



**MONITORING QUALITY STANDARDS ON NATIONAL TRAILS IN  
ENGLAND**

**RESULTS 2005**

## **QUALITY STANDARDS ON ENGLISH NATIONAL TRAILS – 2005**

The Countryside Agency wants everyone using the network of National Trails in England to enjoy their experience to the full.

Our over-arching goal is the maintenance of National Trails to a standard that is consistent and sympathetic to the landscape through which the Trails pass, which meets the needs of users and which is appropriate to their use.

From 2005, we will ask National Trails Officers to report annually on how their Trails are performing against the standards. National Trail Officers are professionally-qualified individuals whose knowledge about each Trail is unsurpassed and whose opinion can be relied upon. This report gives a detailed breakdown of the results monitored during the summer months of 2005.

### **OVERALL SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

These results show a largely positive picture of the National Trail network in England with the majority of measures showing Trails as meeting or almost meeting quality standards.

Where particularly low figures are shown, explanations are available and largely understandable. For example, Measure 9 shows that only 32% of steps and gradients on the Thames Path National Trail are acceptable. The Thames Path is working to become an exemplar in the field of accessibility for people with disabilities and to this end is trying to remove all barriers such as steps and steep slopes.

Areas of particular concern are:

**Measure 8** – where off-road vehicle use is causing demonstrable problems on 2 specific Trails.

A programme of measures to improve the surface of The Ridgeway and lessen the effects of such use is in place. The Ridgeway web pages give more information.

An Action Plan to ascertain the level and cause of problems on the Pennine Bridleway is currently being considered. Details will be available when all relevant parties have been consulted.

**Measure 12** – we are keen to make sure that National Trails can be accessed in a sustainable manner and encourage people to use public transport to reach Trails wherever possible. We are not, however, in the position to be able to provide such transport ourselves. These results highlight the need for

National Trail Officers, and other organisations involved with National Trails, to try to influence transport providers.

**Measure 22** – we have placed specific standards upon the type and content of signage and the Countryside Agency continues to fund programmes of replacement across the network. 19% of users surveyed in 2005 wanted to see an improvement in signage on English Trails and we are working to bring about these changes. However, such a large-scale programme will take time to complete.

A user survey was carried out across National Trails in England during the summer of 2005. Analysis of the results bears out the information included in this report. Further investigation and priority funding will be considered where the two reports do not match. Full results are available on this website.

## RESULTS

These figures need to be read in conjunction with the document “Quality Standards for National Trails in England” which is also available on this website or from the National Trails team at the Countryside Agency (01242 533288).

Where figures are missing, this is sometimes because condition survey methodology has not been changed to reflect quality standard priorities. Next year’s monitoring will remedy this omission. In some cases omissions are due to large-scale on-going works (eg Ridgeway surface work) that render measurements out-of-date very quickly.

It should be noted that figures for the Pennine Bridleway would not be directly comparable year to year as they will encompass new sections of the Trail as they open.

Due to changes in management structures we have been unable to include Hadrian’s Wall Path National Trail in this analysis.

Offa’s Dyke Path is not included as management of this Trail is shared between the Countryside Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales.

*In the tables below a figure in red shows where a result is not as good as when last measured, a figure in blue shows where a result is better than when last measured while a figure in black shows where a measurement has remained the same. Previous figures have been gathered from a variety of sources.*

<b>MEASURE 1: The percentage of each Trail that is legally defined</b>	
Pennine Way	99.9
Cleveland Way	99.5
Yorkshire Wolds Way	99.5
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	100
North Downs Way	100
South Downs Way	99
Thames Path	99.4
Ridgeway	100
South West Coast Path	92.2
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	96.2
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>98.6</b>

Figures that are below 100% are calculated on the fact that the “walked “ route of a National Trails can diverge from the actual “legally defined” route (as shown on definitive maps). Where this is perceived as a major problem, we encourage action to vary routes so that both converge.

<b>MEASURE 2: The percentage of each Trail in the best position</b>	
Pennine Way	100
Cleveland Way	98
Yorkshire Wolds Way	95
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	87
North Downs Way	90
South Downs Way	94
Thames Path	75
Ridgeway	96
South West Coast Path	92.3
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	95.8
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>92.3</b>

Where it is possible to vary the route of the Trail to take landscape, vista and experience into account, we encourage this approach.

<b>MEASURE 3: The percentage of each Trail which is traffic-free and off road</b>	
Pennine Way	93
Cleveland Way	90.5
Yorkshire Wolds Way	86
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	85
North Downs Way	77.2
South Downs Way	93
Thames Path	98
Ridgeway	90.2
South West Coast Path	85.2
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	82.9
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>88.1</b>

Our ultimate aim would be for all Trails to be totally “off-road”. However, this is currently not possible. In most cases, the roads concerned are quiet country lanes but, where this is not the case, priority is given to finding alternative “off-road” routes.

<b>MEASURE 4: The number of road, rail, river and sea crossings on each Trail that need improvements to make them safer</b>	
Pennine Way	0
Cleveland Way	0
Yorkshire Wolds Way	0
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	2
North Downs Way	6
South Downs Way	3
Thames Path	9
Ridgeway	7
South West Coast Path	3
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	7 (this figure is for the eventual line of the Trail – there are interim routes in place currently)
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>3.7</b>

Unsafe road crossings are largely deemed to be so because of speed of traffic, line of sight and similar issues. Sometimes only small improvements such as signing and/or vegetation cutting are all that is required. Work with relevant Highway Authorities is on going to improve these sites. Wherever possible, warnings are given to users at the approach to such crossings.

**MEASURE 5: The percentage of fords, bridges and ramps on each Trail which are appropriate**

Pennine Way	100
Cleveland Way	100
Yorkshire Wolds Way	100
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	100
North Downs Way	100
South Downs Way	80
Thames Path	69
Ridgeway	100
South West Coast Path	90
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	100
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>93.9</b>

**MEASURE 6: The percentage of each Trail with an acceptable width.**

Pennine Way	N/K
Cleveland Way	90
Yorkshire Wolds Way	99
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	99.9
North Downs Way	84.9
South Downs Way	99.5
Thames Path	86
Ridgeway	N/K
South West Coast Path	100
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	100
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>94.9</b>

<b>MEASURE 7: The percentage of each Trail that has an acceptable surface.</b>	
Pennine Way	100
Cleveland Way	96
Yorkshire Wolds Way	99
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddar's Way	96.9
North Downs Way	93
South Downs Way	98
Thames Path	70 (This relatively low figure is caused by the fact that this Trail is trying to be an exemplar for accessibility for all – improvements are on-going)
Ridgeway	49 Major surface improvements are underway
South West Coast Path	99
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	99
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>89.9</b>

<b>MEASURE 8: The percentage of each Trail where off-road vehicle use is causing demonstrable problems.</b>	
Pennine Way	<1
Cleveland Way	1
Yorkshire Wolds Way	1
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	2.7
North Downs Way	5
South Downs Way	2
Thames Path	<1
Ridgeway	46.2
South West Coast Path	<1
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	19.8
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>12.5</b>

<b>MEASURE 9: The percentage of steps and gradients on each Trail that is appropriate.</b>	
Pennine Way	100
Cleveland Way	70
Yorkshire Wolds Way	33 (Currently only one set of steps on the route but a further 2 sets are under consideration where there are currently gradients. Hence this figure)
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	92
North Downs Way	100
South Downs Way	100
Thames Path	32 (This low figure is caused by the fact that this Trail is trying to be an exemplar for accessibility for all – improvements are on-going)
Ridgeway	N/K
South West Coast Path	78
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	100
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>78</b>

<b>MEASURE 10: The percentage of each Trail passing through a protected landscape (AONB, National Park, SSSI or similar) or through agricultural land within an agri-environment scheme.</b>	
Pennine Way	87
Cleveland Way	82
Yorkshire Wolds Way	88
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	79
North Downs Way	91
South Downs Way	99.5
Thames Path	N/K
Ridgeway	100
South West Coast Path	N/K
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	N/K
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>89.5</b>

<b>MEASURE 11: The percentage of furniture on each Trail corridor that is appropriate</b>	
Pennine Way	100
Cleveland Way	80
Yorkshire Wolds Way	93
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	100
North Downs Way	76
South Downs Way	99.5
Thames Path	41 (This relatively low figure is caused by the fact that this Trail is trying to be an exemplar for accessibility for all – improvements are on-going)
Ridgeway	35.5 (Furniture on the Trail has been assessed against accessibility standards – there are many small kissing gates but few stiles)
South West Coast Path	82
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	100
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>80.7</b>

<b>MEASURE 12: The percentage of access points on each Trail that is accessible by public transport and appropriately connected.</b>	
Pennine Way	100
Cleveland Way	100
Yorkshire Wolds Way	83
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	64
North Downs Way	100
South Downs Way	100
Thames Path	81
Ridgeway	56
South West Coast Path	100
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	93
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>87.7</b>

<b>MEASURE 13: The number of gaps in accommodation provision on each Trail</b>	
Pennine Way	0
Cleveland Way	3
Yorkshire Wolds Way	3
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	1
North Downs Way	0
South Downs Way	0
Thames Path	0
Ridgeway	1
South West Coast Path	0
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	3
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>1.1</b>

<b>MEASURE 14: The percentage of each Trail that is litter and dog mess free</b>	
Pennine Way	100
Cleveland Way	98
Yorkshire Wolds Way	100
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	95
North Downs Way	80
South Downs Way	98
Thames Path	97
Ridgeway	90 (Fly-tipping a problem in the last year)
South West Coast Path	99
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	99
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>95.6</b>

**MEASURE 15: The percentage of officially produced Trail information that is currently accessible and branded in accordance with national guidance**

Pennine Way	100
Cleveland Way	100
Yorkshire Wolds Way	100
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	100
North Downs Way	100
South Downs Way	100
Thames Path	100
Ridgeway	100
South West Coast Path	100
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	100
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>100</b>

**MEASURES 16,17,18 AND 19: Availability of printed information**

Pennine Way	All available
Cleveland Way	All available
Yorkshire Wolds Way	All available
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	All available
North Downs Way	All available
South Downs Way	All available
Thames Path	All available
Ridgeway	All available
South West Coast Path	All available
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	All available

**MEASURE 20: The provision of accessible, complete and up-to-date online information**

Pennine Way	Yes
Cleveland Way	Yes
Yorkshire Wolds Way	Yes
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	Yes
North Downs Way	Yes
South Downs Way	Yes
Thames Path	Yes
Ridgeway	Yes
South West Coast Path	Yes
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	Yes

**MEASURE 21: The provision of complete database of service information for each Trail**

Pennine Way	Yes
Cleveland Way	Yes
Yorkshire Wolds Way	Yes
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	Yes
North Downs Way	Yes
South Downs Way	Yes
Thames Path	Yes
Ridgeway	Yes
South West Coast Path	Yes
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	Yes

<b>MEASURE 22: The percentage of signs which meet the standards on each Trail</b>	
Pennine Way	2 (A re-signing programme is on going across the whole Trail and will be completed as funding allows)
Cleveland Way	85
Yorkshire Wolds Way	93
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	100
North Downs Way	80
South Downs Way	80
Thames Path	82 (Some settlements still need signing to and from Trail)
Ridgeway	65 (Some settlements still need signing to and from Trail)
South West Coast Path	61
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	100
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>74.8</b>

<b>MEASURE 23: The percentage of these key access points which have appropriate information displayed</b>	
Pennine Way	100
Cleveland Way	100
Yorkshire Wolds Way	100
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	6
North Downs Way	50
South Downs Way	100
Thames Path	43
Ridgeway	50
South West Coast Path	44
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	0 information not in place yet
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>65.8</b>

<b>MEASURE 24: The percentage of highway authorities that comply with temporary diversion procedure best practice</b>	
Pennine Way	100
Cleveland Way	100
Yorkshire Wolds Way	100
Norfolk Coast Path/Peddars Way	100
North Downs Way	100
South Downs Way	100
Thames Path	100
Ridgeway	100
South West Coast Path	100
Open parts of Pennine Bridleway	70
<b>Average figure</b>	<b>97</b>