

The Criteria 2017

The Green Flag Award scheme recognises and rewards well-managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

A successful Green Flag Award site demonstrates, through a sound management plan and a well-run site, that the management understand:

- **Their users:** who they are, who they could be, what they want, how they are informed and involved
- **Their site:** what is special about its history, biodiversity, landscape, social and physical setting and what it is trying to achieve
- **Their management strategy:** that what is there is safe, in line with legislation and policy, well maintained and that there are plans for the future

Green Flag Award applications are judged against **eight key criteria**. Where certain criteria are not met, applicants can provide justifications that may be taken into account. What's more, if management practice changes are in progress but not yet fully implemented, transitional phases will be acknowledged and viewed positively.

The judging criteria also considers the fact that each park/green space will offer different kinds of facilities, and will be managed and developed to varying opportunities and constraints. Innovation and the way facilities offered are tailored to the needs of the community will also be taken into account.

The criteria have been amended for 2017 to reflect current language and priorities, although the overall essence of the assessment remains the same. Parks are judged against the following eight key criteria:

1. A Welcoming Place;
2. Healthy, Safe and Secure;
3. Well Maintained and Clean;
4. Environmental Management;
5. Management of Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage;
6. Community Involvement;
7. Marketing and Communication; and
8. Management.

This is not a list of requirements. For some sites some of the sub-criteria will not be applicable. The strength of the Green Flag Award is that it provides a framework for good management to professionals evaluate and apply to their own particular site

1. A WELCOMING PLACE

A welcoming place is one that invites and draws people into it. This means creating a space which, through its visual appearance, range of facilities, standards of maintenance and ease of access makes people feel that they are in a cared-for place. There should be:

- Good and safe access
- Good signage to and in the park/green space
- Equal access for all members of the community

2. HEALTHY, SAFE AND SECURE

The park/green space must be a healthy, safe and secure place for all members of the community to use. The management of the park must understand their users' needs, encouraging them to enjoy healthy activities using appropriate, safe-to-use facilities and activities, and to feel personally safe and secure. Facilities are regarded as any structure on the site that are there for the use and enjoyment of users, including sports facilities, cafes, benches, play and exercise equipment, water fountains and bandstands. New issues that arise must be addressed promptly and appropriately.

- Appropriate provision of quality facilities and activities
- Safe equipment and facilities, including policies and records on health and safety
- Personal security, including risk assessments and methods employed to reduce risk of personal harm
- Control of dogs and of fouling

3. WELL MAINTAINED AND CLEAN

For aesthetic, as well as health and safety reasons, issues of cleanliness and maintenance must be adequately addressed. In particular:

- Litter and other waste management issues must be adequately dealt with
 - Grounds buildings, equipment and other features must be well maintained
 - Policies on litter, vandalism and maintenance should be in place, in practice and regularly reviewed
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- Litter and other waste management
 - Horticulture maintenance
 - Arboriculture maintenance
 - Building and infrastructure maintenance
 - Equipment maintenance

4. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

This section seeks to ensure that the way the site is managed has a positive impact on the environment, locally and globally, both now and for the future.

Where choices can be made for future procurement, landscaping or buildings, they should aim to minimise energy and resource consumption and waste. Policies should seek to eliminate the use of peat and chemicals to control pests and as fertilisers. Parks/green spaces should:

- Managing environmental impact
- Waste minimisation
- Chemical use
- Peat use
- Climate change adaptation strategies

5. MANAGEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE

Particular attention should be paid to the conservation and appropriate management of natural features, wildlife and flora; landscape features and buildings and structures. Their particular character and requirements should be identified and appropriate management strategies put in place to conserve and enhance them:

- Management of natural features, wildlife and fauna
- Conservation of landscapes features
- Conservation of buildings and structural features

6. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This sections examines the extent to which the managing organisation understands the community it seeks to serve, actively involving members of the community in making decisions about them it's development and providing opportunities for active participation. They need to ensure there is appropriate provision of recreational facilities and activities for all members of the community.

The following should be demonstrated:

- Community involvement is management and development
- Appropriate provision for the community

7. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

Managers should understand the key benefits of the site and how they use information to promote it. They should understand who the main user groups are, and could or should be, and use a fitting range of interpretation and engagement techniques to communicate with them through:

- Marketing and promotion
- Appropriate information channels
- Appropriate educational and interpretational information

8 MANAGEMENT

This section evaluates how well the management plan is implemented on site. The Green Flag Award requires the establishment of an active management plan based on an understanding of the community it serves and its aspirations

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- A management plan or strategy should be in place.
- This should clearly and adequately address all of the above criteria and any other relevant aspects of the park/green space's management.
- The plan must be actively implemented and regularly reviewed.
- A financially sound management of the park/green space must also be demonstrated.

Taken from Raising the Standard: The Green Flag Award Guidance Manual 2017

Changes between Raising the Standard: 2009 and Raising the Standard: 2017

Language and practice has changed since the previous Raising the Standard was issued, and this publication aims to reflect those changes. The framework is still flexible so that it is relevant to any greenspace and not a prescription list of things to do. It is recognised that there will be a transition period as the new standards come in to full use.

2009 Raising the Standard	2017 Raising the Standard
<p>1 A WELCOMING PLACE</p> <p>1.1 Welcome 1.2 Announcing the park (signage) 1.3 Access – physical 1.4 Access social 1.5 Aspects of design</p>	<p>1. A WELCOMING PLACE</p> <p>1. Welcome 2. Good and safe access 3. Signage 4. Equal Access for All</p>
<p>No significant change. Access has been amalgamated into one section to ensure that the green space can be accessed easily.</p>	
<p>2. HEALTHY, SAFE AND SECURE</p> <p>2.1 Health and well-being 2.2 Equipment and facilities 2.3 Security 2.4 Towards a safer park 2.5 Health and safety policies 2.6 Control of dogs</p>	<p>2. HEALTHY, SAFE AND SECURE</p> <p>5. Appropriate provision of quality facilities and activities 6. Safe equipment and facilities 7. Personal security 8. Control of dogs/dog fouling</p>
<p>There has been a change in the order of criteria to reflect that the facilities should be encouraging healthy activities, such as jogging paths, as well as being safe and secure.</p> <p>Control of dogs/fouling has been widened to highlight that it is to show it is about the control of dogs and also control of fouling from animals including dogs but also geese, swans, horses etc.</p>	
<p>3. WELL MAINTAINED AND CLEAN</p> <p>3.1 Litter and waste management 3.2 Grounds maintenance 3.3 Buildings management and maintenance 3.4 Infrastructure and other facilities 3.5 Equipment maintenance – staff 3.6 Equipment maintenance – public 3.7 Cleanliness</p>	<p>3. WELL MAINTAINED AND CLEAN</p> <p>9. Litter and waste management 10. Horticultural maintenance 11. Arboriculture maintenance 12. Building and infrastructure maintenance 13. Equipment maintenance</p>
<p>Arboriculture maintenance has been moved into this section from Sustainability</p>	

<p>4. SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>4.1 Environment management 4.2 Pesticides 4.3 Materials 4.4 Resource conservation and waste management 4.5 Horticultural and arboricultural management 4.6 Pollution reduction 4.7 Water efficiency 4.8 Energy efficiency 4.9 Air quality</p>	<p>4. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT</p> <p>14. Managing environmental impact 15. Waste minimisation 16. Chemical use 17. Peat use 18. Climate change adaptation strategies</p>
<p>The title Sustainability has been changed to Environmental Management to reflect current language and will look at chemical use, not just pesticides.</p> <p>Climate change adaptation strategies have been added although it is recognised that the impact of this criteria will vary widely. Managers may be questioned about any strategies they are bringing in to the management plan but it is not expected that there will be wholesale redevelopment of sites to include this.</p>	
<p>5. CONSERVATION</p> <p>5.1 Cultural landscapes 5.2 Water management 5.3 Woodlands and trees 5.4 Grasslands 5.5 Other habitats 5.6 Fauna 5.7 Geological and physiographic features 5.8 Conservation of landscape 5.9 Conservation of built environment 5.10 Conservation of historical artefacts 5.11 Maintaining historic character</p>	<p>5. MANAGEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE</p> <p>19. Management of natural features, wild fauna and flora 20. Conservation of landscape features 21. Conservation of buildings and structures</p>
<p>Conservation has changed to biodiversity, landscape and heritage and covers the management of natural features, wild flora and fauna rather than the conservation of them</p>	
<p>6. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</p> <p>6.1 Patterns of use 6.2 Community involvement in green space management and development 6.3 Facilities 6.4 Children's play 6.5 Educational facilities</p>	<p>6. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</p> <p>22. Community involvement in management and development 23. Appropriate provision for community</p>
<p>No changes within this section other than merging the headings.</p>	

<p>7. MARKETING</p> <p>7.1 Information provision and interpretation 7.2 Events 7.3 Promotion 7.4 Using the Green Flag Award in marketing</p>	<p>7. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION</p> <p>24. Marketing and promotion 25. Appropriate information channels 26. Appropriate educational and interpretational information</p>
<p>The section has been widened to include communication, not solely marketing, to reflect current practices</p>	
<p>8 MANAGEMENT</p> <p>8.1 Public service 8.2 Personnel 8.3 Quality systems 8.4 Financial management 8.5 Implementation</p>	<p>8 MANAGEMENT</p> <p>27. Implementation of management plan</p>
<p>This section will look at how the management plan, including finance, staff and volunteer resources, is implemented.</p>	