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# Green Space

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## Aim of briefing

This briefing provides a summary of access to, and provision of, different types of green spaces across West Sussex, drawing on data from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Ordnance Survey and Natural England.

The different definitions and measures of green space used by these organisations will be outlined in subsequent sections of the briefing.

## Background

### What is the definition of 'green space'?

There is currently no universally accepted definition of greenspace, and the meaning of the term can vary depending on the context and purpose of its use (Open Spaces Society, n.d.; Taylor & Hochuli, 2017). This impacts our ability to compare between areas, as what could be considered 'green space' by one organisation may differ from another.

Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the inconsistencies between definitions of green space used when considering analyses conducted by different organisations.

Due to this lack of standardised definition, local authorities may define 'green space' differently depending on the characteristics of their area, alongside local needs and priorities (Open Spaces Society, n.d.). For example, West Sussex has unique characteristics such as a diverse coastline and larger rural areas (WSCC, 2024). As acknowledged by Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in their analysis of access to green space (2025), if measures exclude access to wider countryside in their definition of green space, rural areas are seen as having a lower provision of green space compared to urban areas.

As a starting point, Public Health England defines green space in their 'Improving access to greenspace report' (2020) as the following:

*'Any area of vegetated land, urban or rural. This includes both public and private spaces such as parks, gardens, playing fields, children's play areas, woods and other natural areas, grassed areas, cemeteries and allotments, green corridors, disused railway lines, rivers and canals, derelict, vacant and contaminated land which has the potential to be transformed'.*

Alongside variations in definitions of green space, there are also caveats surrounding how green space is measured. For example, many studies have used area-based measures of green space, such as the percentage of space within a set area, rather than focusing on the quality (e.g., the design of the space, whether it is considered 'safe' etc) or how spaces could benefit communities (e.g., usability and whether the space meets the differing needs and preferences of the population) (McEachan, et al., 2018; Natural England, 2024; Rahman et al., 2025)

### What are the benefits of accessing green space?

There is growing evidence that access to green spaces can positively impact our physical health and mental wellbeing (Geary, et al., 2023). Green spaces provide us with opportunities to exercise, connect with others and relieve stress (The Health Foundation, 2024). In addition, green space can provide numerous environmental and economic benefits, such as reduced air and noise pollution and bringing greater footfall to local businesses (Dobson et al., 2019; Holland, 2021).

However, despite the well documented benefits of green spaces, not everyone has equal access to these resources (Parks for London, n.d.). The Health Foundation (2024) reported that people in more deprived areas, from minority ethnic groups and younger people are more likely to live in areas with less access to

green space. This inequity of access can impact individuals' physical health and mental wellbeing, limiting their opportunities to engage in outdoor activities and social interaction (The Health Foundation, 2024).

#### Good to know

DEFRA are a government department responsible for improving and protecting the environment. Their responsibilities include protecting biodiversity, the countryside and marine environment, alongside supporting the growth of a sustainable green economy.

Ordnance Survey is a national mapping agency – their Open Greenspace product provides information on the location of publicly accessible green spaces across Great Britain.

Natural England provide advice to the government on how to help conserve, enhance, and manage the natural environment in England.

Sources: [About us - Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs - GOV.UK](#), [OS Open Greenspace - Overview](#) and [About us - Natural England - GOV.UK](#)

## Access to green space

### What are the current accessibility guidelines?

#### Green Infrastructure Framework

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, published in 2018, committed to developing a set of green infrastructure standards for England. This commitment led to the creation of the Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework, launched by Natural England in 2023, which supports the 'greening' of towns, cities and connections with the surrounding landscape. Greening refers to increasing and improving urban nature and greenspaces – this includes reducing pollution and promoting positive environmental behaviours such as recycling (Natural England, 2026).

This GI framework is aimed at helping local planning authorities (district, borough, city councils, or unitary authorities for the area) and developers to meet requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework to consider green infrastructure in local plans and new developments (Natural England, 2026). For further information on local planning authorities, refer to the 'role of the local planning authorities' section of this briefing.

#### National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government [MHCLG], 2024)

The latest NPPF was published in 2024 and defines green infrastructure as '*a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity*' (MHCLG, 2024, pg .73).

For many local communities, securing high quality green infrastructure in and around their neighbourhood is important (My Community, 2017). In 2012, the NPPF introduced the local green space (LGS) designation to help local communities protect green areas of particular importance. This enables communities, in certain circumstances, to identify and protect areas that are of value to them through local and neighbourhood plans (Open Spaces Society, n.d.). For further information on local and neighbourhood plans, [refer to Appendix A](#).

It is important to note that not all green areas will be suitable for formal designation as a LGS (South Downs National Park Authority, 2026). As set out in NPPF (2024) paragraphs 106 to 108, a LGS designation should only be used when the nominated green area is:

- a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
- b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

Whilst the NPPF provides the criteria for LGS designation, it does not include specific definitions of what qualifies as 'close proximity' or an 'extensive tract of land' (Carn Brea Parish Council, n.d.). Therefore, this is up to local planning authorities, who designate the LGS, to determine.

The Planning Practice Guidance, which provides local planning authorities with guidance to help them apply policies within the NPPF (Historic England, 2026), states that the proximity of designated LGS to the community will depend on local circumstances. In relation to the 'extensive tract of land' criteria, no minimum size is stated for a LGS, and the sizes will vary between different communities (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2014). Alongside the guidance, other councils have referred to the Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards to support with interpreting the criteria for LGS designation. Further information on Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards is provided in the ['Green Infrastructure Standards' section of this briefing](#).

Once a LGS is in place, it is subject to the same strict development restrictions as Green Belts which refer to areas of land that are protected from most forms of development (Campaign to Protect Rural England, 2023). This means that requests for new developments should not be approved unless it is a special circumstance (Open Spaces Society, n.d.).

## Green Infrastructure Standards

To help local planning authorities and developers meet requirements set out in the NPPF, the GI framework includes a range of supporting tools and resources, such as the 'Green Infrastructure Standards'. This is a set of five headline standards which define what good green infrastructure 'looks like' and can be used by LPAs to assess their existing provision of local outdoor spaces, identify improvements and set targets (Natural England, 2023; 2026).

This briefing will focus on one of the five standards included in the framework, the 'Accessible Greenspace Standard' which aims to ensure that everyone has access to good quality outdoor spaces within a 15-minute walk from home (Natural England, 2024). This standard underpins the Government's 15-minute commitment first highlighted in DEFRA's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 and reiterated in the latest plan released in 2025. For further information on the five headline standards overall, [refer to Houghton and Warburton's \(2023\) Green Infrastructure Framework - Principles and Standards for England report](#).

Accessible Greenspace Standard consists of three components which focus on the size and distance, capacity and quality of green and blue spaces (Grace et al., 2024).

Natural England defined accessible greenspace as 'any greenspace available for the public to use free of charge without time restrictions'. For the size and distance component of AGSt, Natural England outlined six categories of accessible greenspace based on the size of the space, distance from residents and time required to walk there (Grace et al., 2024).

One of the six categories of accessible greenspace, referred to as AGSt's 'local' standard, recommends that everyone should live within a five-minute walk (300m) of at least two hectares of accessible greenspace. This is similar to recommendations from the European Regional Office of the World Health Organization

(WHO; 2016) which advises that all people should live within 300m of accessible green spaces of at least 0.5 hectares, based on an expert working group report (Barboza, et al., 2021; Stauffer & Chagnon, 2025).

#### Good to know

Hectares are often used to describe the size of green spaces. One hectare is equal to 10,000 square metres (m<sup>2</sup>) or 2.47 acres of land.

For reference, two hectares of accessible greenspace is the approximate size of two rugby pitches.

For further information on the six categories of accessible greenspace, [refer to Appendix B](#).

### Role of local planning authorities

Although green space standards are largely guided by the NPPF and Natural England's Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt), local planning authorities play a central role in ensuring that green infrastructure (GI) is planned, delivered and managed effectively.

Key responsibilities include:

- Publishing GI strategies which outline objectives and long-term approaches, supported by evidence and mapped datasets showing provision and access gaps.
- Embedding GI requirements into local planning policies and guide how new development should improve or contribute to GI and ensure residents can access quality green or blue space.
- Explaining funding routes for GI, such as Section 106 Agreements (which mitigate the impacts of proposed developments), Community Infrastructure Levy (a planning charge local authorities can place on new developments) and Infrastructure Delivery Plans (which analyse and assess the existing infrastructure) to deliver GI projects and outline how GI will be monitored and maintained over time.

Altogether, these actions help to promote fair access to green spaces, improve health and wellbeing, strengthen biodiversity, and support the development of more climate-resilient communities (Forestry Commission, 2023; Local Government Association, 2024).

### What do we know about access to outdoor green spaces?

To support local planning authorities to ensure GI is planned, delivered and managed effectively, it is important to summarise available data on both the access to, and provision of, different types of green spaces across West Sussex (Roe, n.d.).

In August 2024, DEFRA published estimates of the percentage of households within various walking distances of different types of green space (Parks for London, n.d.). These official statistics in development built on Natural England's AGSt framework and used a more detailed measure of access to green space, focusing on walking routes rather than a direct line measurement (DEFRA, 2025; Suffolk JSNA, 2025).

Different scenarios were provided with varying distances between households and greenspace (DEFRA, 2025). Estimates were also provided for the percentage of households within various walking distances of different types of blue space.

Building on this work, DEFRA released a new publication in March 2026 which consolidated these statistics, to monitor progress against the Government's 15-minute commitment which aims to ensure that "everyone has access to green or blue spaces within a 15-minute walk from home".

Households that meet the '15-minute' commitment are defined as having access to either doorstep, local or neighbourhood standard green spaces included in Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards, as well as some Public Rights of Way and blue spaces, within a 15-minute walk (DEFRA, 2026).

DEFRA's new publication provides data on how many households meet the 15-minute commitment statistic alongside breakdowns by the local, doorstep and neighbourhood standards. For further information on the criteria used to determine access to different types of green and blue space, [refer to Appendix B](#).

To do this, they calculated the shortest walkable routes from every residential property in England to the green and blue spaces in their neighbourhoods (Duffy, 2026).

An estimated 81% of households in West Sussex were found to have access to at least one green or blue space within a 15-minute walk. This includes 78% of households who have neighbourhood access, 9% of households who have local access, and 14% of households who have doorstep access.

Across the county, this percentage of access to at least one green or blue space within a 15-minute walk ranged from 94% in Chichester to 55% in Worthing.

### **Rural and urban access**

Under the 15-minute commitment, a higher percentage of rural households in West Sussex (95%) had access to at least one green or blue space compared to urban households (78%).

Alongside access to outdoor green spaces, this briefing summarises available data on access to public parks and playing fields and private gardens in West Sussex.

### **What do we know about access to public parks and playing fields during the pandemic?**

In 2020, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) used OS data to highlight areas with limited outdoor access during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ordnance Survey, 2020). This analysis focused on two areas:

- Access to public parks and playing fields
- Access to private gardens

Access to public greenspace is restricted to built-up areas such as towns and cities. A summary of data relating to access to public parks and playing fields in West Sussex is provided in Table 1.

#### **Good to know**

The ONS used OS data to identify the percentage of households with a private or shared garden and how far people must travel to their nearest public garden, park or playing field.

As OS data cannot distinguish between public and private playing fields, some of these areas may not be publicly accessible. Therefore, this briefing focuses solely on access to public garden or parks.

This data suggested that residents in Adur, Crawley and Worthing had a shorter average distance (in metres) to their nearest park or public garden compared to the national average (987m).

Alongside average distance of travel, the average size of the nearest park or public garden (m<sup>2</sup>) was larger in Crawley and Horsham than the national average (203,154 m<sup>2</sup>).

Table 1 Access to public outdoor space

Area	Average distance to nearest park or public garden (m)	Average size of nearest park or public garden (m <sup>2</sup> )	Average number of parks or public gardens within 1,000m radius of residences
Adur	582	22,422	2
Arun	1,141	47,074	2
Chichester	2,624	175,029	2
Crawley	838	317,915	1
Horsham	1,950	244,492	1
Mid Sussex	1,341	76,886	1
Worthing	554	40,639	2
South East	1,018	235,325	2
England	987	203,154	2

The ONS also provided an estimated percentage of the population who lived within a 300m (five-minute walk) and 900m (fifteen-minute walk) of a public park or playing field. A 300m buffer is widely used by World Health Organisation (2017) and Natural England (n.d.) as a measure of accessible greenspace.

#### How many households lived within a five-minute walk of a public park or garden during the pandemic?

Across the districts and boroughs in West Sussex, the percentage of households within a five-minute walk of a public park or garden ranged from 10.8% (Crawley) to 26.2% (Arun).

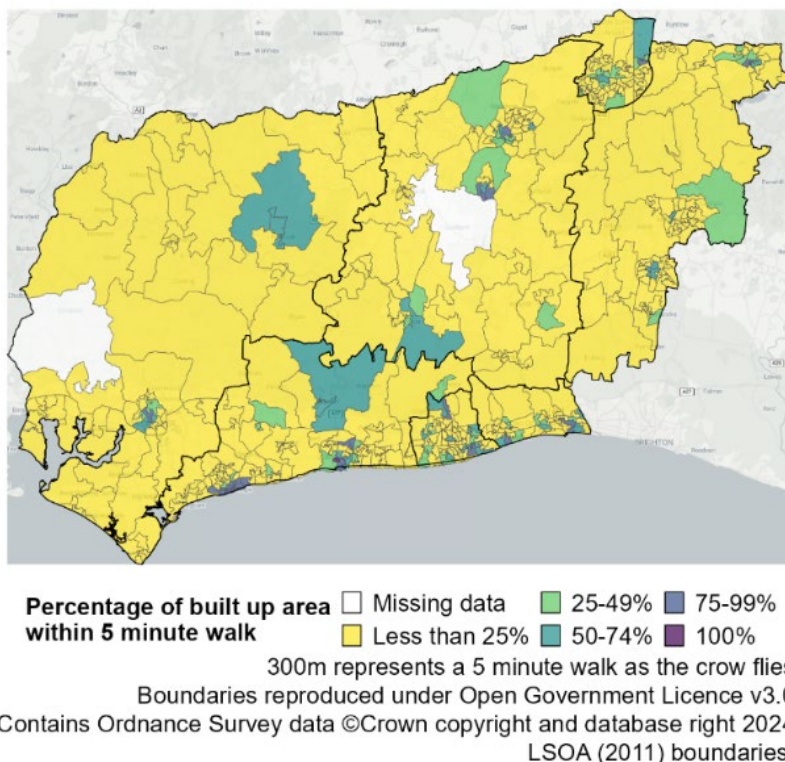
Data was also available for smaller areas in West Sussex, such as lower super output areas (LSOAs or 'neighbourhoods'). Each LSOA comprises of between 400 and 1,200 households and have a usually resident population of between 1,000 and 3,000 persons (ONS, n.d.). Across the county, most neighbourhoods (401; 79.4%) had fewer than 25% of households within a five-minute walk of a public park or green space in 2020.

Table 2 Percentage of households within 300m (five-minute walk) of a public park or green space in 2020

Percentage of households within 300m a park of public garden	Number of neighbourhoods (LSOAs)
Missing	2
Less than 25%	401
25-49.9%	48
50-74.9%	33
75-99.9%	20
100%	1

Source: Ordnance Survey Open Greenspace

Figure 1 Map of percentage of postcodes within a 300m radius of a park or public garden; 2020



**How many households lived within a fifteen-minute walk of a public park or garden during the pandemic?**

When widening the buffer from a five-minute (300m) to a fifteen-minute walk (900m), the number of neighbourhoods with fewer than 25% of households having access reduced to 38.6% (195).

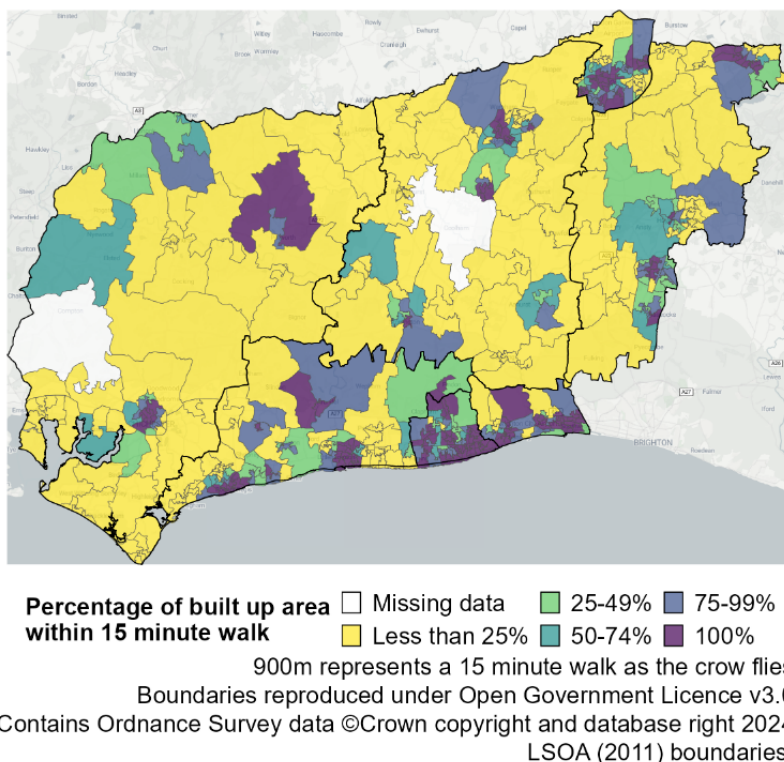
In 2020, 28.5% of neighbourhoods in West Sussex had ‘full access’ to green space, with 100% of households within a fifteen minute walk. Two neighbourhoods had missing data.

Table 3 Percentage of households within 900m (fifteen-minute walk) of a public park or green space in 2020

Percentage of postcodes within 900m a park of public garden	Number of neighbourhoods (LSOAs)
Missing	2
Less than 25%	195
25-49.9%	48
50-74.9%	47
75-99.9%	69
100%	144

Source: Ordnance Survey Open Greenspace

Figure 2 Map of percentage of postcodes within a 900m radius of a park or public garden; 2020



## What do we know about access to private outdoor space during the pandemic?

Alongside access to public green space, OS also provided data on the proportion of addresses with access to private outdoor space (for both houses and flats) in 2020.

For this analysis, private outdoor space refers to private gardens, private outdoor spaces (including balconies, yards or patio areas) and private communal gardens.

Across West Sussex, a higher percentage of houses in Adur, Crawley and Worthing were estimated to have a private outdoor space (98.6%). Whilst a lower percentage of houses in Chichester were estimated to have a private outdoor space compared to other district and boroughs, the average garden size was larger (662.6m<sup>2</sup>).

The estimated percentage of people living in flats with a private outdoor space ranged from 60.3% (Adur) to 74.4% (Chichester). Flats in Chichester were also estimated to have the largest average garden size across the district and boroughs (811.3m<sup>2</sup>).

Table 4 Access to private outdoor space – total across both houses and flats

Area	Houses		Flats	
	Addresses with private outdoor space (%)	Average size of private outdoor space (m <sup>2</sup> )	Addresses with private outdoor space (%)	Average size of private outdoor space (m <sup>2</sup> )
Adur	98.6%	239.6	60.3%	258.4
Arun	97.7%	331.2	74.1%	376.1
Chichester	94.6%	662.6	74.4%	811.3
Crawley	98.6%	202.0	68.3%	297.9

Area	Houses		Flats	
	Addresses with private outdoor space (%)	Average size of private outdoor space (m <sup>2</sup> )	Addresses with private outdoor space (%)	Average size of private outdoor space (m <sup>2</sup> )
Horsham	95.0%	640.4	66.5%	769.9
Mid Sussex	96.2%	501.8	66.7%	646.6
Worthing	98.6%	265.7	64.3%	238.8
South East	96.4%	422.0	67.1%	502.4
England	96.6%	324.5	64.5%	348.9

Source: Ordnance Survey

### What do we know about the size of gardens during the pandemic?

There is variation in the size of gardens across West Sussex - the median garden size for a house in Crawley is 145 m<sup>2</sup>, just over half the size of a standard doubles tennis court (260.8 m<sup>2</sup>). Crawley is the only local authority within West Sussex with a smaller median garden size than England (184.6m<sup>2</sup>). Arun, Chichester, Horsham and Worthing had larger gardens than the regional average (212.2m<sup>2</sup>).

Table 5 Median garden size for a house

Area	Median size of private outdoor space (m <sup>2</sup> )
Adur	203.9
Arun	220.2
Chichester	273.4
Crawley	145.4
Horsham	259.4
Mid Sussex	254.9
Worthing	217.8
Southeast	212.2
England	184.6

Source: Ordnance Survey

To explore access to gardens (and their typical size) across small areas in West Sussex, refer to this accompanying [interactive map](#).

### Green Space Index

Fields in Trust (2025), a British charity, also used the OS Open Greenspace dataset to produce a Green Space Index (GSI) for areas across Great Britain.

The GSI measures the provision of publicly accessible local parks and green spaces in each area and consists of five indicators:

- Provision of park and green space in hectares
- Provision of green space per person in square metres
- A GSI score (which measures whether an area meets the minimum level of park and green space provision).

- Population not within ten-minute walking access of a park or green space
- Green space legally protected with Fields in Trust in hectares

This section of the briefing will focus on elements of the latest index published in November 2025, such as the provision of green space and GSI score for districts and boroughs across West Sussex. This data is based on published outputs from the Fields in Trust GSI headline findings page.

### Good to know

Each new release of the OS Open Greenspace dataset undergoes several changes which include revisions to improve the accuracy of the base data. Therefore, the GSI cannot be used to measure trends overtime as changes in results are likely to be as a result of improvements to the data rather than representing a loss or gain of green space within an area.

### Provision of green space per person

This indicator refers to the total amount of green space available per person (in square metres) for a given area. Field in Trust recommend that a minimum of 2.4ha of accessible green space for every 1,000 people (equating to 24 square metres of green space per person) is needed to support wellbeing and quality of life.

Field in Trust’s analysis focused on parks and green space available to the public for recreational use, which included bowling greens, other sports facilities, play spaces, playing fields, public parks or gardens and tennis courts (Fields in Trust, n.d.; Suffolk JSNA, 2025).

Data for this indicator is available for local authorities and parliamentary constituencies.

In West Sussex, both Chichester and Horsham had a higher provision of green space per person compared to the Field in Trust’s minimum standard (24 square metres), with 57.96 and 30.59 square metres per person respectively.

Chichester had a higher provision of green space per person compared to the average for Great Britain (57.96 sqm vs 30 sqm).

*Table 6 Fields in Trust provision of green space*

Area	Green space provision per person (m <sup>2</sup> )
Adur	12.48
Arun	15.30
Chichester	57.96
Crawley	27.20
Horsham	30.59
Mid Sussex	29.59
Worthing	11.39

Source. Fields in Trust (2025) Green Space Index.

## Green Space Index (GSI) score

Fields in Trust also produce a unique measure of green space provision, a 'GSI score' which analyses the provision of parks, play areas and outdoor sport facilities per 1,000 people in each area against the benchmarks provided in their 2015 [Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play publication](#) (Association of Play Industries, 2019).

This guidance recommends a minimum of approximately 2.4 hectares of accessible green space per 1,000 people with 1.6 hectares of outdoor sport space and 0.8 of children's playing space. This standard equates to 24 square metres per person (Fields in Trust, 2024). A GSI score of 1 indicates this minimum standard of green space provision has been met.

According to the latest index (2025), Chichester was the only district and borough within West Sussex which met the minimum standard of green space provision. By meeting this standard, it highlights that this district is comparatively well-equipped with sports and play facilities in comparison to other areas (Fields in Trust, n.d.).

## Access to Natural Spaces

As mentioned in [What are the current accessibility guidelines?](#), Natural England launched a Green Infrastructure Framework in 2023 with the aim of supporting local authorities, developers and communities to plan, design and improve their green spaces and natural features. Alongside their accessibility standards, the framework includes a 'Nature Close to Home' tool which aims to understand the amount of public accessible nature rich spaces there are across local authorities (Natural England, 2021).

For this analysis, 'nature rich spaces' were defined as the following:

- Spaces which have been assigned a 'naturalness rank' of 1 (close to natural as possible) or 2 (relatively limited impact from human activities) by Natural England
- Spaces greater than 0.5 hectares **Error! Bookmark not defined.** in size (Defra, 2025).

## How many people live near 'nature rich' areas?

Natural England focused on two target groups, children and young people under 15 and older people aged 65 and estimated the percentage who lived within a five-minute walk (300m buffer) from a nature rich space (see Table 5).

Across West Sussex, the percentage of children and young people (under 15) within a five-minute walk from green space varied from 11.2% (Arun) to 24.4% (Crawley). The percentage of older people within a five-minute walk from green space varied from 12.5% (Horsham) to 26.4% (Adur).

*Table 7 Access to natural spaces*

Area	Children	Older people (65+) covered by the
	(15 and under) covered by the 300m buffer	300m buffer
Adur	24.1%	26.4%
Arun	11.2%	12.9%
Chichester	19.2%	20.5%
Crawley	24.4%	25.6%

Horsham	12.5%	12.5%
Mid Sussex	19.5%	19.5%
Worthing	20.3%	19.9%

Source. Natural England.

## Green Flag Award

Alongside the size, distance and capacity of greenspace, Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards also provide recommendations on the quality of spaces.

These recommendations are based on the Green Flag Award criteria for high quality parks and green spaces. This award is managed by Keep Britain Tidy on behalf of the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (Grace et al, 2024; Historic England, 2025).

Any freely accessible park or green space can apply for a Green Flag Award if it is easily identifiable or has a clear map of the space. Applicants are judged against 27 different criteria which are divided into eight sections (Green Flag Award, 2023). These sections include ensuring spaces are welcoming, healthy and safe to use, and well maintained and clean, amongst other criteria (Green Flag Award, 2016).

In 2025, 30 parks across West Sussex were awarded a Green Flag Award (see Table 7).

Following the award, accredited parks or green spaces will have an alternating mystery shop or in-person assessment each year. For further information on the judging process, [refer to this Green Flag Award website](#).

Table 8 List of Green Flag awards

Area	Parks
Adur	Buckingham Park, Lancing Manor Park, Lancing Ring, and Shoreham Beach
Arun	Arundel Cemetery, Brookfield Park, Hotham Park, Jubilee Gardens, Marina Gardens, Marine Park Gardens, Mewsbrook Park, Norfolk Gardens, Old Rectory Gardens
Crawley	Crawters Brook the Peoples Park, Goffs Park, Mill Pond, The Memorial Gardens, Tilgate Park, Worth Park
Chichester	Buchan Country Park
Horsham	Horsham Park
Mid Sussex	Beech Hurst Gardens, East Court and Ashplats Wood, St Johns Park, Victoria Park
Worthing	Beach House Park, Denton Gardens, Field Place, Highdown Gardens, Marine Gardens

Source. Green Flag Award Winners 2025

## Discussion

This briefing provides an updated summary of access to (and provision of) different types of green spaces across West Sussex, drawing on a range of data from DEFRA, OS and Natural England.

This briefing looked at access to green space in 2024, private and public green space during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020) and provision of green space per person, based on Field in Trust's latest Green Space Index in 2025.

Whilst this data provides useful insights into the provision of green space across the county, there are caveats which need to be acknowledged when interpreting this analysis. For example, as mentioned in the introduction, there are varying definitions and measures of 'green space' used by different organisations, and this can impact our ability to compare the provision of green space in West Sussex with other areas (and overtime).

This lack of standardised definition has been recognised in the 'Green Spaces Bill', which is currently being reviewed by the Houses of Commons and aims to define the term 'green space' to include urban parks, neighbourhood areas and significantly natural landscapes (UK Parliament, 2025). This bill is currently undergoing its second reading, as of May 2026.

In addition, the underlying processes involved in creating measures of green space (e.g., access to and provision of) involve a significant amount of geospatial work (e.g., calculating walking routes, creating buffer zones) which potentially affects the how the measures are subsequently reproduced and updated.

Further information on additional data sources relating to green space not covered in this briefing are provided in [Appendix C](#).

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## Appendix A

This briefing provided an overview of the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Green Space (LGS), introduced by the framework. The LGS helps local communities protect green areas of particular importance which enables them, in particular circumstances, to identify and protect areas that are of value to them through local and neighbourhood plans.

A local plan is a statutory document which sets out detailed policies and proposals for the use and development of land in an area. This is drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community, under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Each planning application submitted to a local planning authority is assessed to see whether it fits in with the Local Plan and its supporting guidance.

A neighbourhood plan is an optional document prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Once adopted, a neighbourhood plan sits alongside the local plan and forms part of a local planning authority's development plan.

For further information on local and neighbourhood plans, read the following resources:

- [The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds \(RSPB\) Your local plan: what is it and when can you get involved?](#)
- [House of Commons Library \(2025\) Influencing the planning process \(England\)](#)

## Appendix B

### *Accessible Greenspace Standards*

Category	Actual walking distance	Name	Accessible natural greenspace	Minimum size criteria	Approximate walking/cycling time
Small greenspace – doorstep green space	200m	Doorstep greenspace	N	0.5 hectares	Less than 5 minutes
Small greenspace – local green space	300m	Local natural greenspace	Y	2 hectares	5 minutes
Medium sized greenspace within 1km	1km	Neighbourhood natural greenspace	Y	10 hectares	15 minutes
Medium large greenspace within 2km	2km	Wider neighbourhood natural greenspace	Y	20 hectares	35 minutes
Large greenspace within 5km of home	5km	District natural greenspace	Y	100 hectares	15-20 minutes cycling from home
Very large greenspace within 10km from home	10km	Sub-regional natural greenspace	Y	500 hectares	30-40 minutes cycling from home

## Appendix C

### *Additional Data Sources*

DEFRA has an interactive map which provides geographic information on the natural environment in England. Link here: [Magic Map Application](#)

Natural England have developed a 'green infrastructure map' which displays all the publicly available datasets that have been used to develop the Green Infrastructure Standards at a national level. Link here: [Green Infrastructure Map](#)

