

EASY ACCESS ROUTES

Appendix C

1. There are 56 Easy Access sites remaining (April 2015), as shown in the table displaying HLS sites suitable for wheelchairs. Both the LAFs and Natural England recognise the lack of opportunities for the disabled to access the countryside. It is therefore essential that funding is found, possibly from Public Health England to continue to provide good quality permissive “easy access” routes in the countryside. It is important that funding is provided to every Highway Authority for permissive “easy access” routes, again the pot should be split amongst the Highway Authorities in accordance to area (square miles).
2. Whilst the aim is to obtain funding for permissive access in stewardship schemes, there is a current example of funding being provided where the route is adjacent to a childrens hospice, this is land which is in a HLS scheme. It is considered that if there is farmland adjacent to a similar establishment and the owner/farmer is prepared to provide a suitable route, funding would be considered, even if the land was not in a stewardship scheme.
3. All highway authorities, even the smallest in terms or area should be provided with a reasonable sum of money to enable them to create an easy access permissive route of at least 1000 metres. The easy access site permissive agreement should run for 10 years . The route literature provided for these routes should be in accordance with Countryside for All standards. The LAFs should be responsible for awarding permissive route status. The Highway authority should assist in promoting the routes. DEFRA/Natural England should make the payments to the farmers/landowners for these routes.