is likely that Welsh Government regulations and advice around activities will change as the restrictions are lifted. Whilst this will change the types of activities that may be undertaken at natural and outdoor cultural sites or in the wider countryside, it should not change the basic principle that people should be taking responsibility for their safety seriously and consider the pressure that the emergency services are under during this time.

Respect for local communities

This is possibly the most crucial message of all as visitors start to return to natural and outdoor cultural sites. The national messaging around acting responsibly in the outdoors is built around the [Countryside Code](#). Especially important at this time are the messages around:

- parking responsibly – especially if a natural or cultural site is full or closed
- being prepared for a site to be closed or for there to be no facilities available
- leaving gates as found and following instructions on signs
- leaving no trace and taking litter home
- keeping dogs under effective control including on a lead around farm animals

Guiding Principle

National communication and local or site-based communications should consider referring to current Welsh Government guidance, respect for local communities, responsibility for personal safety and social distancing and hygiene measures.

National communication

A group of communication representatives from public sector organisations, chaired by Visit Wales, meets weekly to share best practice and to discuss and shape message development around the Covid-19 regulations, and subsequent reopening. This work is informed by research undertaken by Visit Wales and is designed to provide detailed insight into the sentiment and feeling within communities in Wales.

Messaging needs to be unified across stakeholders to avoid ambiguity and complement all stakeholders' individual positions. There is a delicate balance between keeping Wales visible to people who would like to visit again in the future and offering leadership and support to tourism industry. Visit Wales are working closely with stakeholders and have broken down potential activity into phases, preparing messaging adapted to audiences and operators.

Local or site-based communications

Site managers should be able to lead communication at a local level, taking into account the context and issues in that area, within the framework of the national communication approach. This will ensure that messages are clear and consistent but allow for site-specific issues to be addressed in a timely and targeted manner. There are two principal ways in which this could be carried out:

Local communications through online user groups and social media

During this period of lockdown, social media is fast becoming the primary route through which people engage with their communities. This can be a geographical community or a community of interest. All are represented on social media via groups or linked through common tagging.

Site managers should monitor relevant local media channels to keep informed of other activity happening in the area and to help identify any issues/pressures that could arise before they manifest on site. These platforms can also be used to notify communities of any changes made to the site in question, including facilities available or social distancing measures put in place.

On-site signage

Generally, visitors to natural and outdoor cultural sites need to be informed of any requirements on them to behave in ways that keep them safe and protect others. Usually this is carried out through on-site signage or interpretation. As many of the core messages associated with the Covid-19 crisis are time limited and liable to change quickly, on-site communication needs to be adaptable. The following principles should be adhered to when developing signage:

- **Keep it clear** – Focus on the core messages
- **Keep it short** – Do not overcomplicate the signage with too many details
- **Keep it positive** – Remember that visitors have been in lockdown and may be struggling.
- **Messaging should be bilingual by default**

For examples of on-site signage see the [Lake District National Park](#), the [Yorkshire Dales National Park](#) and the [Peak District National Park](#).

Appendix 1: Summary of sectoral activity during each stage

Reflecting the principles and guidance already outlined in this document, below is a summary of the activity that managers of natural and outdoor cultural sites will be taking as lockdown restrictions are lifted. Note: this should always defer to Welsh Government's Covid-19 [Guidance](#).

Lockdown

- Most natural and outdoor cultural sites in Wales closed. Only local access on foot or by bike using Public Rights of Way.
- Access rights suspended at highest profile visitor destinations.
- National Communication about staying local and personal responsibility.

Red

- Locally or regionally popular nature and cultural destinations may reopen as soon as there is an ability to travel locally by car for exercise, recreation and leisure. This is subject to the organisation's ability to safely manage visitors.
- Measures to facilitate social distancing put in place at busier sites or 'pinch points' within sites, in line with Visitor Safety Group guidance. Some site facilities may be opened, where appropriate safety measures can be put in place.
- Access restrictions still in place at the highest profile sites.
- National Communication about staying local and personal responsibility.

Amber

- Almost all natural and outdoor cultural sites will be reopened when Welsh Government lifts the restrictions on travel for recreation and leisure.
- Access restrictions will likely remain in place at the highest profile sites. Relevant Authorities will keep under review.
- Social distancing measures will be put in place at busier sites (or 'pinch points'). More site facilities will be reopened to deal with the increased demand. Some commercial services may resume where appropriate safety measures can be put in place
- Some events may be considered, with limited capacity and social distancing in place.
- National communications around staying safe and acting responsibly.

Green

- When restrictions on travel and cultural and leisure activities are fully lifted, all natural and outdoor cultural sites will be reopened, unless there are exceptional safety issues.
- Access restrictions will be lifted. There may be a few "world renowned visitor destinations" where some restrictions remain in place to discourage mass public movement between areas.
- Social distancing measures will be put in place at busier sites (or 'pinch points'). Commercial services resumed where appropriate safety measures can be put in place
- Events will resume, with limited capacity and social distancing in place.
- National communications around staying safe and acting responsibly.

Appendix 2: VSG Risk Control Matrix

General Level of visitor use, location and terrain

Undeveloped
Wild and rugged countryside; remote forests and landscapes. Very low visitor numbers.

Lightly developed
Wider forest, moorland, coast and countryside; extensive farmed land; remote waterways. Low visitor numbers.

Moderately developed
Urban fringe; country parks; intensively farmed land; recreational forests; busy waterways. Moderate visitor numbers.

Heavily developed
Urban environment; easy terrain; surfaced paths; city-centre buildings and waterfronts; staffed facilities. High visitor numbers



Level of visitors' skill, self-reliance and personal responsibility

Advanced
Competent personal safety skills, planning, training and experience are expected. Visitors accept responsibility for their own safety.

Moderate
Skills, awareness of risks and self-reliance are important. Visitors understand surroundings and take some responsibility for their own safety.

Minor
Self-reliance, awareness of risks and personal responsibility encouraged but not expected. Visitors have some experience and knowledge of surroundings.

Minimal
No previous experience is expected. Visitors should follow advice and act responsibly.



Level of management intervention

Minimal
Physical safety measures unlikely. Routine information about site conditions not likely but arrangements made for exceptional circumstances.

Minor
Physical safety measures only likely for high risks. Limited information and signs possible.

Moderate
Some physical intervention for significant risks likely. Possibly some warning signs, leaflets and occasional staff presence.

Advanced
Physical safety measures likely. Managers actively manage risk for first time visitors. Likely to be warning signs, advance information about hazards and regular staff presence on site



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