

# Theme 4:

## Raising Awareness and Understanding of the Park

Overall:

**FAIR**

The indicators representing this theme are:

- **Indicator I0:** Number of outdoor education centres
- **Indicator I1:** Number of settlements benefitting from interpretation and/or information panels
- **Indicator I2:** Ratio of staying visitors compared to day visitors

As the number of outdoor education centres is a new indicator, the figure of 12 provides a baseline against which future reports will be considered. With no previous data against which to be considered, it is difficult to assess how well this indicator is performing. It is fair to say though that outdoor education in the Park has historically been very popular. There are also a number of outdoor education providers whose centres lie just outside the Park boundary, yet regularly use the Park as an education resource.

The number of settlements benefitting from interpretation and/or information panels is another new indicator and the figure of 30 provides a baseline against future data will be measured. Again with no previous data against which to be considered, it is difficult to provide detailed assessment of this indicator. It is fair to assume that interpretation and/or information panels are useful for both tourists and residents and 30 settlements is a significant amount. Therefore it is generally considered that the state of this particular indicator is good.

The Brecon Beacons National Park is unusual in the high proportion of day visitors (74% of visitor days) compared to staying visitors. This means that the total number of visitor days, which is a good measure of the economic contribution of visitors, is generally lower than other National Parks. The Visitor Management Plan seeks to address the issue of enhancing visitors' contributions to the local economy through converting day visitors into staying visitors (amongst other actions). This indicator is currently classified as fair, but with potential for improvement.

Using these three indicators to assess overall condition (Poor, Fair, Good or Excellent), the state of the park in the context of Management Plan Theme 4 is FAIR.



# Indicator 10:

## Number of Outdoor Education Centres

Outdoor education refers to organised learning that takes place outdoors. Outdoor education programs involve residential or day experiences where students participate and undertake their learning outdoors. Many organisations encourage and provide opportunities for outdoor learning.

Outdoor learning is an active, experiential approach to learning, open to all, that involves being outdoors as a central part of the experience. It seeks to use the outdoor environment as a vehicle for transforming the experience into learning, through knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours. It develops personal, social and environmental understanding and skills. It fosters a range of positive attitudes and actions towards risk, health, community and sustainability. Outdoor learning can help to develop knowledge of the environment, oneself, others and specific curricula; it provides a means of developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills; and encourages empathy, tolerance, understanding, cooperation and collaboration<sup>17</sup>.

Experience suggests that moving participants out of their usual environment and stripping away many of the conveniences of modern life enables them to become more aware of their environment and improves learning outcomes. They can become more attuned to themselves as part of a greater ecosystem and are less bound by social customs and norms. Outdoor work often involves team activities with participants encouraged to take advantage of the freedom offered by the situation to become more able to see others as people regardless of race, class, religion etc. Working and living together and relying on others, promotes all-round personal development. It also develops the health and well-being agenda across key Government policy areas, including economic development, communities, education and lifelong learning, environment and transport, rural affairs and culture and sport.

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority provides learning experiences that support the statutory purposes of the National Park and the Welsh curriculum. This is provided at three outdoor education centres (and a number of sites):

- The National Park Visitor Centre
- Crag-y-Nos Country Park
- The YHA Danywenallt National Park Study Centre

There are a variety of external education providers based within the Brecon Beacons National Park boundary:

- Plas Pencelli Outdoor Education Centre
- Royal Navy Outdoor Leadership Training Centre
- Hampshire Outdoor Centre - Argoed Lwyd
- Cwmllynfell
- Storey Arms Outdoor Education Centre
- Dolygaer Outdoor Education Centre
- Maes Lade Outdoor Education Centre
- Pendarren House Outdoor Education Centre
- Gilwern Outdoor Education Centre

There are, in total, 12 outdoor education centres within the Park, both residential and day centres. The number will be monitored over time and reported. The varying quantity of outdoor education centres is a general quantitative indicator of education services being delivered in the park. Although not quantified these centres provide jobs for local people and support the rural economy. In addition, a large number of outdoor providers use the National Park for their business/learning although they are not based in the park and we are unable to quantify.



Craig-y-Nos Country Park  
17 Dave Harvey 'What is Outdoor Learning?' November 2011



Map OEC | Outdoor Education Centres

# Indicator 11:

## Number of Settlements Benefiting from Interpretation

The interpretation of tourism attractions, products, stories and history is an important part of providing a positive experience for visitors and for residents as well as an educational tool. Information is delivered through a range of methods including informative brochures, guided or self-guided tours, interactive displays, signage, media displays, audio information or interpretive information boards.

Interpretation is the process of communicating the meaning and significance of an object, a place or an area to people. It's story-telling, bringing a place or object alive to share what makes it special with others and help them enjoy and understand it better. The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is keen to help local communities to develop interpretation in their area because of the advantages it can bring to everyone concerned. The National Park Authority employs a member of staff, the Interpretation Officer, to co-ordinate all the interpretation in the Park.

The National Park Authority is involved with two levels of interpretive planning. There is an Interpretation Strategy for the whole National Park and there are some Local Interpretive Plans for individual sites, features or areas such as a village trail, a castle or the waterfalls area. The National Park also has a less direct but important facilitator role through granting permission to others for interpretation panels.

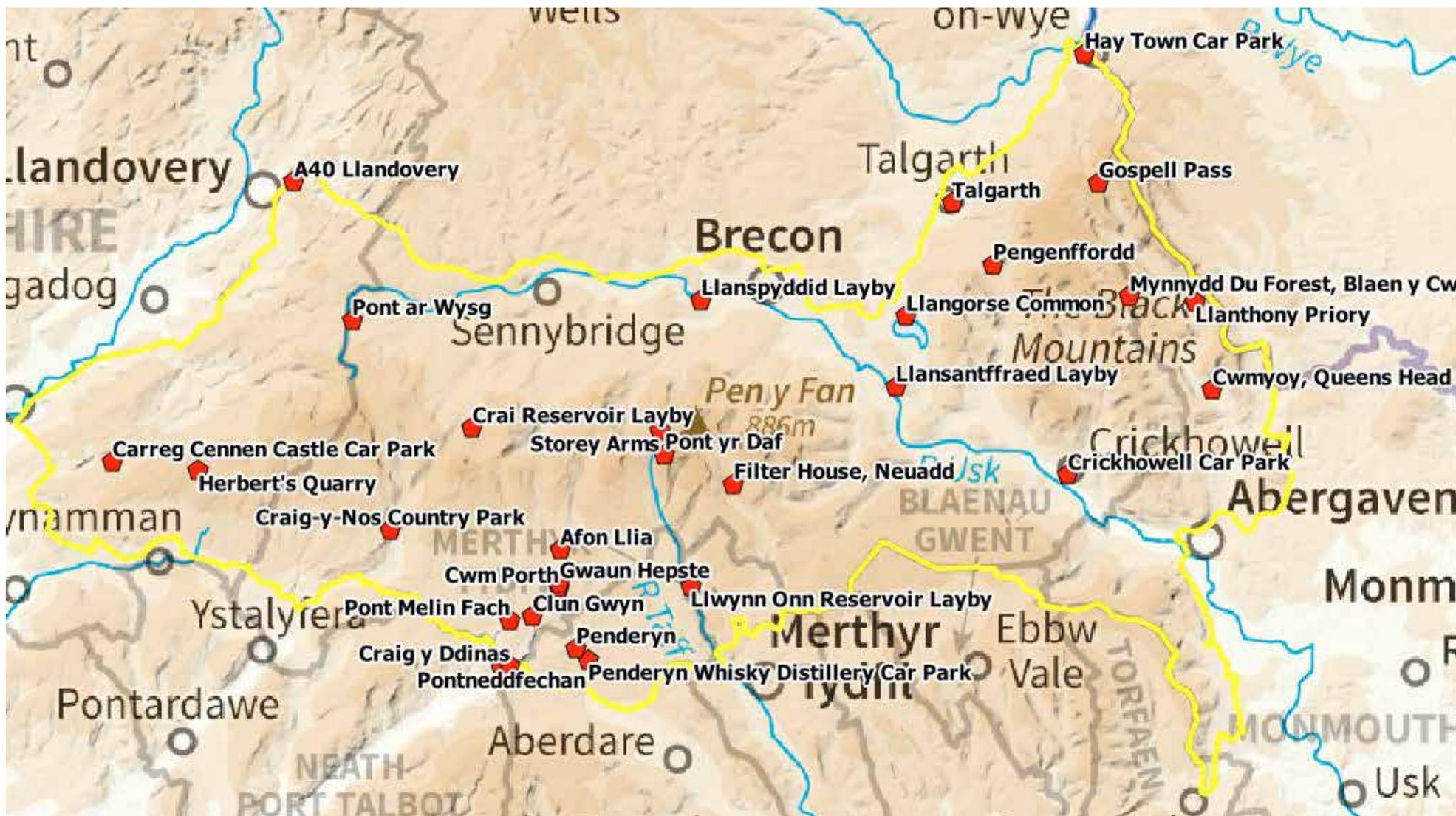
Monitored over time, the number of settlements benefitting from interpretation and information panels will provide a qualitative indication of how widely national park stories and history are being communicated, how widely the education message is being communicated and, how widely they are contributing to a positive visitor experience.

There are currently 30 settlements benefiting from Brecon Beacons National Park interpretation or information panels, as follows:

1. Storey Arms
2. Pont yr Daf
3. Carreg Cennen Castle car park
4. Pontneddfechan
5. Llanthony Priory
6. Llansantffraed layby
7. Talgarth
8. Llanspyddid layby
9. A40 Llandovery entrance to NP
10. Llwynn Onn reservoir layby
11. Penderyn Whisky distillery car park
12. Craig y nos Country Park
13. Crai reservoir layby
14. Herberts quarry
15. Afon Llia
16. Penderyn
17. Pont ar Wysg
18. Crickhowell car park
19. Gospel Pass
20. Cwmyoy, Queens Head
21. Pengefordd
22. Neuadd
23. Mynydd Du Forest, Blaen y Cwm
24. Llangorse common
25. Hay town car park
26. Clun Gwyn
27. Gwaun Hepste
28. Cwm Porth
29. Pont Melin Fach
30. Craig y Ddinas



New Interpretation panel at Maen Llia



Map S11 Interpretation Information

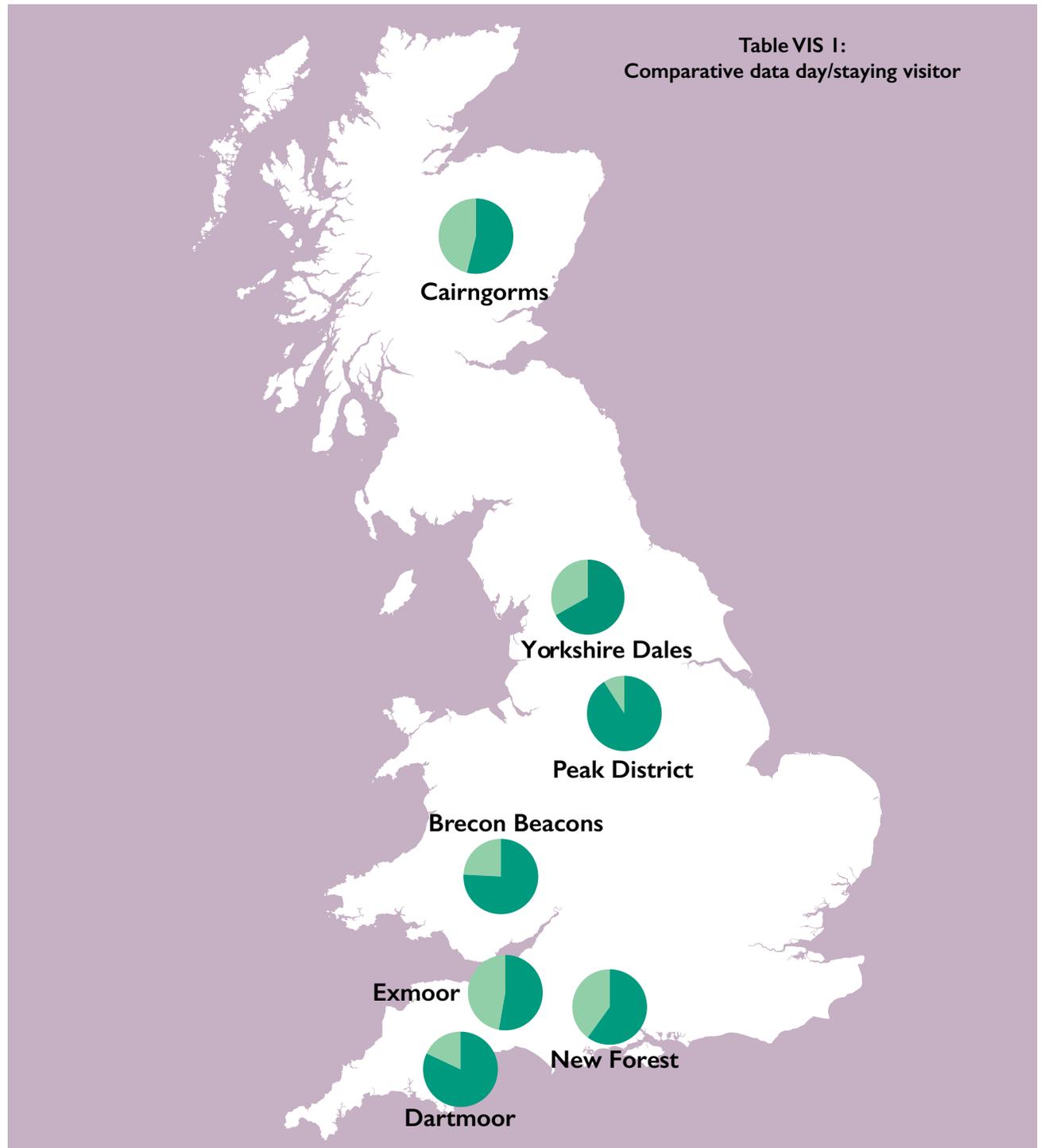
# Indicator 12:

## Ratio Staying Visitors compared to Day Visitors

The Brecon Beacons Visitor Management Plan (2013)<sup>17</sup> states that the National Park hosts a total of 4.1 million visitors who spend 5.1 million days in the Brecon Beacons each year. Compared to the other two National Parks in Wales, the Brecon Beacons is unusual in the high proportion of visits that last no more than a day (74% of visitor days) compared to staying visitors. This means that the total number of visitor days (a good measure of the economic contribution and any impact that visitors bring) is lower than in other National Parks in Wales<sup>18</sup>. Table VISI below shows a comparison of 7 other National Parks in the UK. It provides comparative data for day/staying visitors between the Brecon Beacons National Park and a random selection of other National Parks in the UK.

National Park (UK)	Day Visitor	Staying Visitor
Peak District (2012 data)	91%	9%
Dartmoor (2003 data)	82%	18%
Brecon Beacons (2012 data)	76%	24%
Yorkshire Dales (2011 data)	67%	33%
New Forest (2005 data)	60%	40%
Cairngorms (2008 data)	54%	46%
Exmoor (2009 data)	53%	47%

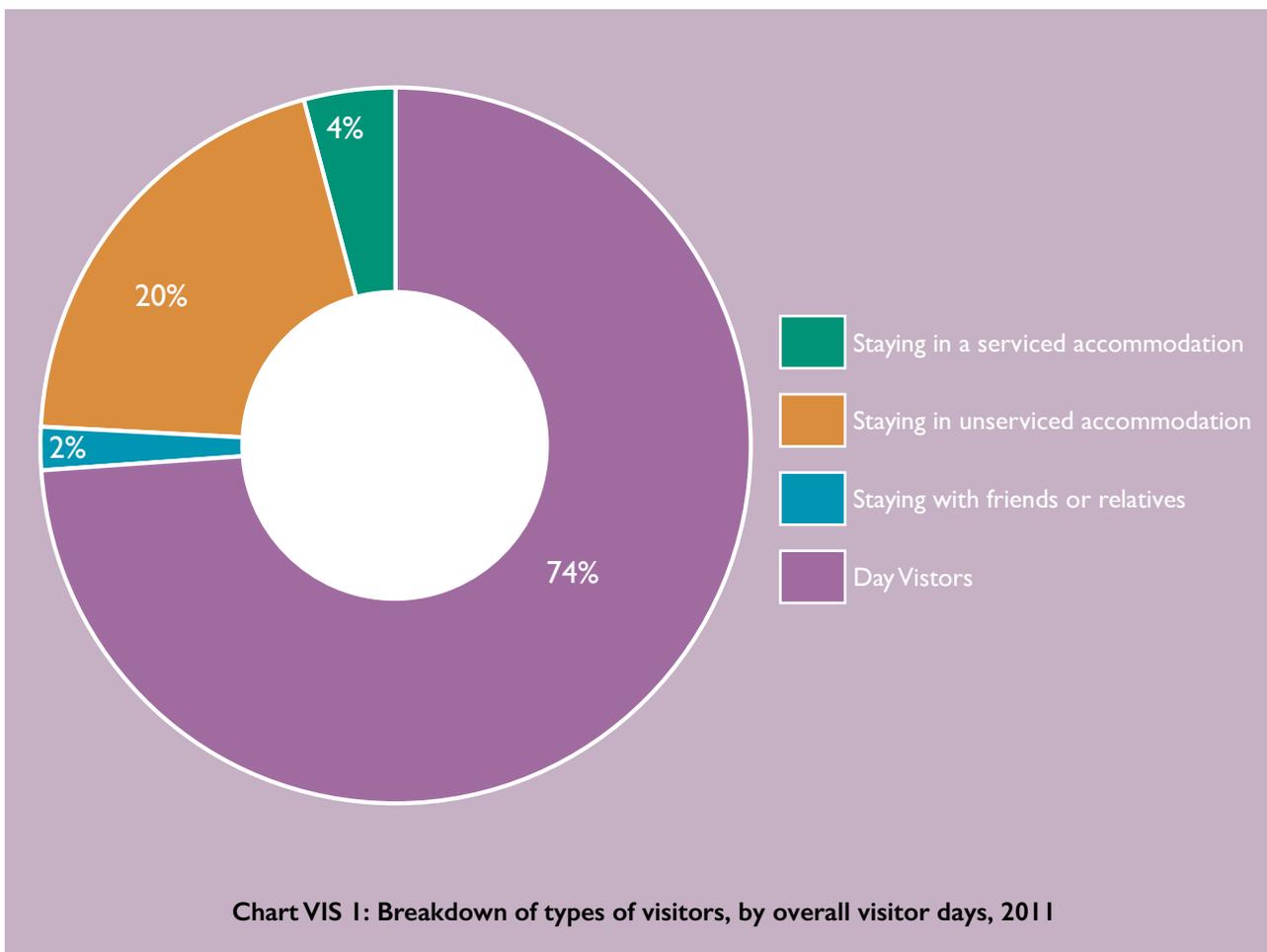
Table VIS I:  
Comparative data day/staying visitor



The large number of day visitors is a reflection of the high proportion coming from nearby urban areas in Wales, Hereford, Gloucester and the West of England. In contrast, a high proportion of staying visitors come from the South East of England. The close proximity of the Brecon Beacons to much of the urban population of Wales creates both opportunities and challenges for the National Park. These will need careful management to realise potential benefits and contain negative impacts.

While there are negative impacts related to an increased number of visitors, it is widely considered that the positive benefits that visitors bring outweigh the negative impacts and that the tourism sector should be supported.

Generally, National Parks in Wales attract a high proportion of staying visitors, averaging 2.26 tourist days per visitor compared to 1.59 for National Parks in England and Scotland.<sup>19</sup> However, Chart VIS1 below shows that in 2011 74% of visitors (as a percentage of total visitors) were day visitors. In 2012 the number of day visitors had increased to 76%.



By monitoring the ratio of staying visitors: day visitors we will be able to determine trends and manage the potential impacts accordingly.

17 <http://www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/the-authority/working-in-partnership/tourism-new/visitor-management-plan-draft>  
 18 The numbers collated by the Association of National Park Authorities are as follows: Brecon Beacons 4.1 M visitors and 5.0 M visitor days; Pembrokeshire Coast 4.2 M visitors and 13 M visitor days; Snowdonia 4.27 M visitors and 10.4 M visitor days.  
 19 [http://npw.nationalparks.gov.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/389727/Valuing-Wales-National-Parks-.pdf](http://npw.nationalparks.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/389727/Valuing-Wales-National-Parks-.pdf)