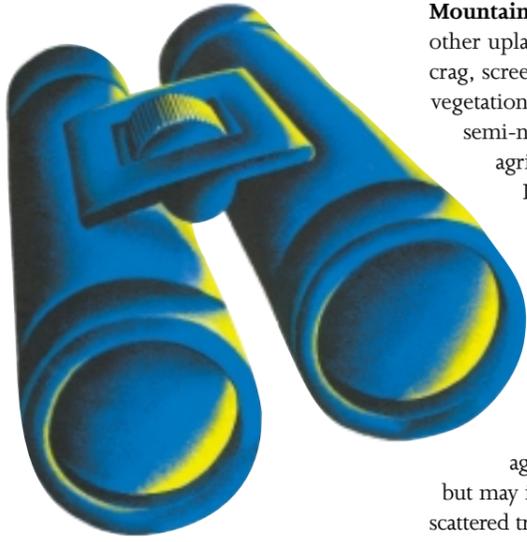


What is registered common land and open country?

Registered common land is land registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965. The legal boundaries are already shown on maps in the common land registers held by county and unitary councils. We copy the boundaries of registered common land and have no discretion to leave out any land or change the boundaries shown in the register.

Open country is land (other than registered common land) which is wholly or mainly mountain, moor, heath or down.



Mountain – all land over 600 metres above sea level and other upland areas comprising rugged and steep land, crag, scree, fell, or other bare rock and associated rough vegetation. It does not include coastal cliffs. It includes semi-natural upland vegetation, but does not include agriculturally improved or semi-improved grassland. It may include areas of bracken, scattered trees, open water, rivers, streams, bogs, mires, bare peat, or a mosaic of these.

Moor – land usually of an open character with semi-natural vegetation, such as; mires (including blanket bog), heaths*, rough unimproved acid grassland, and upland calcareous grassland. It does not include agriculturally improved or semi-improved grassland, but may include areas of unimproved bent-fescue grassland, scattered trees, scrub, bracken, open water, rivers, streams, bare peat, rock outcrops or other bare ground, or a mosaic of these.

Moor usually occurs in upland areas but may also be found in lowland areas.

Heath – land of generally open character, usually characterised by natural ericaceous dwarf shrubs.

Heath usually occurs in lowland areas on nutrient-poor soils.

The typical vegetation types are heathers, gorse, bilberry, mires, scrub, unimproved grassland, or bracken. It does not include agriculturally improved or semi-



improved grassland, but may include areas of scattered or dense naturally regenerating trees, open water, rivers, streams, carr, sand or other bare ground, or a mosaic of these.

Down – land comprising semi-natural grassland in areas of chalk or limestone geology within an open landscape. The typical vegetation type is unimproved grassland often with scattered scrub. It does not include agriculturally improved or semi-improved grassland, but may include areas of scattered trees, dwarf shrubs, streams, springs, or a mosaic of these.

* Heath in this context refers to the vegetation community, not an open country land type.

Types of open country

To identify the land which falls within each of the following land types, we will draw on habitat and vegetation surveys and statutory maps produced by local and national park authorities and Government departments, aerial photography and some field survey where necessary.

Our mapping methodology explains in more detail how we map open country. You can see a copy on our website.

Access helpline: 0845 100 3298

www.countryside.gov.uk/access/mapping

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 will give people greater freedom to explore open countryside. They will have a new right of access, on foot, to many areas of:

- registered common land;
- open country (mountain, moor, heath and down);
- dedicated land ('dedicated' for open access by the landowner)

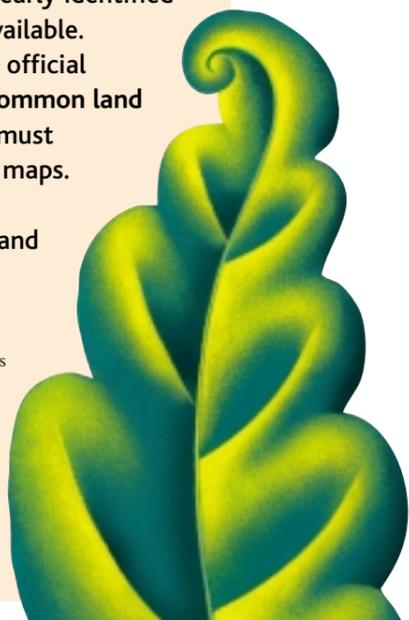


This access land will need to be clearly identified before the new rights are made available.

As a first step, we must produce official maps showing all the registered common land and open country in England. We must consult on draft versions of these maps.

This leaflet explains the mapping and consultation process.

(The Countryside Council for Wales will prepare the necessary maps for Wales. Dedicated land does not need the same process of mapping and consultation, but will be shown on maps produced for walkers when the new rights are available.)



How can I find out more?

- See our leaflet **New rights, new responsibilities** (CA 65) for more on the forthcoming access rights and what they will mean to you.
- Our mapping methodology is available on our website at www.countryside.gov.uk/access/mapping
- Watch our video: **Mapping new access Get informed - get involved**
- For more information or to order leaflets and the video, phone our helpline on **0845 100 3298**.



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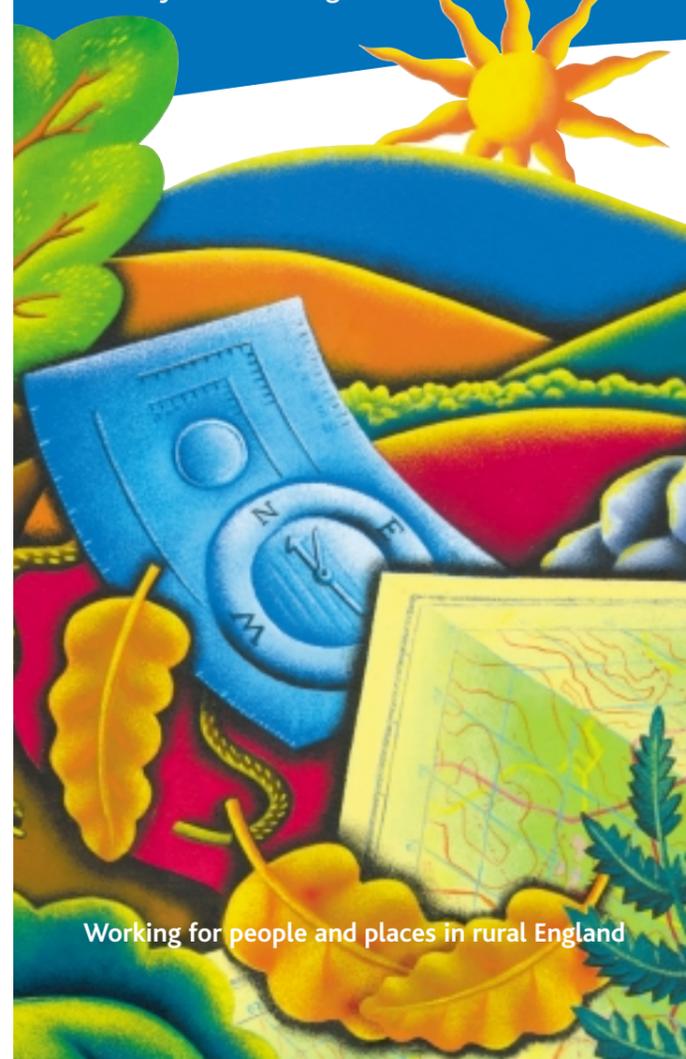
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The Countryside Agency

Drawing the boundaries

Mapping and consultation for new countryside access rights



Working for people and places in rural England

Our mapping programme

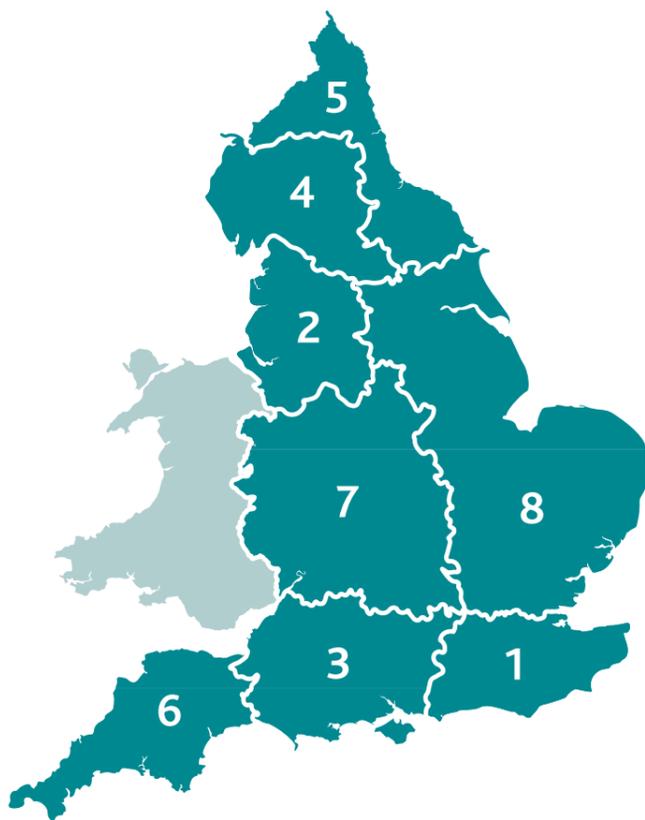
For the purpose of mapping, England has been divided into eight mapping areas and maps are being produced on a rolling programme.

We aim to have produced conclusive maps for the whole of England by 2005.

The process takes about two years in each area and includes:

- regional and local **publicity** before we issue maps;
- preparing **draft maps**;
- wide **public consultation**;
- issuing **provisional maps**;
- an opportunity for those with a legal interest in the land to **appeal**;
- **determination** of appeals by the Secretary of State; and
- issuing **conclusive maps**.

For more detail, see **Consulting on the maps**



Area	Draft map issue date and start of three month consultation
1 Southeast	Autumn 2001
2 Lower northwest	Autumn 2001
3 Central southern	Autumn 2002
4 Upper northwest	Winter 2002

Area	Draft map issue date and start of three month consultation
5 Northeast	Winter 2002/3
6 Southwest	Spring 2003
7 West	Summer 2003
8 East	Autumn 2003

Your questions

When will people have a right of access to registered common land and open country?

People will have a right to walk freely on most registered common land and open country throughout England by 2005. The new rights will come into force when the land has been mapped and the Secretary of State has made a commencement order for that area.

How can I make my views on the maps known?

Anyone can contribute information when mapping starts in each area, and can comment formally on the draft map that we publish. People with a legal interest in the land will also have the chance to appeal against their land being included on the provisional map. See inside for more details.

How will I know where access land is?

The Ordnance Survey plans to show access land on its 1:25,000 Explorer and Outdoor Leisure maps. Other maps and guides for walkers may also show it. A database of access land and any restrictions on it will also be available on the internet.

On the ground, a new 'access symbol' is likely to be used at the main points of entry to access land, and there will often be local information boards showing the boundaries of access land and any restrictions that apply to it.

What happens to the boundaries of access land at the Welsh or Scottish border?

We are working closely with the Countryside Council for Wales to make sense on boundaries either side of the border. In Scotland, the Scottish Parliament plans a more general right of access to land and water, which will not depend on maps of access land.

Will inaccessible 'islands' of registered common land and open country be shown on the maps?

Yes. We will map all registered common land and open country, regardless of whether it is currently accessible by rights of way or other means. Highway authorities have powers to create new paths to allow people to reach these areas of access land. We have some discretion to leave out areas of open country which are so small that we believe it would serve no useful purpose to include them on the maps.

Our mapping approach

We consulted fully on our mapping methodology. It:

- sets out the conditions for deciding whether land is wholly or mainly made up of mountain, moor, heath or down; and
- explains how we use our discretion under the Act to:
 - a adjust the boundaries of open country to match physical features on the ground, so that the boundaries make sense to users and landowners; and
 - b leave out areas of open country which are so small that we believe it would serve no useful purpose to include them on the maps.

Consulting on the maps

Stage 1 - producing the draft map

The first step in the mapping process is for us to produce a draft map of registered common land and open country in each area. We invite people to give us any relevant information beforehand, to help produce this draft map. Any information you give us at this stage will not affect your right to make comments at a later stage. Our website explains how you can send us this information.



Stage 2 - issuing and consulting on draft maps

We have to consult on the draft maps. Regulations set out how we do this. We:

- issue a draft map for each mapping area. The electronic draft map is available at some of our regional offices;
- make reduced scale copies of draft maps available in public places, such as local authority offices and libraries, at our offices, and on our website;
- run a public information campaign in each area to make sure people are aware of the consultation;
- organise roadshows to explain the process and how people can get involved, and answer any questions;
- consult relevant local access forums, where they exist;
- consult relevant national park and local authorities, parish councils and local or regional branches of relevant user, farmer and landowner representative organisations;
- answer questions through our telephone helpline;
- carefully consider every response to the consultation and decide what changes we need to make to the map; and
- keep a full record of the consultation process, the decisions we reached in the light of the responses, and the reasons for our decisions.

Stage 3 - issuing provisional maps

Once we have reached a decision on points raised at consultation stage, we amend the draft maps as necessary and issue them as provisional maps of registered common land and open country.

Stage 4 - dealing with appeals

When we issue provisional maps, anyone with a legal interest in the land (for example, the landowner, tenant, or a holder of sporting or common rights) may appeal to the Secretary of State against the land being included. The legislation gives 3 months from the issue of the provisional map for any appeals to be brought. Members of the public may not appeal, but may be able to offer views or evidence to an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State on the status of any land that is subject to appeal.

Further details on appeals are obtainable from:

The Access Team, Planning Inspectorate, Room 215, Regus House, 1 Friary, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6EA
Phone: 0117 344 5680/5738
Email: access@pins.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/access

Stage 5 - issuing conclusive maps

When the period for making appeals has ended and any appeals have been dealt with, we amend the provisional maps if the Secretary of State asks us to do so. We will then issue the maps in conclusive form. We have a duty to review the conclusive maps at least every 10 years.



Access helpline: 0845 100 3298

www.countryside.gov.uk/access/mapping

