

About us

The Coal Authority works to protect the public and the environment in coal mining areas. We manage the effects of past coal mining in order to promote public safety and safeguard the landscape – now and for future generations.

- We manage our property in a responsible manner and deal with any emergencies arising from old coal mine workings.
- We help to clean up water from coal mines.
- We give people advice and information about past coal mining.

Contact us

To book an appointment with one of our inspectors, call:

0845 762 6848

To find out more about our work, go to:

www.coal.gov.uk

If you believe that a mine shaft is in a dangerous condition, has caused damage or allows access to the mine, please call our 24-hour emergency line:

01623 646 333

YOUR Coal Authority inspection



Protecting the public and the
environment in coal mining areas

Coal mining in Britain

Coal has been mined in Britain since Roman times, and there are over 170,000 old mine shafts throughout England, Scotland and Wales. The term 'mine shaft' refers to any entrance from the surface into a coal mine. This includes tunnels as well as vertical shafts.

Many of the shafts were treated or filled in when the mines were closed, and local residents may not even know that there were once coal mines in their area.

Why does The Coal Authority inspect mine shafts?

The Coal Authority works to protect the public and the environment in coal mining areas. The inspection programme helps us to keep our records up to date and to identify whether we need to carry out any further investigations or maintenance work.

Problems with mine shafts are very rare. But if the mine shaft is open or there is coal mining subsidence, we will act quickly to ensure that you and the community are safe. If we do need to carry out any work, we will ask your permission.

The mine shaft inspection

If we undertake an inspection, it will last about 20 minutes. We will look around the outside of any buildings for evidence of the mine shaft and to assess its condition. We will show you its recorded position, and answer any questions you may have.

Afterwards, we will send you a copy of our findings, including a map showing the position of the mine shaft.

What do we look for?

- Old brickwork, markers, covers or fences that may need maintenance.
- A depression near the mine shaft.
- Cracks in structures or in the ground by the mine shaft.
- A boggy area or water flowing from a mine shaft.

Even if these are present, there is not necessarily a problem.

Remember: our teams are specialists in mine inspections. NEVER explore a mine shaft yourself.