



# Public Rights of Way

## *some common questions answered*



- **Who can use a public footpath?**  
A footpath can be used by anyone travelling on foot from one place to another. This also includes people with pushchairs and wheelchairs.
- **Who can use a public bridleway?**  
A bridleway can be used by anyone on foot, using a pedal cycle or on a horse, to travel from one place to another.
- **What is the difference between a footpath and a pavement?**  
Pavements are sometimes called footpaths. Pavements (or 'footways') normally run alongside a road and are registered as part of the public road network. Public footpaths usually go away from roads, across fields and other terrain.
- **How can I find out where all the public rights of way are?**  
We keep an updated legal record of all public rights of way in Leeds, together with details of their status. This is called the 'definitive map'. You can contact us to arrange to see our copy of the definitive map at our offices.
- **What if a path I use does not appear on the definitive map?**  
If a path or route does not appear on the definitive map, it doesn't necessarily mean there is no public right of way - it just means that it has not been proven as a public right of way. Anyone can claim a public right of way, but you must follow the correct legal process in order to get changes made to the definitive map. Contact us if you need more advice or an application pack.
- **Can horse riders, cyclists or motorvehicles use a footpath?**  
Horse riders or pedal cyclists do not have a right to ride on a public footpath. They can be considered as trespassers by the landowner, and asked to leave. However, on some paths 'higher rights' – for example for horseriding – may exist, even though the route is currently shown on the Definitive Map as a footpath. In such cases, a formal legal process is used to investigate the evidence and to decide what sort of right of way it is before any changes are made to the Definitive Map.  
Riding a motorcycle or driving a motor vehicle on a footpath or bridleway is a Road Traffic Act offence (unless you are the landowner, have their permission or have a private right of access). Motor vehicle users on footpaths and bridleways can be reported to the Police or, on Council-owned land, to our ParksWatch team (call 0113 232 9973).

More questions? Contact the PROW team



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