

Appendix 2 - Accessible Greenspace Standards

We have updated Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) to broaden their scope, and we have re-named them Accessible Greenspace Standards.

The **Green Infrastructure Headline Standards** states everyone should have access to good quality green and blue spaces close to home for health and wellbeing and contact with nature, to meet the **Accessible Greenspace Standards**, with an initial focus on access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home.

The Accessible Greenspace Standards define good provision based on different size-proximity, capacity and quality criteria as set out below.

Size Proximity Criteria

Within 15 minutes' walk:

EITHER a Doorstep OR Local Accessible Greenspace

- A **doorstep greenspace** of at least 0.5ha within 200 metres, or
- A **local natural greenspace** of at least 2ha within 300 metres walk from home.

AND

- A medium sized **neighbourhood natural greenspace** (10ha) within 1km.

AND, beyond 15 minutes' walk:

- A medium/large **wider neighbourhood natural greenspace** (20ha) within 2km. and
- And large **district natural greenspace** (100ha) within 5-km. and
- A very large **subregional greenspace** within (500 ha) within 10 km.

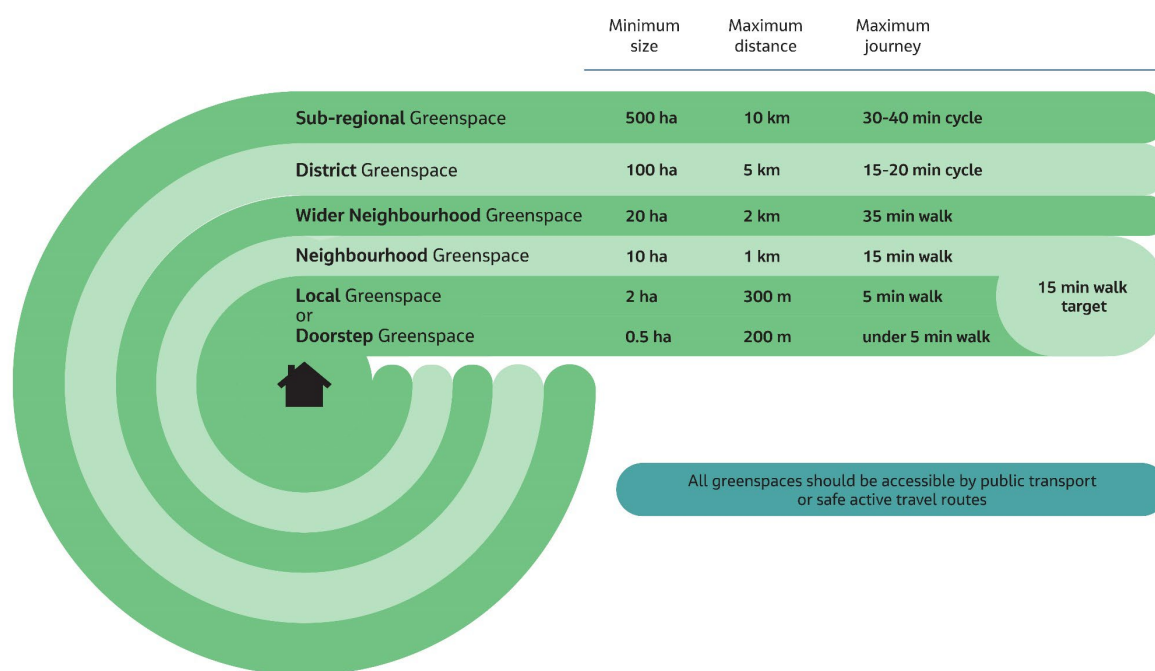


Figure 2: Accessible Greenspace Standards - size-proximity

Table 1 Accessible Greenspace Standards

Category of Accessible Greenspace	Actual walking distance	Name of criterion	Accessible Natural Greenspace	Size criteria (minimum)	Approximate walking / cycling time
1. Small greenspace close to home: either a Doorstep or Local Greenspace	200m	Doorstep Greenspace	N	0.5 ha	Less than 5 minutes
As above	300m	Local Natural Greenspace	Y	2 ha	5 minutes
2. Medium sized	1km	Neighbourhood Natural Greenspace	Y	10 ha	15 minutes

Category of Accessible Greenspace	Actual walking distance	Name of criterion	Accessible Natural Greenspace	Size criteria (minimum)	Approximate walking / cycling time
greenspace within 1km					
3. Medium large Greenspace within 2km	2km	Wider Neighbourhood Natural Greenspace	Y	20ha	35 minutes
4. Large greenspace within 5km from home	5km	District Natural Greenspace	Y	100 ha	15 – 20 minutes cycling from home
5. Very large Greenspace within 10km from home	10km	Sub-regional Natural Greenspace	Y	500 ha	30 - 40 minutes cycling from home

Notes:

- Distances given are actual walking distances. Actual walking distance will be measured through network analysis in due course. However, in the meantime, the Green Infrastructure Mapping uses a straight line distance from home to the boundary of the greenspace in analyses of the AGS standards.
- Where possible all greenspaces should be accessible by public transport and or safe active travel routes.
- The Accessible Greenspace Standards do not cover formal sports provision, for which Sport England is responsible; nor play provision, which is covered by Play England.
- The above diagram uses a walking speed of 60 metres per minute, which is the average for people of 60 years and teenagers. It uses a cycling speed of 20 kilometres per hour as an average for inexperienced cyclists

Capacity Criteria

A traditional and commonly used way to set standards for greenspace is to set capacity standards for accessible greenspace. This is advocated by [Fields in Trust](#) (Fields in Trust, 2015) and included in the National Model Design Code (DLUHC 2021a). It has been adopted by many local authorities.

A Capacity standard of at least 3 ha accessible greenspace per 1,000, measured at district /borough/ unitary authority-wide scale, has been included in the Accessible Greenspace Standards to ensure that sufficient greenspace is provided across a local authority area. Please see the Green Infrastructure Standards User Guide and Green Infrastructure Mapping User Guide for clarification of the types of Accessible Greenspace (and Accessible Natural Greenspace) that are covered by the Accessible Greenspace Standards and Green Infrastructure Mapping Analysis.

Quality Criteria

The Accessible Greenspace Standards Quality Criteria recommend that:

- Accessible greenspace meets the [Green Flag Award Criteria](#), (Ellicott, 2016) and best practice in accessibility for all: [By All Reasonable Means: Least restrictive access to the outdoors](#) (The Sensory Trust, 2020) in major new developments.

The Green Flag Award® scheme originated in 1996 and is a non-profit international accreditation programme that 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. (Ellicott, 2016)' The Green Flag Award® is managed under licence from the UK Government by Keep Britain Tidy and delivered internationally through a network of national operators. It is an ISO 9001 (QMS) Certified process.

Natural England recommends that parks and greenspaces managers use the Green Flag Award® criteria to assess the quality of their site management, and to plan and deliver management enhancements as needed. Local authorities and others may wish to apply for accreditation through the Green Flag Award®, but this is not necessary to meet the Green Infrastructure Framework's Accessible Greenspace Standards.

The criteria include the following which are set out in The Green Flag Award® Guidance Manual (Ellicott, 2020):

- A Welcoming Place

- Healthy, Safe and Secure
- Well Maintained and Clean
- Environmental Management
- Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage
- Community Involvement
- Marketing and Communication
- Management

The award criteria can be applied to all greenspaces including:

- City Parks
- Nature Reserves
- University Campuses
- Woodland
- Neighbourhood Parks
- Country Parks
- Cemeteries and Burial Grounds
- Botanic and Historic Gardens

Access for All Criteria

The Access for All criteria within the Accessible Greenspace Standards are based on the principle of inclusive access, and best practice guidance set out in '[By All Reasonable Means – Least restrictive access to the outdoors](#)' (Sensory Trust, 2020). This publication guides greenspace, recreational route and other recreational land managers in providing more inclusive access, in more places, for more people, i.e. enable more people of all ages, circumstances and backgrounds to enjoy the outdoors.

The Guide is an updated version of an original publication, commissioned by Natural England's predecessor, the Countryside Agency, from the Sensory Trust to produce practical guidance for countryside managers on Access for All in 2005. The Sensory Trust updated this on behalf of Natural England, and in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales, in 2020.

The updated Guide responds to the Equality Act 2010, and addresses accessibility in its widest sense, embracing all the protected characteristics identified by the Equality Act (2010). The Guide is based on the principle of Least Restrictive Access – an approach that aims for the highest standards possible for a particular piece of work.'

Rationale for updated scope and name

The broader scope of the Accessible Greenspace Standards includes all publicly accessible green and natural spaces. This scope is described in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) (HM Government, 2018) which states:

We will draw up a national framework of green infrastructure standards, ensuring that new developments include accessible greenspaces and that any area with little or no greenspace can be improved for the benefit of the community. (p.77)

The wider scope is consistent with the Green Infrastructure Framework's Principles that we should aim for integrated planning and design of greenspace to deliver multifunctionality and multiple benefits (while not impacting negatively on sites of nature conservation value). In many cases, enhancing greenspaces for nature can be integrated with delivery of benefits for health and wellbeing, climate, water and the economy. Indeed nature is a fundamental requirement to deliver many of these benefits.

The new scope of the Accessible Greenspace Standards excludes greenspaces that are not publicly accessible, e.g. the greenspace around privately owned buildings, and other typologies such as allotments that are normally only accessible to members.