Miles Without Stiles: Minimum Path Specifications

We adopted the Countryside Agency's Draft National Guidelines (2003) on the minimum path specifications necessary to meet the needs of people with limited mobility in the countryside. These are:

Minimum path specifications

Feature	Paths for All	Paths for Many	Paths for Some	Challenging paths
Barriers	No steps higher than 15mm, or stiles, fences, hedges and walls to restrict access.	No steps higher than 40mm, or stiles, fences, hedges and walls to restrict access.	No steps higher than 100mm, or stiles, fences, hedges and walls to restrict access.	Some steps greater than 100mm but not exceeding 200mm.
Path surfaces	Hard and firm with some loose stones (no bigger than 10mm) not covering whole surface.	Path possibly modified (preferably hard and firm in all weathers) with some stones up to 40mm and occasional tree roots, potholes and short stretches (<10m) of rutting up to 40mm.	Path possibly modified, not necessarily hard and firm (weather dependent) with some stones up to 100mm and occasional tree roots, potholes and short stretches (<10m) of rutting up to 100mm.	May be soft, muddy with tree roots and rutting occasionally exceeding 100mm but not exceeding 200mm. Surface may have longer sections of rough ground for some or most of route.
Path widths	At least 1000mm.	At least 900mm.	At least 900mm.	At least 850mm.

Lake District National Park

Miles without Stiles

Feature	Paths for All	Paths for Many	Paths for Some	Challenging paths
Width restrictions	At least 900mm for no more than 1600mm along path and any gate at least 1000mm.	Any gap at least 900mm and any gate at least 1000mm.	Any gap at least 900mm and any gate at least 1000mm.	Any gap at least 850mm and any gate at least 900mm.
Surface breaks	No more than 12mm measured across the line of the path.	No more than 12mm measured across the line of the path.	No more than 75mm measured across the line of the path.	No more than 100mm.
Path gradients	Maximum of 1:10.	Mainly 1:10. There may be short sections with gradients of up to 1:8 (<10m) but these will be made more accessible by hard surfacing and a handrail where possible.	Natural or built gradients not limited but slopes greater than 1:8 will be made more accessible by hard surfacing with a handrail where possible. Maximum of 1:6 and only for short distances (<10m).	There may be slopes up to 1:6 for longer lengths and up to 1:4 for short lengths (<10m). No handrails.
Height rise between landings on built ramps steeper than 1:20	Maximum of 950mm.	Maximum of 950mm where feasible.	Maximum of 950mm where feasible.	Maximum of 1000mm where feasible.

Feature	Paths for All	Paths for Many	Paths for Some	Challenging paths
Cross slopes	Level where possible but there may be cross slopes caused by tree roots/potholes/ruts.	Maximum of 1:35 but cross slopes caused by tree roots/potholes/ruts may be greater.	Maximum of 1:25 but cross slopes caused by tree roots/potholes/ruts may be greater.	Maximum of 1:15 but cross slopes caused by tree roots/potholes/ruts may be greater.
Clear walking tunnel	At least 1000mm wide and 2100mm high.	Cut vegetation to at least 1000 mm wide and 2100mm high.	Cut vegetation to at least 1000mm wide and 2100mm high.	Cut vegetation to at least 850mm and 1800mm.
Passing Places	At least every 150m.	Not formalised or surfaced, but at least one passing opportunity (2m x 2m) every 150m.	Not formalised or surfaced, but at least one passing opportunity (2m x 2m) every 150m.	Not formalised or surfaced, but at least one passing opportunity (2m x 2m) every 350m.
Rest Areas	At least every 300m.	At least every 600m.	At least every 1000m.	Not formalised.