

## What are they?

Age-friendly parks and green spaces are barrier-free, comfortable to navigate, and offer a choice of activities that foster a sense of belonging for all ages. While local authorities are responsible for managing parks and green spaces, older people have an opportunity to support and contribute to the vitality of their local parks and green spaces.

## Why do they matter?

Access to parks and green spaces can reduce loneliness and enhance mood while improving mental wellbeing, increasing physical activity and intergenerational social connection. However, older people may encounter physical or logistical barriers which make them unable to realise these benefits if the space is not designed with age-friendly considerations.

## Age-friendly implementation considerations

- Listen to lived experiences** to learn what a diverse range of local residents, including older people, want and need from parks and green spaces. Undertake an access audit with older people / intergenerational groups.
- Identify stakeholders** such as relevant council departments (e.g. planning, public health, environment, parks and community services departments), relevant authorities and local businesses.
- Develop solutions** with residents, stakeholders and local groups to ensure the parks and green spaces are safe and useable for all. Discuss priorities and agree improvements.

- 1 Location:** Is green space available for residential areas that need them within a reasonable walking distance? Are entrances at appropriate locations? Are larger parks accessible by public transport?
- 2 Wayfinding and signage:** Is wayfinding / signage clear, intuitive, and directs to toilets, exits, and key locations? Is information (e.g. maps, opening hours, walking routes, activity schedule) available / easy to find?
- 3 Accessible routes:** Are ground surfaces firm, even, step-free and slip-resistant for safe and comfortable wheeling and walking in all weather conditions? Are routes at least 1.8m wide to allow people to walk with mobility devices or walk safely alongside another person? Are objects (e.g. signage, bins) located and overhanging branches maintained so route widths are not reduced?
- 4 Changes in level:** If routes have a change in level, are handrails provided for steps? Do stepped areas have a step-free route nearby? Are sloped areas shallower than a 1:20 gradient? If routes are steeper than 1:20, do they provide handrails?
- 5 Perceptions of safety:** Do sight lines and lighting allow visibility and make people feel safer? Is consistent, even lighting illuminating the routes, key features and people without pooling or creating glare? Does the design avoid dead ends and/or narrow routes surrounded by dense planting where people might feel trapped?

- 6 Toilets:** Well-maintained, free-to-use, open public toilets enable people to participate in parks and green spaces. Are clearly marked toilets available? Are accessible toilets and/ or a Changing Places facility provided?
- 7 Seating/rest areas:** Is seating provided at regular intervals? Are there options with arm rests, back rests, and space for wheelchair users? Is some seating weather protected?
- 8 Participation in the park:** Is a variety of trees/planting provided? Does some planting engage the senses and support people living with dementia? Are experiences that enable older people to engage with nature encouraged (in audio, tactile, olfactory formats in addition to visual)? Are older people supported to use and participate in the park space (e.g. volunteering opportunities, community groups, events)? Are there areas where dogs must be kept on leads? Do activities and design enable socialising and connection?
- 9 Inclusive play/movement:** Does the park provide inclusive play, fitness, and activity options for all ages to use or feel welcome to watch? Do activities and design support intergenerational connection?
- 10 Maintenance/care:** Are management and maintenance plans in place to ensure the routes are kept even and clear throughout all seasons, lighting is working, and toilets / facilities are maintained so they are trusted and reliable? Are trip hazards removed?

## Age-friendly parks and green spaces: top 10 design considerations



# Parks and Green Spaces

No.	Design considerations	Y/N	Issues and actions notes
<b>1 Location</b>			
1.1	Is green space available for residents within a reasonable walking distance?		
1.2	Are entrances at appropriate locations?		
1.3	Are larger parks accessible by public transport?		
<b>2 Wayfinding and signage (see specific Quick Guide for more info)</b>			
2.1	Is wayfinding / signage clear, intuitive, and directs to toilets, exits, and key locations?		
2.2	Is information (e.g. maps, opening hours, walking routes, activity schedule) available / easy to find?		
<b>3 Accessible routes</b>			
3.1	Are ground surfaces firm, even, step-free and slip-resistant?		
3.2	Are routes at least 1.8m wide to allow people to walk with mobility devices or walk safely alongside another person?		
3.3	Are objects (e.g. signage, bins) located and overhanging branches maintained so route widths are not reduced?		
<b>4 Changes in level</b>			
4.1	If routes have a change in level, are handrails provided for steps?		
4.2	Do stairs have a step-free route nearby?		
4.3	Are slopes shallower than 1:20 gradient?		
4.4	If routes are steeper than 1:20, do they provide handrails?		
<b>5 Perceptions of safety</b>			
5.1	Do sight lines and lighting allow visibility and make people feel safer?		
5.2	Is consistent, even lighting provided without pooling or creating glare?		
5.3	Does the design avoid dead ends and/or narrow routes surrounded by dense planting where people might feel trapped?		

No.	Design considerations	Y/N	Issues and actions notes
<b>6 Toilets (see specific Quick Guide for more info)</b>			
6.1	Are clearly marked toilets available?		
6.2	Are accessible toilets and/or a Changing Places facility provided?		
<b>7 Seating and rest areas (see specific Quick Guide for more info)</b>			
7.1	Is seating provided at regular intervals?		
7.2	Are there options with arm rests, back rests, and space for wheelchair users?		
7.3	Is some seating weather protected?		
<b>8 Participation in the park</b>			
8.1	Is a variety of trees/planting provided?		
8.2	Does some planting engage the senses and support people living with dementia?		
8.3	Are experiences that enable older people to engage with nature encouraged (in audio, tactile, olfactory, visual formats)?		
8.4	Are older people supported to use and participate in the park space?		
8.5	Are there areas where dogs must be kept on leads?		
8.6	Do activities and design enable socialising and connection?		
<b>9 Inclusive play and movement</b>			
9.1	Does the park provide inclusive play, fitness, and activity options for all ages to use or feel welcome to watch?		
9.2	Do activities and design support intergenerational connection?		
<b>10 Maintenance and care</b>			
10.1	Are management and maintenance plans in place to ensure the routes are kept even and clear throughout all seasons, lighting is working, trip hazards removed, and toilets/bins/facilities maintained so they are trusted and reliable?		