



FOR A HAPPIER,  
HEALTHIER SCOTLAND

# Consultation Response

## Active Cairngorms Action Plan

25/10/23

If you have any questions about this response, please contact our policy team:  
[policy@pathsforall.org.uk](mailto:policy@pathsforall.org.uk)

## Who We Are

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Paths for All is Scotland's walking charity. Established in 1996, we work in partnership with 30 national organisations with a shared vision of a healthier, happier, greener Scotland, where everyone can be active every day. Walking is the easiest and most accessible way to be active, and our work to change the way people move, travel, and enjoy life in Scotland is focused on the following three themes:

- Walking is for everyone.
- Walking is for everywhere.
- Walking is for every day.

Our [strategy](#) sets out our vision for tackling physical inactivity, poor mental health, increased health and transport inequalities and the climate emergency.

## Our Response

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Thank you for consulting us on the Draft Active Cairngorms Action Plan.

We are broadly supportive of its contents and will be pleased to support its delivery.

We would be pleased to be included as a partner organisation over the next five years.

Specifically, the plan identifies us as partners in delivering:

- Develop dementia-friendly walks in each community within the National Park
- Develop and promote a health walks programme in each community of the Park

We are pleased to be able to continue supporting this area of work.

There may be other areas of our work where we can support the strategic objectives of the Active Cairngorms Action Plan – our strategy sets out our vision

<https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/about/strategy> Relevant work might include:

- Health walks – training, resources and support and Dementia Friendly Environments – as mentioned in the Plan
- Active Travel - Smarter Choices Smarter Places Programme– training, resources, and support
- Workplace – training, resources, and support
- The Step Count Challenge – an online workplace resource

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- Community paths – training, resources, and support
- Ian Findlay Path Fund - this £1.5 million fund is for the improvement of path networks to increase walking, wheeling, and cycling.
- Technical advice and guidance to community organisations, to help them create, promote, and maintain safe, welcoming community paths and active routes for everyone.

We would be pleased to explore any of these opportunities.

## **General Comments**

We are broadly supportive of the plan.

We believe that the Plan will help visitors enjoy the National Park's special qualities in a sustainable way, safeguarding and protecting our most sensitive species and habits. One note of caution is that a balance must be struck whereby access rights are not unnecessarily eroded.

The plan will be dependent on sufficient resources - e.g., for ranger services if it is to be a success.

The programme to support best practice within the land management sector on safeguarding access rights to reduce access obstructions is important.

Minimising impacts on sensitive species and habitats – the proposed actions seem sensible but there needs to be proper consultation with users over site specific actions and safeguarding of legitimate recreation. There is a danger that this could be exploited by some land managers seeking to restrict responsible access.

We agree that Rangers working in the National Park will be crucial to delivery of the Plan.

Public Health and the Outdoors - we fully support the actions on:

- Improving access to health-enhancing opportunities in nature.
- Reducing inequalities through additional support for disadvantaged and under-represented groups.

We support the intention to see an expansion of the opportunities available for volunteering in the National Park. This includes a vibrant community of volunteer Health Walk Leaders.

Young People and outdoor learning - we support proposals to provide opportunities for young people.

We agree that high quality, accessible paths, long distance routes and mountain paths are at the heart of our National Park. We support the ambition to improve community path networks. Our community paths team can potentially support this work.



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