

Quantity and Accessibility in Parks and Open Spaces

National quantitative standards for open space follow the Fields in Trust guidance as set out in their document *Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play, Beyond the Six Acre Standard: England*.¹ This provides a **quantity guideline** for several typologies, provided as hectares per 1000 population, together with an **accessibility guideline**, being the walking distance to a type of open space, expressed in walking distance, in metres, from dwellings.

The 2021 census data has been used for the purposes of the calculations below.

Amenity Greenspace: Quantity and Accessibility

The Fields in Trust guidelines state that 0.6 hectares of amenity greenspace should be provided per 1000 population. Applying this to Portsmouth leaves a deficit of amenity greenspace of 43.67 hectares.

Fields in Trust Standard	Portsmouth population 2021	Requirement for Amenity Greenspace	Current supply	Deficit
0.6 ha / 1000	208,100	124.86	81.19	43.67

The shortfall is likely to increase based on population projections and given the density of the city's population. Due to the city's geography, it is unlikely that amenity greenspace quantity will be significantly increased. Changes to usage may only be affected by qualitative improvements.

The Fields in Trust guidelines for **accessibility** are 480 metres of walking distance to amenity greenspace (6 minute walk). The catchment area for amenity greenspace in the 2018 assessment shows shortfall in Cosham, the city centre north of Fratton and the central south. Where shortfall exists, any new development must provide amenity greenspace and consideration should be given to the transport network to provide for pedestrian and bicycle routes to connect urban areas to open spaces by defining routes and providing signage.

The 2018 assessment included suggestions for the following qualitative improvements:

1	Where appropriate, include welcoming and informative signage, including heritage and history information
2	Undertake planting to enhance biodiversity and provide variety to landscape
3	Provision of additional amenity greenspace as and when land is available in Cosham, city centre north of Fratton and central south.

¹ <https://www.fieldsintrust.org/Upload/file/guidance/Guidance-for-Outdoor-Sport-and-Play-England.pdf>

Public Parks and Gardens: Quantity and Accessibility

The Fields in Trust guidelines state that 0.8 hectares of public parks and gardens should be provided per 1000 population. Applying this to Portsmouth leaves a deficit of 28.84 hectares.

Fields in Trust Standard	Portsmouth population 2021	Requirement for Parks and Gardens	Current supply	Deficit
0.8 ha/1000	208,100	166.48	137.64	28.84

The shortfall is likely to increase based on population projections and given the density of the city's population. Due to the city's geography, it is unlikely that the quantity of public parks and gardens will be significantly increased. Changes to usage may only be affected by qualitative improvements.

The Fields in Trust guidelines for **accessibility** are 710 metres of walking distance to public parks and gardens (10 minute walk). The catchment area for public parks and gardens in the 2018 assessment shows the majority of the city's population falls within the catchment area. The area that falls outside catchment is on the eastern boundary of the city, however this area is well served by natural and semi natural green space.

Due to the city's geography it is unlikely that further land will be found for new public parks and gardens. It is possible to improve quality where it is not possible to improve quantity, where funding is available to do so. For example, National Lottery Heritage Funding currently being used to make improvements to Victoria Park and the confirmation in late 2021 that Levelling Up Funding has been awarded for the development of Hilsea Linear Park.

The 2018 assessment also included the following suggestions for qualitative improvements

1	Extension of all weather footpaths for walking and cycling at key public parks.
2	Improve signage for entrance welcome at key public parks
3	Increase tree planting in key public parks

Natural and Semi Natural greenspace: Quantity and Accessibility

The Fields in Trust guidelines state that 1.8 hectares of natural and semi-natural greenspace should be provided per 1000 population. Applying this to Portsmouth leaves a deficit of 29.64.

Fields in Trust standard	Portsmouth population 2021	Requirement for Natural & Semi-Natural green space	Current supply	Deficit
1.8/1000	208,100	374.58	344.94	29.64

As a densely populated city and limited by its geography, it is unlikely that the shortfall can be addressed in terms of quantity. One way to address this is to increase wildflower planting in other types of space, to increase biodiversity.

The Fields in Trust guidelines for **accessibility** are 720 metres of walking distance to natural and semi-natural spaces (10 minute walk). The catchment area for natural and semi-natural space in the 2018 assessment shows that accessibility is good as a very high proportion of the city lives within this distance of woodland, common, seafront or other natural space.

Appendix 5.6 - Quantity and Accessibility

Whilst there is little scope to address the deficit, improvements can be made by softening areas of other types of open space by increasing tree planting and wildflower meadow planting to provide shade and reduce surface water run off.

The 2018 assessment also included the following suggestions for quality improvements

1	Improve entrances at natural and semi natural spaces - improved signage and visibility of entrances
2	Improve interpretation offer for natural history and local heritage connections
3	Improve Rights of Way and footpath signage for access

Play areas and provision for children and young people: Quantity and Accessibility

The Fields in Trust guidelines state that 0.25 hectares of equipped designated areas are required for children and young people, per 1000 people. Applying this to Portsmouth leaves a deficit of 47.88.

Fields in Trust standard	Portsmouth population 2021	Requirement for Children and Young People	Current supply	Deficit
0.25/1000	208,100	52.03	4.15	47.88

Scope to address the deficit can be addressed by way of provision for new development. Developer contributions can also be used to create new or improved facilities in current open spaces.

The Fields in Trust guidelines for **accessibility** for children and young people depends on the type of equipped provision:

Local Areas for Play (LAPs) for very young children	100 metres
Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) for children who can play independently	400 metres
Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs) for older children	1000 metres

The catchment area in the 2018 assessment for all types of provision for children and young people shows that accessibility is located mostly in the south-west of the city with some further provision mostly off-island to the north-west. It is important therefore that developer contributions are used for new facilities in existing spaces where possible. It should also be considered that children and young people may use other types of open space for recreation, such as amenity green space and public parks.

Appendix 5.6 - Quantity and Accessibility

The 2018 assessment includes the following suggestions for provision for children and young people:

1	More adventurous equipment for older children and young people
2	Improved landscaping to increase the attraction of the play area
3	Use of 'positive' signage
4	Use of equipment to improve access for disabled or less abled bodied children at larger sites
5	Introduction of new play facilities in other open spaces such as amenity green spaces and public parks.

Allotments: Quantity and Accessibility

Fields in Trust does not incorporate guidelines for allotments. The standard is instead taken from the 1969 Thorpe Report (Departmental Committee of Inquiry into Allotments). This provides a standard of 0.2 hectares of designated allotment land per 1000 population. Applying this to Portsmouth leaves a deficit of 13.76.

Thorpe Report standard	Portsmouth population 2021	Requirement for allotments	Current supply	Deficit
0.2/1000	208,100	41.62	27.86	13.76

There are no accessibility standards for allotments. The 2018 assessment suggests an accessibility standard of 400 metres (5 minute walk) based on Greater London Authority guidelines. This indicates accessibility across the city, with exception to the south-west and north-east corner. Whilst the deficit must be considered, alternative provision such as community gardening is perhaps an alternative to allotments as this provides for the burden of cultivation to be shared. Community gardening can also be shared more broadly as an outdoor recreation and leisure activity and increase social cohesion. The Victoria Park project includes plans for community gardening activity.

The 2018 assessment also includes the following suggestions for improving allotments provision

1	Improve entrances and include informative and welcoming signage
2	Provision of community growing or allotments in south-west and north-east of city.

Cemeteries and church grounds: Quantity and Accessibility

There are no quantitative standards for cemeteries, as any standard would need to differentiate between the primary purpose of cemeteries and their secondary purpose as an outdoor space for informal leisure, wildlife habitat and place for quiet contemplation. Cemeteries and church grounds provide 41.09 hectares of open space provision to the city.

There are no accessibility standards for cemeteries. The 2018 assessment suggests an accessibility standard of 400 metres, based on Greater London Authority guidelines for cemeteries of local significance.

The 2018 assessment illustrates the catchment area for cemeteries and church grounds. Whilst there is a fixed supply of this typology, some improvements could be made

1	Use of interpretative signage to illustrate the heritage value and biodiversity value of these sites
2	Increase wildflower planting to enhance biodiversity and enjoyment for visitors

Outdoor sports grounds: Quantity and Accessibility

There are no quantitative or accessibility standards for outdoor sports grounds, due to their primary use for formal sports activity. Outdoor sports grounds provide 141.79 hectares of open space provision to the city.

The 2018 assessment makes the following suggestions for this typology:

1	Improved entrances to encourage informal use of outdoor sports grounds, in consideration of the deficits of other open space typologies in the city
2	Tree and wildflower planting on the perimeter of outdoor sports grounds
3	Installation of appropriate seating to encourage informal use.