

# Planning visits

for learning outside the classroom

Reaching Out seeks to open up the Yorkshire Dales National Park for all users and groups, from every background.



'Safety first' for groups at Malham Cove (YDNPA).

## Help is on hand

The variety of opportunities for learning in the National Park attract huge numbers of groups. While all countryside is sensitive to visitor pressure, the special features of the Park are extra fragile. Minimising the environmental impact of a visit needs to be thought through at all stages.

The **Dales Visitors Code** and **Countryside Code** leaflets are both available. For more information on the Countryside Code see the Natural England website [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk).

The network of over 2,100km of **public rights of way** and **Open Access areas** covering 63% of the Park, offer huge access opportunities, find details on Ordnance Survey Outdoor Leisure (1:25,000) maps. Added provision includes:

- permissive paths, for access to some hidden locations;
- the Conservation Walks Access Register (Defra).

The **Yorkshire Dales Group Organisers' and Coach Drivers' Guide** shows routes and their suitability for vehicles. There are good rail services to Ilkley, Skipton and Settle. The Settle-Carlisle line gives direct access to stations in the Park. Some operators may offer special prices and services.

A variety of **group accommodation** is on offer in the National Park to suit many needs and most budgets.

The **facilities for groups** on offer are growing, such as suitable attractions, equipment hire facilities and activity providers, many of which cater for those with special needs. Qualified leaders, holding appropriate licenses for outdoor activities can be found at [www.aals.org.uk](http://www.aals.org.uk).





Yorkshire Dales National Park.

## Good practice suggestions

Thorough planning will help make a visit as safe, worthwhile and engaging as possible for everyone. For specialized help and courses for group leaders, first refer to Local Authority / governing body guidance. Here are some starting points:

**Successful visits** start with good planning .

- Formulate clear purposes for activities and communicate these to the group and to other leaders.
- Plan activities in ways which help conserve the environment and minimise disturbance to local communities and visitors.
- Make sure that your group follows the countryside code.
- It helps to contact the Authority about your visit in advance, for up to date advice on access, conservation and weather for example: you may also help us to monitor use of some areas.

**Make a pre-visit** to get background information needed.

- Check out accommodation, activities and study sites.
- Check facilities like toilets and car parking in advance.
- Make bookings and avoid holiday periods if possible.
- Check transport routes to ensure suitability for your vehicle.
- Check with land owners, that your activity is permitted.

## Work near water

Water levels in Dales rivers and streams can rise without warning after rainfall. Leaders must be mindful of hidden dangers and unpredictable currents, as well as slippery and uneven surfaces near water. It helps to seek local advice.

**Safety first** is top priority in all areas of planning.

- Thoroughly check safety hazards for all activities: documented risk assessments are standard practice.
- Make sure that your party will be suitably dressed and equipped and physically fit for the work expected.
- Prepare for the possibility of poor weather and accidents: make alternative arrangements beforehand.
- Keep groups to a manageable size and provide enough supervision for any foreseeable changes.

**In the community** managing groups in ways which are sensitive to local conditions will most appreciated.

- Please provide necessary supervision in places where disturbance may be difficult, such as villages or camp sites.
- Pavements can be narrow and hard to negotiate, please make allowances for the elderly and less physically able.
- Visits to local shops are always welcome, small groups, with a group leader are best: check with shopkeepers in advance.
- Using questionnaires to collect data is well accepted: well planned and supervised surveys are likely to be welcome.
- Litter can be a real problem, please take it to dispose of responsibly: there are no litter bins on Authority property.



**YORKSHIRE DALES**  
National Park Authority

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