

Age Friendly Leeds

Age Friendly Cities checklist – Outdoor spaces and buildings Parks and Countryside, July 2014

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Public areas are clean and pleasant

As stated in our Parks and Green Spaces Strategy, we aim for all our green spaces to be clean and pleasant.

We sometimes struggle to keep up with litter picking on every single site (we have hundreds of green spaces including parks, nature areas, woodlands, public rights of way, cemeteries, allotments etc) due to limited staff resource but we prioritise the most well-used sites when allocating staff resource so visitors are affected as little as possible by any issues that arise.

We are pleased to say that our Residents' Surveys show high public satisfaction when scoring our parks for 'Design and Appearance' and 'Cleanliness and Maintenance'. Levels of satisfaction are slightly higher among respondents over 60.

The survey was mailed out to 30,000 homes in Leeds. 3738 were returned of which 1040 were over 60. For these respondents over 60, the results were as follows:

From 2009 Parks Survey: User Satisfaction by age (scores out of 10)

Question	Age group	
	60-74	75+
Design and appearance	8.4	8.4
Cleanliness and maintenance	7.9	8.1
How easy is it for you to get around	8.7	8.5
The range of visitor facilities	6.7	6.8
The standard and maintenance of the trees, the flowers and flower beds, shrubs and grass areas	8.3	8.4
The care and protection of nature and the wildlife that lives in the park or open space, the insects, birds, and animals etc	8	8
The facilities and / or services that are provided for children and their parents	6.9	7.3
The sports facilities	6.4	7
Overall impression of the park or open space	8	8.1

Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well-maintained and safe.

Parks and green spaces are a key factor in making Leeds an attractive place to live, visit and work for people of all ages. They provide places for relaxation and escape, for recreation and exercise, as well as help to build a sense of community. Leeds City Council has one of the largest fully inclusive local

authority Parks and Countryside services, managing almost 4,000 hectares of parks and green space. This includes 7 major parks, 62 community parks, 95 recreation grounds, and 155 hectares of local green space, which include 500 sports facilities such as football pitches, bowling greens and golf courses, and which play host to 600 events annually. There are also 97 council managed allotment sites, 819km of public rights of way, and 156 nature conservation sites, as well as 24 cemeteries and 3 crematoria.

Most of the green spaces listed have plenty of benches and seating is always something we consider when external funding allows for new developments on our sites.

We operate a parks patrol system whereby anyone who is experiencing safety issues on site can call parks patrol who will respond as soon as possible, the contact number of the Parks and Countryside switchboard is provided at all sites with signage.

Safety is also considered when planning and maintaining sites, for example, we endeavour to keep site lines along popular paths open so users can see what's coming up and who else is using an area they are about to enter.

Pavements are well-maintained, free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians

An issue for Highways mainly.

Regarding paths in green spaces, again, it is our aim to get have all our paths well-maintained but financial issues mean this isn't realistic for all our sites and paths, however, they are all kept free of obstructions and reserved for pedestrians. Some specific paths in parks do allow cycling but these are either segregated by markings on the path or on very wide paths.

When we receive external funding (which happens fairly often, especially through developers' contributions) to improve green spaces, we usually invest in improving access such as paths.

Customer satisfaction when asked 'How easy is it for you to get around?' was very high, with an average score of 8.6 out of 10 for both the general population and the over 60s.

Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as separate queues or service counters for older people.

Not particularly relevant but we don't do this in our cafes or visitor attractions like Tropical World and Home Farm – there's not the demand from older people.

Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating and toilets, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.

Our public buildings (cafes and visitor attractions) are generally DDA compliant with the exception of Home Farm because the area is listed and the cobbles are part of this listed area.

Public toilets outdoors and indoors are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained and accessible.

We have public toilets (including disabled toilets) in our major parks – Middleton, Roundhay, Lotherton, Temple Newsam, Pudsey Park, Otley Chevin and Golden Acre Park.

Social participation

Good information about activities and events is provided, including details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options for older people

Our Out and About leaflets (that cover events, activities and news) are available around the city from libraries and museums and are also mailed to Neighbourhood Networks when they come out.

The Out and About leaflet describes accessibility of, and to, our major parks.

Civic participations and employment

A range of flexible options for older volunteers is available, with training, recognition, guidance and a compensation for personal costs.

Over one thousand people volunteer with the Parks and Countryside Service annually through Friends of, In Bloom groups, corporate volunteering and work placements. Many of our volunteers are retired and we have a large range of volunteer opportunities to suit people of all ages (ranging from office work to gardening).

At Roundhay Park, we are in the process of setting up a gardening group with Adult Social Care for dementia patients (it's due to start in July) and we are keen to set up other such schemes elsewhere if successful (similar schemes with other specific groups such as youth offending service are working well).

Training and guidance is provided to all volunteers but we do not have the financial resources to reimburse financial costs to the volunteers.