

News Release from Cumbria Local Resilience Forum

Public urged not to visit Lake District yet

Following the relaxing of lockdown restrictions, the clear message from Cumbria and the Lake District is now is not the time to visit the area.

With the Prime Minister announcing a lifting of the restrictions on travel and exercise there are fears an influx of visitors will put local communities and emergency services at further unnecessary risk. As the county continues to experience one of the worst COVID-19 outbreaks in the country, with higher numbers of infections and deaths than elsewhere and shops and visitor amenities still closed, Cumbria's multi-agency Local Resilience Forum is asking people to stay local for their exercise and not rush back to the Lake District just yet.

Assistant Chief Constable Andrew Slattery, Chair of Cumbria's Local Resilience Forum, said:

“We know people love the Lakes and when the time is right we will of course warmly welcome back visitors. But now is not the right time. Cumbria has been one of the worst affected parts of the UK and Coronavirus is far from over, we still have people being infected and people dying in the county on a daily basis. People coming into the county from elsewhere just makes the job of containing and controlling the outbreak more difficult. We've said it before, the Lake District isn't going anywhere, so please put off your visit for now.”

For those that do decide to visit the area despite local concerns there three key messages:

Respect our local communities

- Be considerate and don't do things that increase the risk or cause problems for local people, particularly the vulnerable: avoid using paths through farmers' yards; keep your dog on a lead and take your litter home.
- Plan ahead and avoid busy places: use saferlakes.co.uk to park safely and considerately and avoid the more popular destinations.
- Bring your own food and drink to avoid pressure on local shops.
- Consider the lack of toilet and washing facilities and don't behave in an

anti-social manner.

Respect the risk

- Cumbria continues to record new cases of the virus every day and the threat has not gone away
- Don't take risks on the fells, on the water or on the roads. Stay within the limits of your ability and equipment at all times.
- If you get into trouble help may take longer to arrive and you will put unnecessary additional pressure on local health and emergency workers as well as volunteer mountain rescue and coastal rescue services.

Respect the rules

- Observe all the Government's social distancing rules.
- No overnight stays, no camping, no visiting second homes.
- Avoid crowds.
- Wash your hands regularly.

Richard Leafe, Chief Executive at the Lake District National Park Authority, said:

“We understand that people are keen to enjoy the health and wellbeing benefits of the Lake District National Park, however we're appealing to people not to rush back. Many of the facilities that visitors usually enjoy, such as toilets, restaurants and campsites, are not open, so it's a very different experience in the National Park at the moment. If people are exercising, we'd urge you not to take unnecessary risks to help protect our volunteer mountain rescue service and local communities.”

Colin Cox, Cumbria's Director of Public Health, said:

“We have had well over 2000 confirmed infections and around 400 deaths as a result of COVID-19 and it's only as a result of the lockdown restrictions that those grim totals aren't even worse. We understand that lockdown can't last forever, we certainly don't want it to, but I'd urge people to really consider whether a visit to the Lake District is the right thing to do at the current time. As the Government says, the best way to beat this virus remains to stay home as much as possible.”

ENDS

For further information contact Kieran.Barr@cumbria.gov.uk or call 07500066520.