

# Natural England launches new Countryside Code for land managers

With more people enjoying the outdoors than ever before, Natural England, in partnership with Natural Resources Wales, has today (8 February 2022) set out [new guidance for land managers](#) to help them ensure that visitors to the countryside can enjoy it in a responsible way.

Published under the [Countryside Code](#), the update provides recommendations to land managers on making rights of way accessible, creating safer environments and installing clear signage to help the public respect, protect and enjoy the countryside.

The new guidance advises farmers and land managers on how to make land more accessible, for example by adding self-closing gates instead of stiles where possible and using better signage, and how to report anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, littering, livestock worrying and other offences correctly. These changes will allow more people to access nature safely whilst also supporting land managers and helping to avoid damage to property, livestock and wider anti-social behaviour.

As well as advice for protecting livestock, using machinery in public spaces and the safe storage of chemicals, other key changes include:

- Clearer guidance on keeping rights of way usable, including recommendations for cutting back vegetation and keeping public waterways clear
- Instructions for where visitors can walk freely on [open access land](#) or in a [coastal margin](#)
- Information about common land and understanding that horse-riding rights are applicable
- The process of reporting anti-social behaviour – criminal damage and threatening behaviour will not be tolerated, and farmers and land managers are advised to contact the police to report any such incidents
- Advice on reporting noise disturbances and fly-tipping to the local authority
- Guidance on managing and protecting livestock, and a reminder of responsibilities when using firearms and fencing
- Advice for creating a safe environment, including the safe storage of bales, logs and the management of trees
- Information on using and storing dangerous substances responsibly

## **Marian Spain, Chief Executive of Natural England, said:**

With more people than ever before spending time in nature, this refreshed advice for land managers has never been more important in helping to ensure we work together to protect our outdoor spaces.

I urge all land managers to follow this new advice and continue to help make nature accessible to everyone, so people of all ages and backgrounds can enjoy the invaluable health and wellbeing benefits that nature offers, while giving it the respect it deserves.

**Lord Benyon, Minister for Rural Affairs, said:**

We want to ensure that nature is accessible for all, whilst also supporting people to do the right thing when they are visiting the countryside.

The new advice in the Countryside Code will help farmers and land managers to help the public enjoy the outdoors in a responsible way. I am grateful to all of those stakeholders who have helped shape this updated guidance.

Natural England and Natural Resources Wales have worked alongside stakeholders, including the National Farmers Union (NFU), Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Country Landowners Association (CLA), to develop advice which offers clear guidance to land managers and ensures the public can enjoy the countryside in a safe and respectful way.

The new advice for land managers follows the publication of the refreshed Countryside Code last year, which was revisited following a growth in people spending time outdoors during the pandemic.

The Countryside Code now covers all green spaces, waterways, the coast and parks in urban areas. To help people of all ages and backgrounds enjoy the countryside responsibly, the public code encourages people to 'be nice, say hello, share the space' and reminds visitors to not litter and avoid feeding livestock, horses or wild animals.