

Operational update: Coronavirus

How Natural England is operating now that national coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions have been lifted

Natural England continues to operate largely as normal, providing a full range of services and advice.

In our activities, both outdoors and indoors, we will be adhering to the government's updated [guidance](#), ensuring that, in progressing our full programme of work, we assess all relevant risks (including COVID-19-related risks) and that we take all appropriate measures to address these risks. Our staff will however not attend our offices, face to face meetings or carry out site visits if they test positive or have Covid-like symptoms to minimise the chance of them passing infection on to others.

We will continue to check in with our partners and customers on their needs and on their comfort in engaging with us in normal business – whether field visits or meetings. As we have been through the pandemic, we will continue to happily adjust our ways of working to meet specific needs, for example through virtual/remote methods of communication where that is preferable.

The COVID-19 crisis has continued to show us that a thriving and accessible natural environment is vital to the nation. We continue therefore, to progress the government's key policy ambitions for the environment, such as the 25 Year Environment Plan, the commitment to move towards net zero and the role of nature in mental and physical health/well-being, as well as ensuring that environmental law is maintained through our regulatory activities.

All Natural England-managed National Nature Reserves (NNRs) welcome visitors to connect with nature and enjoy our awe-inspiring wildlife, habitats and landscapes, but do check with your local site before you visit in case of any local car park closures or other restrictions. You can find more details on the [NNR pages](#).

We have employed additional seasonal wardens in some reserves to ensure they are safe and welcoming places to visit. When visiting our reserves or other outdoor spaces please follow the [Countryside Code](#) to enable all to enjoy, value and respect the natural environment.

Our levels of COVID-19-related absence are currently low and reducing – should this change in such a way as to impact key services for customers, we will of course advise on any short-term implications.

Our offices are now all open, with some adjustments in place to ensure safe working. Natural England will continue to operate its flexible working policy – with our staff operating from a range of locations, in the field, at partner locations, at home and in our 25 offices across England. If you need

to contact an individual member of staff, please use electronic communications which can reach them wherever their whereabouts.

At this time, we would like to thank all our partners and customers for their continued support over the past year and more. Together, we have delivered a lot of excellent work to benefit the natural environment. Over the coming months, I am pleased to say that we expect to bring forward a set of new and exciting projects which will further assist in reversing the decline of nature and in helping people to enjoy the countryside with all it has to offer.

Moving forward

We remain committed to our mission to build partnerships for nature's recovery, which the nation will need more than ever. We continue to work in partnership, even if in different ways, safely and enthusiastically.

Marian Spain,
Chief Executive