

The Place Standard tool

A Version for Young People

This guide is for helping anyone who wish to hold a conversation or do an assessment with young people about how good a place is: What works for them? What doesn't? How good is it now? What could change to make it better?

Use this guide to help you, as a facilitator, to get the best out of your discussion / workshop when using the Place Standard tool. It takes you through the process and gives you ideas and tips that you can use when working with individuals or in a group setting to capture the information.

How good is my place?

The Place Standard tool provides a simple framework to structure a conversation about a place. It allows you to think about the physical and social aspects of a place, and the important relationship between them. It has **14 themes**, each with a **heading question**, **extra questions** and **further prompts** to help you have a conversation, make an assessment and identify issues for improvement.

Why is place important?

Places where we live and spend our time directly affects our lives. The quality of places and the opportunities we have access to can affect our health and wellbeing and our environment.

Understanding what is good about our places now, and what could be better, can help us make good decisions on what needs change, how best to change them and allow us to target resources where they are needed most.

This will help make the places better for us to live, work and play in and help to take care of nature and the environment, now and for the future.

People of all ages and backgrounds have a relationship with where they live and a right to be included in those places – to influence how the places are and how to improve.

Who is the Place Standard for?

The tool is for everyone to use, including communities and professionals, and can be used by individuals or in a group setting. It can be used for parts of cities, whole towns or neighbourhoods, and in rural or island areas.

The different versions of the Place Standard tool help everyone work together using a common framework.

This Young People's Version complements the core Place Standard tool and is recommended for young people aged around 12 up to the age of 25.

What is the purpose of the tool?

The Place Standard is a way to assess the quality of places that are well established, undergoing change, or still being planned. The tool helps to identify the good and not so good aspects of the place and where improvements are needed.

The 14 themes in the tool have been carefully selected based on research and evidence for their combined influence on our health and wellbeing.

The same themes run across all versions of the Place Standard tool. In this Young People's Version, the theme names have been adapted through participatory action research to resonate better with younger people.

The Young People's Version is adapted to help to improve understanding of a place through talking about what's important to them in their everyday lives, by asking themselves:

1. **Where I go and what I do (quality of place)**
2. **How I get from one place to another (movement)**
3. **How I care and how I feel (self-efficacy and stewardship)**
4. **What I need to live well (community context)**

Thinking about and discussing with friends and trusted adults if these important things:

- **are good now**
- **how they could be made better for the future**

So, young people can develop, communicate and share their views about their places.

Based on lived experience and local knowledge, the scoring and written information produced through the use of the tool are collected on a common framework that help to make sense for everyone taking part. This includes those living in the area being assessed and the professionals who might be interpreting the information.

The output can help make better, more informed decisions and allow resources to be targeted where they are needed most. This approach can deliver better results over the long term.

Getting started

Record the following information:

Area of assessment
Date of assessment
Postcode [first 5 letters]

Age:
12-15
16-17
18-21
22-25

With parents or carer/s? Yes/No

Gender:
Male
Female
Non-binary
Other

This information will only be used by organisers of your Place Standard assessment to support their analysis of the data by age, gender and postcode.

If you are completing the Place Standard tool as a group, you may want to collect the information for each individual.

The conversation – structure it

Through experience, the following structure based on a **“route of enquiry”** method, is suggested to enable a more natural flow when having the Place Standard conversations with young people. This is recommended as good practice but facilitators can adapt to suit what work best for the group.

In this structure, the conversations begin with discussing with young people around “what’s important to our lives here in <place name>...”

The 14 Place Standard themes are asked under 4 broader questions, which are organised into 4 parts in the tool:

Part 1: Where I go and what I do (quality of place)
Part 2: How I get from one place to another (movement)
Part 3: How I feel and how I care (self-efficacy and stewardship)
Part 4: What I need to live well (community context)

The ordering of the 4 broader questions represents the way young people are most likely to think about place.

Each of them seeks to address a set of Place Standard themes as presented in the table below.

Route of Enquiry:			
Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
Where I go and what I do (quality of place)	How I get from one place to another (movement)	How I feel and how I care (self-efficacy and stewardship)	What I need to live well (community context)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play, hang out, games and hobbies • Streets, squares and buildings • Nature – parks, woods, hills, beaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking, wheeling and cycling • Buses, trains, trams, boats • Traffic and parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling safe • Feeling proud and part of a place • Having our say and being listened to • Fixed, clean and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools, libraries, shops and other services • Jobs and places to work • Homes, friends and neighbours • Meeting and talking with people

The Place Standard themes under each part can be discussed in any order the young people / groups prefer. A discussion about which themes within each set are most important for the group may help to inform the order they are discussed.

Tips:

- ‘Where I go and what I do’, may be the most effective starting point for groups, particularly those of a younger age, and helped build shared context for the themes.
- In discussing themes, by following this “route of enquiry”, participants start with talking about what comes most naturally to them, and then more specific themes and ideas can cascade from these broader conversations.
- Bearing in mind, the emerging priorities for action may span multiple themes.

The conversation – start it

Themes – there are 14 of these

Play, hang out, games and hobbies

Play, hanging out, games and hobbies keep us active, happy, connected and help improve our health and wellbeing. Places with a range of indoor and outdoor spaces and events encourage us to enjoy leisure, culture and sports.

QUESTION

Heading questions – there are 14 of these

What are the spaces for play, recreation, sport and hanging out like in and around my place?

Extra questions

You might want to think about:

- What are they like, and are there enough?
- Are some places better to play and hang out in than others?
- Why do you like these places? What stops you from using the other spaces/places?
- Are there things missing to do in your place?
- Do people ever make the wrong assumptions about you when you're out and about?
- What else is important about play, hanging out, games and hobbies in your place?

Further prompts

clean & safe wifi changing facility seating
 choice & types of space quiet places grass to sit on
 signage lighting ballgames skate park
 sports field shelter hanging out fun games

Taking each Place Standard **theme** in turn, introduce the theme and discuss the **heading question**.

Use the Place Standard Theme sheets to guide the discussion of each theme and make sure the score is with reference to the heading question of the theme. **Extra questions** and **further prompts** are provided to help.

Some general principles:

- ✓ think about the place now and in the future – what could change and what impact would that have on your place?
- ✓ think about the place under different conditions, for example time of day, day of the week, the different seasons or weather conditions (sunny, wet, dry, icy, snowy, windy, other).
- ✓ think about the place from own perspective but also from the point of view of others: mum/dad, grandparents, brother/sister, friends and neighbours and others who may be different, for example older/younger, from different backgrounds or with a disability.
- ✓ think about what / how it could be made better and why.

The conversation – capture it

As the conversation progresses, capture the key points from your discussion, record agreement and any differences.

For each theme you should also record:

- ✓ **What is good now?**
- ✓ **How could we make it better in the future?**

Recording may be done by participants themselves, facilitators, or a combination of the two – do what feels more appropriate for your group.








If participants are recording their views through drawing, photography, videos, audio clips or other media, make sure you collect these (with permission) and consider with the young people how to interpret these and what to use them for.

It is helpful to remember:

- **DO** need to answer all of the heading questions for all the themes – capture the score and key points.
- **DO NOT** need to answer every ‘think about’ question – these are prompts that may or may not be appropriate in your place.
- **MAY** want to think about other things that are not included but are important in your place and add your own questions.
- If a young person does not think they know enough to score or does not want to give a score to a theme, they should never be compelled to do so.

The scoring

Similar to the core Place Standard tool, the Young People’s Version uses a 1 to 7 scoring system, where 1 means there is a lot of room for improvement and 7 means there is very little or no improvement required.

1 - Terrible Lots of improvement needed!	
2 - Bad Quite a lot of improvement needed!	
3 - Almost OK Improvement needed!	
4 - OK It’s neither good nor bad...	
5 - Better than OK It’s more good than bad!	
6 - Good It’s good but not quite excellent!	
7 - Excellent We love it!	

Discuss and agree a score for the theme with reference to the heading question of that theme.

Tips:

- If the group is having trouble deciding on a score, see if you can agree on an 'in-between' score.
- The group may want to give different scores for one theme, such as for walking and then for cycling - you can record in notes, then agree a combined score.
- If you are unable to score some themes individually, see if there is strong overlap between themes in the minds of the group, discuss them as a whole and determine if each theme should receive the same or different scores.

Remember: If a young person does not think they know enough to score or does not want to give a score to a theme, they should never be compelled to do so.

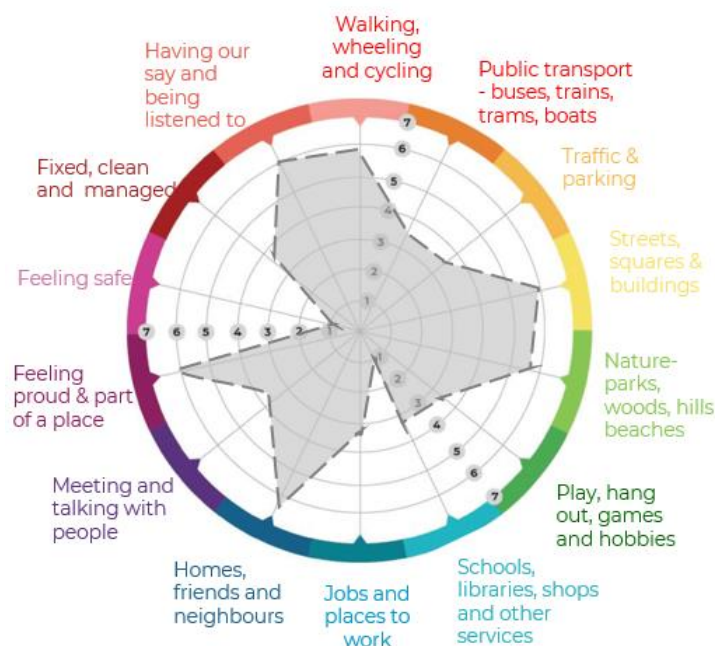
Drawing the Place Standard shape

Once decided on a score for a theme, this can be marked on the Place Standard wheel.

Once you have marked all of the scores, you can join the dots to draw the Place Standard shape.

If young people complete individual Place Standard shapes, they can then compare shapes with anyone else who have also completed the wheel.

Here's an example of how the scores make a shape on the Place Standard wheel.



Deciding on Top Things for Change

Engage the young people in an overall group discussion and see if you can determine with the young people what the priorities for action are.

Think about all the questions, themes and everything that has been talked about / recorded, discuss what are the things / themes that are very important, important and less important to the young people.

Observe if the very important things / themes have scored high / low and discuss what things / themes need to change most in the place. For example:

- Things / Themes that are very important and scored 1 are likely to be high priorities
- Things / Themes that are less important and scored 7 are likely to be low priorities

Encourage the young people to use their imagination and get creative about making the place better.

Once the priorities are agreed, record them. The young people can write them down, draw pictures, add photos, build a model, make a tiktok video, an audio recording – or by any other innovative means to illustrate their ideas and communicate their views.

What happens next?

When you have agreed on the top things for change in the place you have assessed, you can use the output to get started on developing actions.

A Place Standard assessment is part of a bigger process of improving a place, *not the end*. When considering what you might do afterwards, you can think about opportunities to develop and build on the conversations and relationships that have started from using the tool. The results might help to develop a local place plan – contributing to the developing the plan from young people's perspective.

The tool also enables you to assess and re-assess a place in a consistent way. This helps you to see if improvements have been made over time, as well as to identify any new areas for improvement.

A key attribute of the Young People's Version is its direct comparability with outputs produced by adults and other population groups using the core Place Standard tool.

The Place Standard shape can be overlaid with the ones produced from parallel conversations involving adults and different population groups.

This provides a very quick and powerful visual comparison showing where the views of different population groups within a place either aligns or varies, which can help better decision making on actions and resource planning in the long term.