

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Part 1 – Initial Screening

1. People responsible for completing the assessment:

Belinda Davis, Senior Specialist, Policy Team - People & Access (EqIA trained)

(Please indicate which person(s) have undergone training in EqIA's)

2. Name of the policy, strategy or project:

Access Policy

3. What is the main purpose or aims of the policy, strategy or project?

The access policy will provide the principles for Natural England's access guidance for both our internal and external stakeholders.

Context

Inspiring people to value and conserve the natural environment is one of the four strategic outcomes under Natural England's refreshed Strategic Direction. Providing high quality access to the natural environment is integral to delivering this outcome.

Access in this policy includes both access to the natural environment as well as the wide range of healthy and sustainable, recreational activities that people enjoy in the natural environment on land and water

4. Who will be the beneficiaries of the policy/strategy/project?

The context for the Access Policy states that we will: provide the widest range of opportunities for people of all abilities, ages, ethnic groups and social circumstances to actively engage in, value and enjoy the natural environment.' It also states that: 'It also includes motivating those people who do not currently, or only partially, enjoy any relationship with the natural environment. Our ability to inspire this latent sector of society will be a key measure of our success. We acknowledge the many high quality recreational resources that currently exist and the longstanding expertise of many land managers including the National Trust, the National Park Authorities and country parks in managing the demands of recreation, wildlife, landscape conservation and socio-economic development. We want access to all existing high quality natural environments to be maintained.'

5. Has the policy/strategy/project been explained to those it might affect directly or indirectly?

No, but there is a policy position statement and guidance notes will help to explain and communicate the messages and proposed delivery of the policy - to a wide

range of both internal and external stakeholders.

6. Have you consulted on this policy/strategy/project?

Yes, there has been internal and external consultation with a diverse range of individuals and organisations during the development of the Access Policy. The evidence of this is clear to see in the wording and direction of the final policy which positively embraces the concept of a welcoming natural environment for all people.

Access Policy development stages

1. A Review of founding body policies, evidence and practices including the joint English Nature-Countryside Agency *Outdoor Recreation Strategy* .
2. Development of the scope for a 'Recreation' policy within the original Strategic Directions
3. Creation of a draft 'Recreation' policy
4. Consultation with stakeholders during summer 2008
5. Changing the draft policy into 4 strands including this Access policy
6. Board paper and discussion in September 2008
7. Draft Access policy External Consultation Workshop 21 November 2008

Invitations to attend the external consultation workshop on 21 November 2008 were issued to a diverse range of people. At the event the draft access Policy was presented to the audience followed by 3 round the table discussions groups on the policy. Feedback from these discussion groups was collated and then fed into a re-drafted access policy taking into account comments received from this consultation event.

In addition, Natural England's Evidence Team supplied a robust evidence base to support the development of this Access Policy some of which particularly focuses on increasing the opportunities and enabling more diverse audiences to visit their natural environment.

7. Please complete the following table and give reasons/comments for where:

(a) The policy/strategy/project could have a positive impact on any of the equality target groups or contributes to promoting equality, equal opportunities and improving relations within equality target groups.

(b) The policy/strategy/project could have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups, i.e. disadvantage them in any way.

If the impact is high, or the policy will impact significant amounts of people, a full EqIA should be completed.

Equality Target Group	a) Positive impact		b) Negative impact		Reason/Comment
	High	Low	High	Low	
Men	H			L	The Access Policy concentrates on providing high quality access that will appeal to both men and women; with opportunities to improve and create access where they are most wanted and needed, close to where people live. The Policy also states that there should be opportunities within the wider countryside that present all people with more challenge and inspire outdoor adventure that can be enjoyed by both men and women.

Women	H			L	Please see section above on men as this is also relevant to women. It is recognised that for women there may be a range of cultural (clothing, chaperoning), psychological (confidence, personal safety) and transport barriers which may restrict women's desire or ability to access to their natural environment. This has been addressed by acknowledging that there is a need for distinction and provision of a wide range of different opportunities; and also need to provide a high quality access that will help to address some of these potential barriers and also help to overcome concerns.
Asian or Asian British people Black or Black British people White people (including Irish people) Chinese people Mixed Race people Other racial/ethnic group (please specify)	H			L	<p>There is consistence reference to consideration of the needs of people from different ethnic backgrounds and communities within the evidence and context of the Access Policy. This policy is supported by evidence that BME groups are likely to be less engaged with their natural environment and the Policy states that ..'the creation of more accessible and inspirational natural environments as a means of overcoming the psychological barriers to engagement will be particularly important for children, the disabled and ethnic minorities. Implementation of the Defra 'Outdoors for All' action plan will be a vital component of policy delivery.'</p> <p>In addition Evidence shows us that 80% of its 50 million people are living in towns and cities. These areas contain the greatest social and cultural diversity (as well as the most acute areas of disability, disadvantage and poor health) and are also likely to have the lowest amount of natural environment per head of population. Therefore the Policy supports the development of multi-purpose green space, water and water-side access in urban areas and around the edges of our towns and cities that will benefit people and communities from all cultures and ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>The Countryside Agency research 'Capturing Richness and the Diversity Review' has helped to shape the development of this policy.</p> <p>The specific mention and inclusion of all ability trails in this policy will also address the need for some people to consider</p>
Disabled and deaf people	H			L	<p>The implementation of the Defra Outdoors for All action plan will be a vital component of policy delivery and consideration for disabled and deaf people are one of the highest considerations contained within this action plan. The Policy consistently refers to the use of 'least restrictive' access multi use trails and also the provision of high quality multi use experiences on existing facilities such as our own estate of NNRs where the provision of better interpretation to improve the quality of intellectual access can also be improved.</p> <p>Within Policy 2 it states that Natural England believes that access to the coast should be provided on foot by right and for multi-purpose use wherever reasonable.' Although access will be primarily on food, we will be seeking local opportunities, wherever reasonable, to add facilities and opportunities for disabled people to take advantage of these new access rights. There will also be a coastal corridor that will enhance the opportunities for people to improve the quality of experience.</p> <p>One of the main barriers for many disabled people is transport and the acknowledgement that there is.... ' a need to improve and create high quality places where people can access their natural environment where it is most wanted and needed, close to where people live; and, where they want to visit'(extract from Policy 1) supports the development of opportunities that disabled and deaf people can access without the reliance on public transport or private car.</p>
Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual	H			L	The Access Policy supports the provision of opportunities for increasing and enabling access to the natural environment for everybody, including Gay and lesbian community. The concept around this policy is to create a welcoming environment for all people.

people					
Transgender people	H			L	The Access Policy supports the provision of opportunities for increasing and enabling access to the natural environment for everybody, including transgender people. The concept around this policy is to create a welcoming environment for all people.
Older people (50+)	H			L	The overall approach to this access policy is to aid healthy activity within the natural environment, that will benefit the health and wellbeing of older people and also to create the widest range of opportunities for people of all abilities and ages.
Younger people (17-25) and children	H			L	There is no negative impact predicted for younger people and the Policy actively encourages opportunities for families that include children and younger people encourage healthy activity through access to their natural environment. More specifically Environmental Stewardship Schemes have been identified as increased opportunities for educational visits and learning outside the classroom. In addition the high quality longer distance trails and recreational routes have the potential to attract more young people as they offer higher levels of challenge. They traverse through cities, valleys and across mountains by cycle, foot or horse and also link younger people from disadvantages communities in towns and cities to inspirations of the wilder countryside and waterside environments.
Working patterns (P/T or part year)	H			L	This policy does not really affect or negatively impact upon people with part time or unusual working patterns as it concentrates on access to the natural environment which will be available to people at locations they can access whenever they choose to do so.
Faith groups (please specify)	H			L	This policy does not really affect positively or negatively on different faith groups. More can be done to promote the links between spirituality and the natural environment which can benefit people of all faith groups. There will be some natural linkages between the considerations described above for race groups which should be taken into account. Due to the diverse range of opportunities supported by this policy there will be opportunities for people to visit areas or locations that can also tie in with religious and/or prayer commitments.

8. If there is a negative impact on any equality target group, is the impact intended?

No negative impact on any equality target group

If there is a negative impact on any equality target group is the impact legal?

9. What actions could be taken to amend the policy/strategy/project to minimise the negative impact?

There are no negative impacts identified but the delivery of Outdoors for All action plan over the next ten years will consistently address and review and mitigate and minimise any impacts that come to light during the advocacy and delivery phase of this policy.

10. If there is no evidence that the policy/strategy/project promotes equality, equal opportunities or improves relations within equality target groups, what amendments could be made to achieve this?

Natural England consistently and continually engages with different equality target groups and individuals to improve relations and provision.

11. How will the policy/strategy/project be implemented including any necessary training?
See annex 1 – Delivery of Natural England’s Access Policy.

Full assessment necessary? No but as a matter of good practice for a Policy that will directly affect the lives of all sectors of society a full assessment has been undertaken

Is this Policy/Strategy/Project:

A new policy	Yes
A change to an existing policy/strategy/project	No
An existing policy/strategy/project	No

Is this Equality Impact Assessment:

Predictive	Yes
Retrospective	No

Date completed:

Signed by Line/Project Manager:

Approved by Senior Management /Project Management Team:

Signed by Diversity lead:

(This indicates that the EqIA has been through the QA process and has been approved as sufficient quality and appropriate for publication)

If applicable, now move on to the following pages for Stage 2 and Stage 3 – Partial and Full assessment

12. In part 1 (initial screening), which equality target groups were identified as being disadvantaged by the policy, strategy or project:

Age	No
Disability	No
Faith or Religion	No

Gender/Transgender	No
Race	No
Sexual orientation	No
Working patterns	No

13. Summarise the negative impacts for each group: (check questions at checklist for stage 2 – assessing likely impact)

See section 7 of part one of this Equality Impact Assessment.

Partial assessment completed. Move on to stage 3 – full assessment

14. What previous consultation has taken place or will take place with each equality target group either externally or internally? Give details:

This Policy is based on a robust evidence base both through the previous and continued work within Natural England and also evidence gathered from a variety of external sources. The Diversity Review was completed in 2006 where Natural England investigated what could be done to support the participation in outdoor recreation of disabled people, black and minority ethnic people, people who live in inner city areas and young people.

Natural England's Diversity Review team produced 'Outdoors for All?' on behalf of Defra. This is an Action Plan to increase the number of people from under-

We work with disabled people to assess and improve the opportunities to access our National Nature Reserves and also carry out other work related to diversity in the natural environment. For example, we have collected disabled peoples' experiences of using the outdoors to produce 'A Sense of Freedom' which is available in a variety of different formats and also 'Capturing Richness' which concentrates on the experiences of BMEs.

15. Who was consulted and/or what research material was obtained? Please list:

The list of organisations below were provided an opportunity to be involved in the consultation process; not all organisations responded. Consultees were selected by relevance and experience surrounding the policy content and also to represent a broad range of ages, genders, abilities, backgrounds, faiths and races.

Black Environment Network, British Canoe Union, British Horse Society, British Mountaineering Council, British Waterways, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Central Council for Physical Recreation, Commission for Architecture and Built Environment, Commission for Rural Communities, Council for National Parks, Country Land and Business Association, Countryside Management Association, Cycling England, Cyclists Touring Club (CTC), Defra, Department for Children, Schools and Families, Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Transport, Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Department of Health, Disabled Ramblers Association,

Duke of Edinburgh Awards, England Access Forum, English National Park Authorities Association
Environment Agency , Field Studies Council, Fieldfare Trust, Forestry Commission
Institute of Public Rights of Way Management Ltd, Kennel Club, Local Government Association
MIND, National Association for AONBs, National Farmers Union , The National Trust,
Natural Economy, New Forest National Park Authority, Open Spaces Society, Ramblers' Association
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Sustainable Development Commission
Sustrans Head Office, Byways and Bridleways Trust, The Long Distance Walkers Association
The Wildlife Trusts, Visit Britain, Walk England, Woodland Trust , Youth Hostel Association

Feedback was considered and appropriate amendments made to the access policy.

16. What does the consultation indicate about the negative impact of the policy, strategy or project?

Most consultees agreed with the basic content of the Access Policy although some minor adjustments were suggested and made in relation to the wording to make the content and policy direction more relevant and/ or appropriate for some potential user groups.

17. What changes / action do you propose to make to the policy, strategy or project as a result of research and/or consultation?

See 16 above

There will be a Policy Position Statement together with a suite of guidance notes (for both internal and external audiences) to ensure that delivery of this policy is undertaken in the most effective and accessible manner possible, so that it benefits people of all ages, abilities, cultural and socio economic backgrounds. There will also be specific guidance notes on diversity and equality to support the advocacy and delivery of our whole suite of Outcome 2 policies.

A new toolkit has been developed to help promote our policies and translate the high level messages into information that is more easily read and absorbed eg policy postcards that capture and simplify the main policy messages in a few short and simple bullet points and policy cartoons (both of these contain visual images that try and capture the main components and feel of the policies). In addition, information will be available via internal intranet which will include a pre recorded webinar that can be accessed by all staff and a copy of the policy position statement that will be uploaded onto the intranet main Natural England Internet. Web based information provision can increase the accessibility of information for many people.

Outdoors for All will be progressing the way that Natural England (and other countryside service providers) currently communicates, markets and delivers its products and services that result from the making of this policy to ensure that any negative impacts to any equality group is minimised where ever possible.

18. Will the planned changes/action to the policy/strategy/project:

Lower the negative impact? **Yes**

Ensure that the negative impact is legal under anti-discriminatory law?
Yes

Provide an opportunity to promote equality, equal opportunity and improve relations within equality target groups? i.e. a positive impact **Yes and Outdoors for All will also be gathering success stories and examples of best practice to promote and raise awareness of diversity and equality issues.**

19. What equality monitoring/evaluation/review systems have been set up to carry out regular checks on the effects of the policy/strategy/project? Give details:

The advocacy, delivery and monitoring of the Access Policy will be supported by Outdoors for All a 10 year action plan which will be monitoring progress both within Natural England and also within external countryside service providers or organisations.

20. When will the policy/strategy/project be reviewed?

Unknown at present time

Please indicate which assessment has been completed:

Partial Assessment **Yes**

Full Assessment **Yes**

Date completed:

Signed by Line/Project Manager: ...Belinda Davis.....

Approved by Senior/Project Management Team

Signed by Diversity lead:Claire Rose.....

(This indicates that the EqIA has been through the QA process and has been approved as sufficient quality and appropriate for publication)

Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan

Area of negative impact	Changes proposed	Lead responsibility	Deadline	Resource implication	Comments
No areas of negative impact identified though improvements around effective communication and advocacy of our policy messages have been identified as an area that requires further work.	Outdoors for All will be concentrating on the way that Natural England and other Environmental organisations communicate and engage with diverse	Outdoors for All Project Manager	Continual improvement over the 10 year action plan is anticipated	Continuing progress initially reliant upon continuation of OfA PM. Providing information in a variety of alternative formats.	But over time the concepts and methodology should become embedded in our ways of working

	audiences and driving forwards improvements.				
Potential misinterpretation or translation of policy messages	No policy changes proposed but production of policy guidance notes and signposting to examples of best practice and existing additional internal and external guidance will help to ensure that advocacy and delivery of policy messages are approached in an inclusive manner	D&E Access Policy guidance notes Belinda Davis	Dec 09	Staff time already allocated to this task	