

Cairngorms Visitor Management Plan - Easing of Covid-19 Lockdown restrictions on recreation in the countryside

Aim – The proposed scenario plan below is to ensure a safe and just transition from the current lockdown measures. Specifically it aims to:

- Maintain all health and safety protocols for prevention of transmission of Covid-19.
- Mitigate any negative impacts from increased recreation in sensitive or popular sites
- Reduce potential conflict between residents and visitors:
- Prepare business, land owners and communities for the increase in visitors:

Key National Strategy

The Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making - Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis -

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis/> provides the immediate focus for the work in this document. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code provides the overarching framework for the way that visitors and land managers operate in the countryside.

Key Partners

National

- Environment and Economy Leaders Group & sub-groups – Key coordination across countryside portfolio
- STERG – coordination across tourism industry.
- Access and Communications Groups – CNPA, SNH, FLS, HS, SportScotland & LL&TNPA
- National Parks UK

Regional

- Cairngorms Business Partnership / VisitAberdeenshire / Moray/Speyside
- Partner Ranger Services
- Public bodies
- Owners of key visitor sites / Estates
- Local Authorities
- Community Organisations

- Police Scotland
- CNPA Staff & Volunteer Rangers

Cairngorms Tourism Emergency Response Group

Remit and membership

Remit of Group: The group has been set up to provide consistent and comprehensive analysis of the implications of Covid-19 for tourism, to coordinate communications with the tourism industry, ensure close working between key agencies and the private sector, to gather, share, facilitate, interpret and disseminate information and agree relevant actions and delivery plans.

Membership: The Group consists of representatives from Cairngorms Business Partnership, VisitAberdeenshire, MoraySpeyside, VisitScotland, Aberdeenshire Council, The Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Angus Alive and CNPA (Chair).

Focus

The Cairngorms National Park is the largest in the country so it is unrealistic to implement all measures equally across the Park given staffing and resources. However, it is essential to implement confidently & consistently – clear, simple, messaging about safe, responsible and enjoyable behaviour.

The Scottish Outdoor Access Code already provides a very good basis for guiding and managing visitor behaviour and land manager activity responsibly and we will focus on the additional and temporary measures that are necessary at this time to deal with the covid emergency.

Therefore the focus of the implementation measures to lock down easing will be on proactive, safe management of key countryside sites simplified into two broad areas:-

1. Rural 'hot spots' – mostly requiring vehicle access
2. Community locations – easy 'local' walk or cycle

Both 'areas' can be popular with residents and visitors and some 'overlap' is possible.

No paid attractions have been included because currently these seem unlikely to open during first 'phase'

A risk rating for each site identified is given as follows:

	Very popular, pinch points on trails, could be on a dead end road, limited parking and overspill sites, popular hills or beauty spots, heavily promoted by 3 rd parties, close to main transport routes i.e trunk roads and accessible from large towns.
	Popular, parking previously sufficient for level of use, setting off point for hills or beauty spots and promoted by 3 rd parties, likely to experience overspill from nearby popular sites.
	Less popular, sufficient parking, generally used by residents.

Rural 'Hotspots'

Key Countryside Location	Risk	Manager	Roads Authority	Potential onsite support (including estimated FTE coverage)	Additional staff support from CNPA
In bold 'dead end roads'					
ABERDEENSHIRE					
Muir of Dinnet		SNH	Aberdeenshire	SNH Site Manager and Aberdeenshire Ranger	3 CNPA Seasonal Rangers by end of June with volunteer rangers at the appropriate point.
Cambus o May		FLS	Aberdeenshire	FLS Ranger (0.1)	
Glen Tanar		Glen Tanar Estate	Aberdeenshire	GCT Ranger Service (1.4)	Access team support
Loch Muick		Balmoral Estate	Aberdeenshire	Balmoral Ranger Service (2)	
Keiloch Car Park		Invercauld Estate	Aberdeenshire	Staff but no ranger	
Linn of Dee		NTS	Aberdeenshire	NTS Ranger Service (2)	
ANGUS					

Glen Clova		FLS Angus Alive	Angus	AA Ranger Service (2)	Access team support
Glen Mark		Angus Council and Dalhousie Estates	Angus	Estate staff but no ranger	
PERTH & KINROSS					
Killiecrankie		NTS	Perth and Kinross	NTS Ranger (2)	Access team support
Beinn a Ghlo (car park)		Lude Estate	Perth & Kinross	No ranger service	
Falls of Bruar		Atholl Estate and House of Bruar	Perth and Kinross	Atholl Estates?	
HIGHLAND					
Glen Feshie (car park)		THC/SNH?	Highland Council	No ranger service	5 CNPA Seasonal Rangers by end of June with volunteer rangers at the appropriate point.
Uath Lochans		FLS	Highland Council	FLS Ranger (0.1)	
Laggan Wolftrax		FLS and Laggan Forest Trust	Highland Council	FLS Ranger (0.1) and LFT staff	Access team support
Loch an Eilien		Rothiemurchus	Highland Council	Rothiemurchus Estate Ranger Service (2)	
Coylumbridge / Inverdrue		Rothiemurchus	Highland Council	Rothiemurchus Estate Ranger Service (2)	
Glenmore		FLS	Highland Council	FLS Ranger Service (2)	
Cairngorm Mountain		HIE	Highland Council	CM Ranger Service (2)	
Loch Garten		RSPB Scotland	Highland Council	RSPB Community Ranger and estate staff (0.3)	
MORAY					
Glenlivet Mountain Bike Trail Centre		Crown Estate Scotland	Moray Council	CES Ranger (0.5)	Access team support

Note Significant numbers of staff are furloughed in partner organisations and may not immediately be available to help manage sites when lockdown eases

Community 'Hotspots'

Community	Risk	Community Path Leaflet (y/n)	Popular Routes	Onsite Support (including estimated FTE coverage)	Additional support from CNPA
ABERDEENSHIRE					
Strathdon		Y	Ben Newe and the Doune	Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service (0.1)	3 CNPA Seasonal Rangers by end of June with volunteer rangers at the appropriate point. Access team support
Dinnet		N	Loch Kinnord, Deeside Way	Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service (0.1)	
Ballater		Y	Deeside Way, Craigandarroch, Riverside path	Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service (0.2)	
Crathie		N	Riverside Path	Balmoral Estate Ranger Service (0.1)	
Braemar		Y	Creag Choinnich, Lions Face and Morrone	Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service (0.2)	
Glenshee		N	Cataran Trail		
PERTH & KINROSS					
Blair Atholl		Y	Falls of Bruar, River Tilt Trail	Atholl Estate Ranger Service (2)	Access team support
HIGHLAND					
Dalwhinnie		Y	Loch Ericht		5 CNPA Seasonal Rangers by end of June with volunteer rangers at the appropriate point.
Newtonmore		Y	Glen Banchor, Wildcat Trail,		
Kingussie		Y	Creag Bheag, Gynack Mill, Loch Gynack		

Kincraig		N	Speyside Way, Loch Insh		Access team support
Insh		N	Speyside Way		
Aviemore		Y	Old Logging Way, NCN 7, Craigellachie NNR		
Carrbridge		Y	Riverside Path, Ellan Wood	CNPA Community Ranger (0.2)	
Boat of Garten		Y	Deshar Wood, Speyside Way	RSPB Community Ranger (0.2)	
Nethybridge		Y	Dell Woods, Speyside Way, Riverside Path	RSPB Community Ranger (0.2)	
Dulnain Bridge		Y	Riverside Path, Old Laundry path		
Grantown-on-Spey		Y	Anagach Woods, Speyside Way, Dava Way	Highlife Highland Ranger (0.1)	
Cromdale		N	Speyside Way		
MORAY					
Tomintoul		Y	Speyside Way, Circular Walk	Crown Estate Scotland Ranger Service (0.5)	Access team support
Glenlivet		N	Scalan, Cairn Dìamh, Speyside Way, Drumin	Crown Estate Scotland Ranger Service (0.5)	

Overall Scenario Plan

Timescales (based on SG Guidance)

Phase I - 28 May until next review on 18 June

- You will also be permitted to travel short distances for outdoor leisure and exercise but advice to stay within a short distance of your local community and travel by walk, wheel and cycle where possible.
- In this phase we are planning to allow unrestricted outdoors exercise adhering to distancing measures and non-contact outdoor activities in the local area - such as golf, hiking, canoeing, outdoor swimming, angling – consistent with the wider rules and guidance applicable to any activity in this phase.
- In this phase we are planning the gradual opening of drive through food outlets as well as the re-opening of garden centres and plant nurseries with physical distancing. Associated cafes (e.g. in garden centres) should not reopen at this stage except for take away.

Phase 2 – Potentially from 18 June but no decision until review point

- People will be able to drive locally for leisure and exercise purposes.
- Pubs and restaurants can open outdoor spaces with physical distancing and increased hygiene routines

Phase 3 – Timescale Unknown

- In this phase you can drive beyond your local area for leisure and exercise purposes.
- Pubs and restaurants can open indoor spaces with physical distancing and increased hygiene routines.

Defining characteristics of these Phases are that:

- The timing of Phases is unclear
- The transition from one Phase to the next is likely to be indistinct;
- Progression isn't necessarily linear with time e.g. we could regress back from Phase 2 to Phase 1

Key Times for Visitor Management

- Friday – Sun are key visitor times
- School summer holidays from 3 July

Phased Approach

This Plan provides the overall context for visitor management planning in the Cairngorms National Park. There is a Glenmore specific and Deeside specific plan being prepared and these plans will also tie in with specific plans being put in place by individual landowners.

All organisations involved will have to ensure that they are following the guidance and ensuring that their risk assessment process is appropriate. A consistent risk assessment process around opening up countryside to protect staff, visitors and local communities is crucial for this work.

Activity/Action	Lockdown	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Car parks	Rural car parks mainly closed at present.	Most car parks remain closed but preparing for reopening. Consideration to some car park reopening for locals (within 5 miles)	Car parks begin to open in key locations to ensure visitors can be managed. Use webcams to live feed how busy sites are.	Car parks open across the Park
Public toilets	Public toilets are closed at present	Public toilets are closed at present	Public toilets at key hotspots are open and supplied with equipment suitable to maintain safe hand washing, correct signage etc. Key issue and needs clear approach to risk, products etc.	All public toilets open and promoted Key issue and needs clear approach to risk, products etc.
Promoted paths and popular mountain paths	Clear guidance from SG on the ability to drive to take exercise: Clear guidance on social distancing rules:	Maintain social distancing measures and daily exercise message and #stayathome messages with signage	Instigate social distancing measures such as “one way” systems and additional temporary routes.	Phase out temporary promoted trails.

		Maintain SOAC messages re wildfire and dogs with signage	<p>Update online promotional material to include information on social distancing.</p> <p>Remove, or limit access to, furniture such as map boards and seating to reduce transmission risk:</p> <p>Provide safe hand washing facilities such as hand sanitiser stations if appropriate.</p> <p>Maintain daily exercise message and #stayathome messages with signage.</p> <p>Maintain SOAC messages re wildfire and dogs with signage.</p>	
Ranger patrols	Updated and revised personal risk assessments re social distancing and safe hand washing	Limited ranger patrolling to maintain health and safety.	Increased ranger patrols, with physical distancing, at key sites and times to promote SOAC messages and maintain health and safety. Key use of social media	Regular ranger patrols to maintain SOAC compliance and health and safety.
CNPA Seasonal Rangers	CNPA developing proposals to recruit and employ seasonal rangers to promote, with partners,	CNPA seasonal Rangers being recruited. Start on 15 th June. Operational at end of June.	<p>8 CNPA Seasonal Rangers in place by end of June 2020.</p> <p>Agree patrol routes and coordinate with existing ranger services.</p>	<p>8 CNPA Seasonal Rangers in place by end of June 2020.</p> <p>Agree patrol routes and coordinate with existing ranger services.</p>

	responsible access post lockdown			
Volunteer Rangers	Updated and revised personal risk assessments re social distancing and safe hand washing	Volunteering programme suspended in line with partner organisation policies	<p>Potential to start support limited volunteer ranger Otential Limited support available to ranger services to maintain health and safety ie, path maintenance and path inspections.</p> <p>If appropriate, greater emphasis on activities which are less visitor facing and more focused on infrastructure/habitat management/wildlife recording etc.</p>	<p>Requests for support at key sites and key times to promote SOAC</p> <p>Wider activities restart where appropriate</p>
Land management support	<p>Clear guidance from SG on the ability to drive to take exercise:</p> <p>Clear guidance on social distancing rules:</p> <p>Support/approval from Police Scotland.</p>	<p>Support to land managers to maintain SOAC signage.</p> <p>Prepare for increase in wild camping, fire risk and potentially motorhomes.</p>	Funding to land managers to implement basic visitor management measures i.e litter picks, informal camping site clean ups and temporary way marked trails.	
Statutory measures	Clear guidance from SG on the ability to drive to take exercise:	Advise on SOAC compliant signage	<p>Supply revised SOAC compliant signage</p> <p>Section 15 powers to maintain health and safety signage.</p>	Fast track statutory powers to remove non- compliant signs and obstructions

	Clear guidance on social distancing rules:			
Traffic Management	Developing consistent approach to visitor management and traffic management in Deeside and Glenmore	Glenmore Visitor Management Plan drafted Deeside Visitor Management Plan drafted Consider issues associated with motorhomes	Implementation of plans	Implementation of plans
Private Sector Capacity	Almost all visitor facing businesses are shut or are extremely limited. Clear guidance on what private sector facilities are available to residents under lockdown	Look at what services can be offered by businesses and how this can be communicated in this phase. (see comms planning) Maintain stay local messaging with awareness of what facilities are open to locals	Look at what services can be offered by businesses and how this can be communicated in this phase. (see comms planning) Awareness of what facilities, particularly attractions and popular beauty spots are open for those able to travel within permitted guidelines to support distribution of visitors and locals.	Look at what services can be offered by businesses and how this can be communicated in this phase. (see comms planning) Continue as for phase 2 with more facilities open helping spread visitors and pressure on easy pinch points.

Communication Planning

Cairngorms Business Partnership, VisitAberdeenshire, Moray DMO and the CNPA are developing a consistent approach to the messaging around lockdown. Our messaging will promote Scottish Government Guidelines, encourage people to plan ahead, adapt their plans if

necessary to stay safe and to be kind to each other and nature. The communications approach will target local residents, employees and visitors to inform, reassure, manage expectations and inspire people to care for each other and the Cairngorms.

The outcomes we aim to achieve are:

- Public information on COVID 19 restrictions and Scottish Government guidelines are easy to find/access and are delivered in a positive, clear and consistent way
- Residents, employees and visitors are reassured that as restrictions change people know how to keep themselves and others SAFE – particularly how to **Be Safe Outside**
- Residents, employees and visitors feel we are working together to allow services and experiences to open SAFELY and know how to find Scottish Government Guidelines and other relevant information
- People enjoying the Park are aware and understand the latest SG guidelines, plan ahead, know how to keep themselves and others safe and are kind towards each other and the Park (SOAC messages). **All messages to be created around - Know the guidelines, Plan Ahead, Be Flexible and Be Kind.**
- Visitors feel and are welcomed by local residents & businesses and support the community spirit to **Care for the Cairngorms**
- See Appendix I for further information on the framework for communication #CairngormsTogether

Activity/Action	Lockdown	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Communications	Build compliance to stay at home, exercise locally with members of your household only. Promote SOAC & connect with Cairngorms Nature from home.	CNPA to act as a clearing house for which facilities are open in the Park in early part of easing of lockdown. Communicate through relevant channels. Maintain compliance with SG Guidelines.	CNPA to co-ordinate positive, clear and concise messages on how to follow SG guidelines and enjoy the Park safely and responsibly. Provide up to date information on what car parks, paths and related services are open in the Park.	CBP/DMOs to promote services and experiences that are open for business and ready to welcome visitors safely.

Appendix I –#CairngormsTogether - Framework for Communicating Confidence for Communities, Employees and Visitors



Cairngorms Together - A Framework for Communicating Confidence For Communities, Employees and Visitors -

Providing a warm welcome and exceptional experiences to people from near and far is part of our culture in the Cairngorms National Park.

We value that visitors choose to spend their precious leisure time with family, friends and loved ones, here, with us. We have missed them. To help care for the Cairngorms and each other we have developed a framework for communicating confidence for our communities, businesses and visitors. Our aim is to make it as easy as possible for us all to do the right thing.

Know the Guidelines

- Businesses and those with responsibilities for public spaces keep up to date, understand and abide by the relevant guidelines; understand how guidelines apply to protect communities, employees and our visitors and explain how they are being implemented.
- Visitors and customers keep up to date with guidelines, understand their responsibilities, adhere to social distancing and protect our employees and communities. Respect local measures that have been put in place to ensure we keep everybody as safe as possible.

Plan Ahead

- Businesses and those responsible for public spaces make information available so visitors, customers and residents can plan for their experience and to do the right thing.
- Customers and visitors research and plan their trips taking into account available facilities, toilet provision etc. Be prepared to flex your plan to help us care for our special environment. Be responsible and follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Be Flexible

- Businesses operate within capacity restraints and in accordance with guidelines, to keep our communities, our employees and our visitors as safe as possible. Where capacity is reached they will endeavour to help find alternative activities and venues. We are the largest National Park in the UK and we can help you find your own safe space.
- We all act under the principle that if '*it feels too busy, it is too busy*', be prepared to be flexible, move on and save that experience for another day.

Be Kind.



Appendix 2 – Car Park Capacities

See Glenmore and Deeside Specific plans for car park details in those areas +

Key Countryside Car Park	Manager	Car Park Capacities (if more than one car park at a location please separate e.g. Glenmore)
Killiecrankie	NTS	
Glen Tilt	Atholl Estates	20
Beinn a'Ghlo	Lude Estate	10
Falls of Bruar	House of Bruar	?
Glen Feshie (Achlean car park)	SNH	25 (reduced to 15 for covid)
Allt Ruadh	SNH	11 (reduced to 8 for covid)
Uath Lochans	FLS	12
Frank Bruce	FLS	17
Feshiebridge	FLS	12
Laggan Wolftrax	FLS and Laggan Forest Trust	50 + Buses
Pattack Falls	FLS	12
Glen Clova	Angus Alive	100

Appendix 3 – Key Public & Other Toilets

Public Toilets

The green toilets below highlight which public toilets need to open first to provide a level of service across the Park (subject to risk assessment etc by operators).

Highland	Moray	Aberdeen	Angus	Perth & Kinross
Aviemore	Tomintoul	Ballater	Glen Doll	Blair Atholl
Grantown		Braemar		
Kingussie				
Carrbridge		Crathie	Milton of Clova	
Nethy Bridge		Spittal Muick		
Newtonmore		Glenshee		
		Strathdon		

Other toilets ‘open’ to the public

The opening of the ‘other’ toilets will depend on funding, cashflow and when businesses might reopen.

Highland	Moray	Aberdeen	Perth & Kinross
Cairngorm Mountain	Lecht	Glen Tanar	House of Bruar
Rothiemurchus (inc Loch Eilean)	Glenlivet Mountain Bike Centre	Muir of Dinnet	Killiecrankie
Glenmore Visitor Centre		Invercauld	
Ralia		Mar Lodge	
Laggan			

Appendix 4 - Covid-19 Temporary access point/hotspot signage principles

1. Signage Objectives

- Promote general responsible behaviour both in the use of text and the use of imagery:
- Be able to highlight site specific requirements such as areas to avoid or one way systems:
- Promote current government advice regarding Covid -19:
- Engage path users in an emotional way ie, imagery of members of the public enjoying themselves.

2. Signage Principles

- Simple, obvious, clear and consistent messages
- Easy to read, concise
- Visible

3. Design

- Size – A4 and A3
- Visual template- A4 portrait and A3 landscape which has space for map
- Standardised colours – colourfast
- Accommodate individual estate, Ranger Service, Park Brand and appropriate strapline:
- Visually interesting graphic design i.e. photos
- Robust and weatherproof made of 3mm dibond
- Include scope for additional detail to be added at a site level with a permanent marker pen

4. Text

Header text 'Take care'

Introductory text

Key (draft) bullet points

- Know and follow the latest Government advice:
- If it feels too crowded, it is too crowded
- Be kind out there:
- Follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code:
- Public toilets are available at #####

5. Implementation

Hotspot grade	Sign type	Key information
	A4	Maintain physical distancing Please follow outdoor access code Be kind out there
	A4 and A3 with map if required	Know and follow the latest Government advice: If it feels too crowded, it is too crowded Be kind out there: Follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code: Public toilets are available at #####
	A4 and A3 with map a daily information	Know and follow the latest Government advice: Site specific advice i.e one way system If it feels too crowded, it is too crowded Be kind out there: Follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code: Public toilets are available at #####