

Place Standard Tool

How Good is Our Place?

Guidance

Updated 2022



This guidance is designed to help you plan, organise and carry out an assessment using the Place Standard tool. It is for individuals who are new to the Place Standard as well as those familiar with the tool.

Place Standard Guidance – Contents

- Place Standard Guidance – Contents1
- 1. Quick guide.....2
- 2. Why do we need a Place Standard tool? 6
- 3. Using the Place Standard tool..... 7
- 4. Organising your assessment 10
- 5. How to manage a workshop..... 20
- Appendix 1: How to include a walk-about.....27
- Appendix 2: Suggested approach for a half-day workshop..... 28

1. Quick guide

This quick guide provides an introduction to the Place Standard tool, an overview of its main stages, and some key principles to think about while carrying out your assessment. These are then explained in more detail in the rest of the guide.

What is the purpose of the tool?

The Place Standard is a simple tool to structure a conversation about a place. It helps people to think about both the physical and social aspects of places, and the important relationship between them.

The tool is designed to:

- Assess the quality of new and existing places to identify where improvements may be needed.
- Bring communities and the public, sector and third sectors together to deliver high quality places.
- Ensure people's physical and social environments support good health and wellbeing.
- Promote consistency so everyone in Scotland has an equal chance of living in a good quality place.

The Place Standard tool can help you to find out what people think and feel about their place and to identify the strengths of an area. It can also highlight issues that might impact on people's health and wellbeing. The assessment can also be repeated in the future to allow comparison over time and identify any improvements.

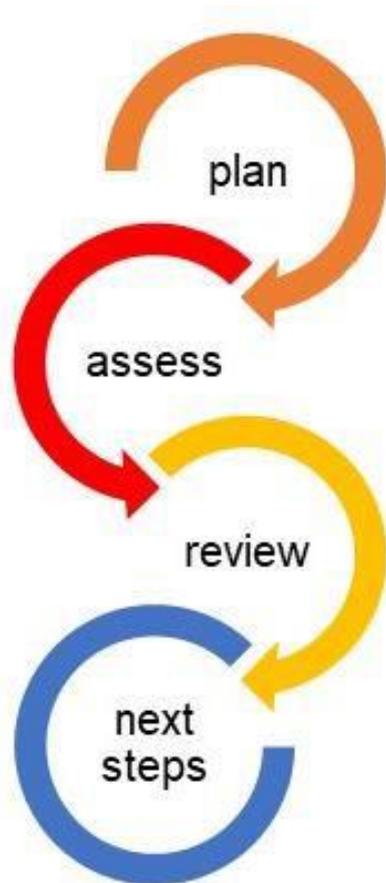
Carrying out an assessment

The Place Standard tool can be completed on paper or online, through the [Place Standard](#) website.

It can be used in many ways including surveys of individuals, focus groups or as part of larger events such as community-led design (also known as charrettes). Or you can get creative and devise your own method such as the [giant wheel](#) used for on-street engagement in Leith. You can even complete it virtually as a group using a digital meeting tool such as Zoom.

The Four Stages of a Place Standard Assessment

There are four main stages of a Place Standard assessment to think about:



Plan: Think about the reason for your assessment – what will it help to achieve; decide and record who is leading and everyone who will be involved; and agree the boundaries of the place. Go to the place and look around if this would help.

Assess: Consider and rate each of the main questions. Capture the reasons for the scores, including agreement and differences of opinion if you are working in a group. Plot the 14 scores on the compass diagram and join the dots.

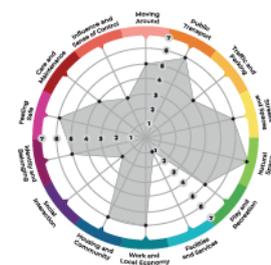
Review: Look at the results and think about the main issues for improvement in the place. If there have been several assessments combine and analyse findings before sharing the results with everyone involved.

Next steps: Consider the main issues for improvement and how to take action. Think about who should be involved and what resources are needed.

These four stages are explained in more detail in the Organising your assessment section on page 10.

If you are running a **group workshop session**, you will need one or more facilitators and scribes. There is useful advice in the How to manage a workshop section on page 20.

You might also want to arrange a **walk-about** of your place during your workshop – there is advice on how to go about this in Appendix 1 on page 27.



What are the core elements of the tool?

The Place Standard tool has 14 themes that look at the different elements of place – physical and social. For each theme there is a **headline question** and a series of 'think about' prompt questions.

The headline question must be answered for all themes and should form the basis of the score for that theme.

The prompt questions are provided to support the discussion – they will not all be relevant for all places. There is cross-over between some of the themes, but encouraging people to think about all of the elements will give an overall picture of the area.

You may find that for some places you may need to add other prompts to reflect unique local circumstances. Indeed, we have already prepared some additional prompts prepared to help you explore particular issues, such as air quality. Find out more on the [OurPlace website](#).

STREETS AND SPACES

Buildings, landmarks, greenery, views and natural landscape can help to create an attractive place that people enjoy being in. Distinctive streets and spaces can help people to find their way around, and greener streets and spaces are not just good for wellbeing but also for the environment and for biodiversity.

What are the buildings, streets and public spaces like in my place?

Here are some things to think about:

- What are streets and spaces like? (welcoming, distinctive, pleasant, accessible, fun, sheltered, shaded, places to rest, adaptable)
- Are there points of interest? (local landmarks, historic features, public squares, parks and gardens, trees)
- Is it easy to find my way around? (good surfaces, visual features, well signposted, direct and easy routes to follow)
- How accessible are spaces for everyone? (pavement width, crossing points, tactile surfaces, dropped kerbs)
- Are there any challenges? (flooding, derelict buildings, vacant land, pollution, litter, lighting, busy roads, pavement clutter, illegal parking)

Please rate the place on a scale from 1 to 7

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

What is good now?

How could we make it better in the future?

Please see page 25 if you wish to add further comment referencing the question

The scores that are gathered for each of the themes will quickly show where people have identified strengths and issues. However, you will find that the feedback gathered during the discussion – what is good now? - how could we make it better in the future? – is the most valuable output from the tool.

Following completion of each of the 14 themes, the '**Review**' stage encourages participants to review their responses and to identify what they think are the main issues for improvement in their place.

The '**Next steps**' stage asks participants to think about what **action could be taken to address what has been learned**. These last two stages are an **important step to complete the Place Standard** process. You can plan to do them as part of a single session or in follow-on engagement process.

You can access case studies which provide examples on how the Place Standard can be used – including where, when, how, who with, and why - here:

<https://www.ads.org.uk/resource/place-standard>

Key Principles

There are a number of key principles that are useful to consider while organising or carrying out your assessment.

- **Record key data on respondents** so you can analyse differences in points of view between groups of people. This will allow you to identify whether you have captured feedback from a broad range of people and to identify issues that different groups might have.
- **Define the place** that is being assessed clearly and make sure that everyone knows where they are assessing.
- Give people relevant information in advance so that they come prepared and have set aside enough time.
- Remember that the tool is a simple framework designed for use in a number of different settings, so be **flexible to suit local circumstances**.
- Mix the order around if some themes are more important than others – but make sure that you have enough time to cover all themes.
- The 14 themes have been carefully selected based on evidence about their combined influence on health and wellbeing, so try to answer all the main questions.
- Use the prompts that are most relevant to the place being assessed. Remember that not all may be relevant. Or you may want to add additional content for local circumstances. For instance, prompts about effects on your place from global health challenges or climate change or air quality. See www.ourplace.scot/about-place-standard/ for more information.
- There is a small element of duplication in content across some of the themes – this has been kept to a minimum but is necessary at some points to fully capture the relevant issues relating to each theme.
- If completing the assessment **online**, remind everyone to use your **Group ID** at the start so that their work can be saved as part of your group assessment.

2. Why do we need a Place Standard tool?

This section provides a background to the Place Standard tool. It explains why place is important and sets out the Scottish policy context.

Where we spend our time has an important effect on our lives. Improving the quality of places - and the opportunities we have access to - can support our health and wellbeing, tackle inequalities, and improve our environment.

Understanding what is good about a place now, and what could be better, can help us make good decisions and allow us to target resources where they are needed most. The climate emergency we are facing means it is also more important than ever for us to think about how we can make our places more sustainable, for both people and the environment.

The Place Standard tool can support the design and delivery of successful places, creating good-quality places where people want to live and where they can meet the majority of their daily needs locally. Its 14 themes have been carefully chosen based on evidence about their combined influence on our health and wellbeing.

Some of the evidence behind this is within:

[Scotland's Public Health Priorities](#)

[Place and Wellbeing: Integrating Land Use Planning](#)

[Inequality Briefing: Place and Communities](#)

[Evidence behind Place Standard tool and Place and Wellbeing Outcomes](#)

Policy context in Scotland

There are a number of key policy documents that provide more detailed context for a Place Standard assessment.

[Good Places, Better Health](#)

[Creating Places: A Policy Statement on Architecture and Place for Scotland](#)

[The National Planning Framework 4](#)

For more information, see the [Our Place](#) website

3. Using the Place Standard tool

This section outlines who the Place Standard tool is for, where and when it can be used. This will help to prepare and plan your assessment.

Who is the Place Standard tool for?

The tool is for everyone to use. It is for both communities and professionals. It enables everyone to work together over time using a common framework.

The table below provides some examples of how different groups might benefit from using the tool.

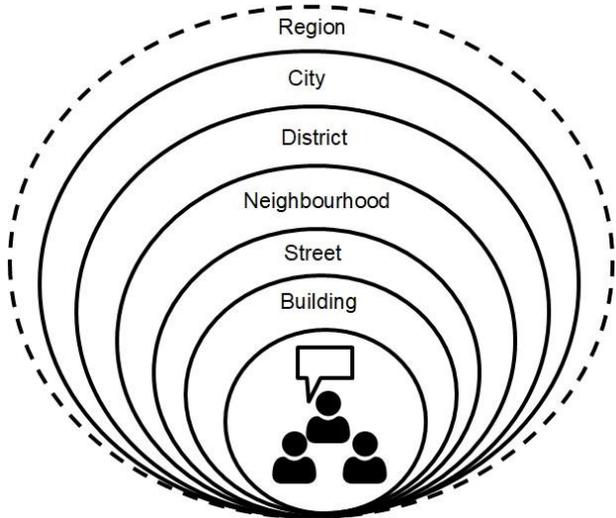
For	It provides	Benefits
Local residents	A template to assess your own neighbourhood and share your views.	Helps document views collectively in a recognised format.
Community groups	A framework to share views, develop local knowledge and build consensus on the main issues for improvement.	Build a stronger, better informed and more influential local voice.
Local Authorities (community or shared services)	A framework that provides a common language to bring services together, helping to focus discussion on a particular site, neighbourhood or place.	Provides a focus on place-based outcomes for communities, by bringing services together.
Public sector procurement agencies	A framework to assess options for siting public services, integrating new facilities in local areas, informing targeted investment, reducing procurement error or locating new housing.	Identify the best-value options for investment
Community planning partnerships	A framework to identify community needs. e.g. through workshops. These can be compared over time and between places with similar features.	Use the views of the community to guide decisions about investment. Repeated assessments can show if changes have been positive.

Planning authorities	A framework to identify community needs at early Development Plan stages. A framework to engage with people; inform site briefs, action plans and local policies; and support assessment of proposals during initial phases.	Improve the quality of development and ensure that planned growth is appropriate, helping to meet local needs and opportunities. See also Place Standard Design Version .
Developers	A framework to identify community needs and opportunities. Or to assess proposals in a consistent way that can work across different planning authorities.	Use the views of the community to inform development proposals, as evidence for decisions and to support conversations with planning authorities.
Designers	A framework that provides a comprehensive template to gather evidence to support specific planning applications and wider area masterplans.	Enables community engagement in a way that is recognised by planning authorities. See also Place Standard Design Version

Where can you use it?

The tool is flexible and is intended to be used by different people and organisations in a wide range and scale of places, and for different purposes. It can be used for parts of cities, whole towns or neighbourhoods, in urban, rural and island settings.

Defining the place is important. The geographical boundaries will not always define the place that is being assessed – think about how it is viewed locally and how one area connects or impacts on another. For example, a Place Standard assessment can be completed in a place where small villages or hamlets are grouped together, whether they share facilities or not, because they share a strong sense of identity.



In other cases, a part of a place might have a distinct local identity and might be best considered on its own. The most important thing is that the local people using the tool have a shared understanding of what is meant by the place being assessed.

When can you use it?

The Place Standard tool can be used at any time when people want to have a discussion about a place.

This might be in an existing place or community, or in a new place that is being developed. The tool is particularly helpful when used in the early stages of any conversation about a place, ensuring that the needs and preferences of local people are understood, and any potential opportunities are identified. The tool can be used to monitor and review change within an area through comparable analysis over time.

The table below shows some examples of the benefits of using the tool at different times.

Early stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify needs, assets and opportunities• Align priorities and investment• Empower communities, allowing their views to inform future action
During design and development stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Action planning• Inform or review proposals• Ensure community input to decision making
For continuous improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor changes and impact of investments• Community after-care and stewardship• Share learning

The Place Standard tool can also be used alongside other tools as part of an engagement process. See the [Ourplace toolbox](#) for some ideas.

You can access case studies providing examples on how the Place Standard can be used – including where, when, how, who with, and why – here <https://www.ads.org.uk/resource/place-standard>

4. Organising your assessment

This section sets out what is needed to prepare a Place Standard assessment, how it works, and what to do afterwards.

Plan

Planning for your Place Standard assessment is an essential first step to get the most out of the process.

Think about the reason for the assessment, and what it will help to achieve. Is it to find out what the main needs and assets are in a place, to inform the Local Plan or a development proposal, or is it for something else?

It can be helpful to do some research about the place before starting the assessment. This can help to set the physical boundaries of the area to be assessed, identify who should be involved and the best way to involve different groups of people.

It can also help to prepare background information and develop some additional 'think about' prompt questions to supplement and/or replace those that are already included in the tool, such as those in the [air quality lens](#).

Consider what resources are needed, and what is readily available. If there are group sessions, a facilitator will be important to lead the discussion and a scribe for each group can help to record the discussion.

A good facilitator will encourage discussion, keep everyone on topic, challenge assumptions, and ensure that everyone's views are heard and valued equally.



Here are some things to think about when planning:

- What will the assessment help to achieve?
- Is it the right tool to use for the stage you are at and the outcomes you are hoping to achieve?
- Will it be helpful to do some research into the local area – what information is available including any previous Place Standard assessments? Who can gather it? How can it be shared with people before the assessment starts?
- If the organiser is not a member of the local community, is it helpful to include local people in the planning and delivery, as a facilitator or participant in the workshop? And in analysing the feedback gathered through the assessment?
- Is it helpful to visit the place/ site before starting to plan?
- Who needs to be aware of and/or involved in the assessment? This will help you to decide on the best time, date and venue for any group sessions. This will help to ensure that everyone in the community can take part whatever their age, mobility, disability, sex, ethnic group, religious belief or sexuality.
- What are the options to engage other people in the assessment? This might include focus groups, workshops, public meetings, online meetings, an online survey and one-to- one interviews.
- If working in groups, is it helpful to have a walk-about during the assessment?
- Is there a need for additional resources or help from others to increase participation e.g. translation, audio/visual or mobility aids, childcare, etc.?
- How will the findings be shared with participants and others in the community – ensuring an approach that is open, honest, clear and transparent?
- What are the opportunities for people to engage in the process after the assessment has been completed?

Methods of engagement

There are a number of different ways to engage individuals and organisations in the assessment. These can include focus groups/ workshops, public meetings, online meetings (such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom), online surveys and one-to-one interviews or meetings. Several of these methods may be needed to reach everyone that needs to be involved.

The National Standards for Community Engagement

The Place Standard tool goes beyond typical engagement. It promotes and encourages discussions about how people think and feel.

In Scotland, this approach is complemented by the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#). These good practice principles are really useful to support and inform the process of community engagement and improve what happens as a result.

A walk about the area can help people to think about the strengths and opportunities. It can be a great way to spark ideas, discussion and interest in the assessment, and in helping people to think about 'what is good now' and 'how could we make it better in the future'. A walk about also allows people to share their different views and experiences of a place.

A walk can add an hour or more to the assessment, depending on the travel distances, size of the area, and mobility of the participants. If there isn't enough time to do this during the assessment, use maps and photographs of the place instead.

Further guidance on how to use the Place Standard tool in a focus group/ workshop setting, including a walk-about is included in Appendix 1 (page 27).

The [Place Standard Learning Resource](#) includes useful templates to support organisers through the planning stage within the Appendices:

- Project management template on page 46
- Engagement plan template on page 48.

Assess

Carrying out a Place Standard assessment is simple.

Using the 'Respondent details' page

Record details of the participants and any groups or organisations that are represented. If people are willing to share personal data (i.e. age, gender, postcode, etc.) this will help in the analysis of results from different perspectives.

See Section 4 above for help with planning your engagement to make sure that the community is included.

Using the 14 themed pages

For each theme there is a headline question and 'think about' prompt questions.

1. Consider and score each theme

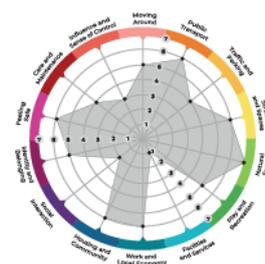
Starting with any theme, consider and rate each of the headline questions. It is important to consider all of the 14 themes. The suggested prompt questions are there to help – use as many as are helpful, amend or add new prompt questions to reflect local circumstances.

Give each headline question a score from one (meaning there is a lot of room for improvement) to seven (meaning no improvement is required). Note the reasons for each rating. If the assessment is conducted in a group setting agree a consensus score from the group but also record any differences in opinion.

The comments are important as they will help to build a picture of the main issues for improvement and how action needs to be taken. Comments can also inform the analysis of issues that might arise for different groups of people. Differences of opinion can be important – the comments can help to understand why different groups have scored the same place differently.

2. Plot the 14 scores on the compass diagram.

3. Join the dots to complete the compass diagram.



Record the scores and comments

Participants can use the space in the text boxes under each theme to record their views that reflect the place now and also what they think could be improved:

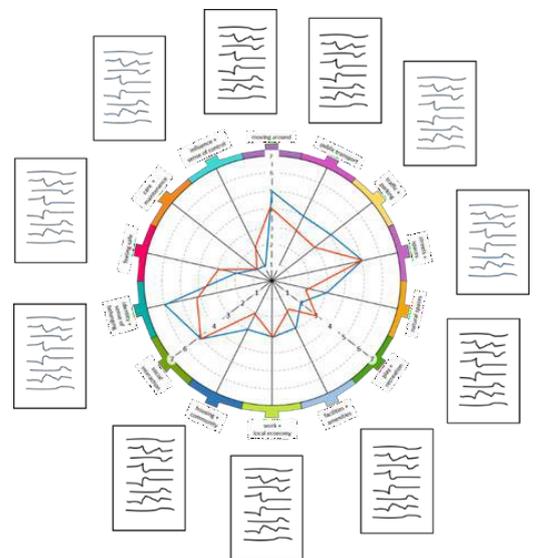
- What is good now?
- How could we make it better in the future?

Two boxes are provided to consider and record responses to these questions when completing the Place Standard tool using a printed copy or online – see right for how these look on the page.



This illustration (right) shows how the scores and comments can also be recorded on a **large print-out** of the compass diagram.

This might help to share key results or headline findings in a simple way that identifies the existing strengths of the place and where people think that improvements are needed for the future 'at a glance'. This single page can be a useful record of an individual response or used to collect comments from a workshop discussion. This then functions as an effective talking point for the 'review' part of the process.



Review

Using the 'Review' page

Review the assessment to identify the main issues for improvement.

It is important to identify and agree the main issues for improvement in your place from your assessment.

If the assessment has been conducted in a group setting, it may be useful to start a discussion on the findings while the feedback is still fresh in people's minds. Alternatively people may prefer to reflect on the discussion and reconvene at a later date to review the results.

If more than one group has undertaken the assessment, or if feedback has been gathered through online surveys or one-to-one interviews, the assessment organiser may wish to analyse all of the feedback and bring results together before sharing the findings. In this case, it may be helpful to arrange a joint review meeting at a later date to discuss the results of all of the Place Standard sessions together.

Whichever approach is adopted, it is important that the results are brought together in a way that makes sense for the assessment or to the participants. It can be useful to present an overall view of all the results, but also present results for different groups e.g. by age or sub-area. This can be useful to build an understanding of issues that different groups of people in the same place might have.

When reviewing the assessment it is important to consider both the scores (including the range) and the comments that have been provided. See below for help with presentation and interpretation.

Discussing the scores and comments will help identify the main issues for improvement. The 'Review' section of the Place Standard tool provides an explanation and further 'think about' points to help with this.



Review

It is important to identify and agree the main issues for improvement in your place from your assessment. It may be useful to start thinking about this while it is still fresh in your mind, or you may prefer to come back at a later date to complete on your own or as part of a group. If there have been several Place Standard assessments the organiser may wish to analyse all of the feedback and bring results together before sharing the findings.

- **Here are some things to think about when reviewing your assessment:**
 - Are all of the 14 themes of equal importance or do you think some have a higher priority?
 - Which themes scored well and why? Thinking about this might help you to identify opportunities for improvements in other themes.
 - Have you considered issues that may be raised by other people in different groups such as people with specific needs or barriers?
 - Have you thought about how your place can both help to combat climate change and adapt to a changing climate?
 - Is your place well prepared to adapt to a global health challenge?
 - Can people access the majority of their daily needs locally?
 - Do some themes require a more detailed assessment?
- **If you are in a group setting, here are some additional things to think about:**
 - Are there any areas for improvement that everyone agrees on?
 - Are there any areas where there is disagreement? Is further discussion needed to identify the main issues?
- **Here are some things to think about when identifying the main issues for your place:**
 - What do people need to enjoy a good quality of life, now and in the future?
 - What would make the biggest difference in your place?

Record the main issues for improvement in your area.

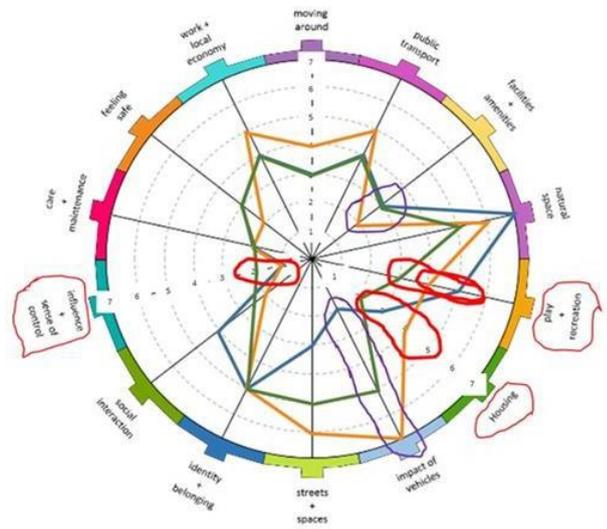
Please use page 25 if you wish to add further comment referencing the question.

Understanding your data scores

Consider the full range of scores i.e. how spread out the scores are and not just an average of the overall results.

The illustration (right) shows how the compass diagram can be used to assess the differences in scores gathered during an assessment.

It is important to understand why these differences occur – it could be due to differences over time or by demographics e.g. school children versus older people. If the assessment is based on a whole town, differences might reflect issues that are relevant to specific areas within the place.



Analysing Comments

The comments about ‘what is good now’ and ‘how could we make it better in the future’ are important. They will help to build an understanding of why people scored in a particular way. They are vital to inform what action might need to be taken.

All of the comments should be reviewed and any recurring issues should be identified and grouped. Comments can be divided into positive, negative or constructive – this can build a picture of what issues people have identified for each theme and help to prioritise action for the future.

The **table** below shows a way of doing this. The negative comments will help to identify the main issues for improvement. The positive comments will identify strengths that can be built upon. The constructive comments can be useful to get ideas on how to take action.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY

Good places have a mix of housing in attractive, safe and connected communities for different types of families and people. Where we live and call home affects our health and wellbeing.

How well do the homes in my place meet the needs of my community?

Here are some things to think about:

- Is there a good mix of housing types? (different sizes, various prices, privately owned, rented, specialist housing, supported living, multi-generational)
- Are residential areas attractive? (well maintained homes, private and community gardens, well laid out, communal areas)
- Are homes and places able to adapt to changing circumstances? (changing climate, population changes, global health challenges, energy efficiency)
- Is there a good community spirit? (local activities and events, trendy neighbours, welcoming neighbourhoods, intergenerational mixing)
- Are there any challenges? (damp/draughty homes, secure boundaries, flooding, noise and disturbance, homelessness, anti-social behaviour, no storage)

Please rate the place on a scale from 1 to 7

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

What is good now?

There are lots of family homes and it's a friendly community. Nice well-kept gardens. People want to stay here. But there are lots of empty shops - can't they be used for something else?

How could we make it better in the future?

There is no affordable housing for young people. And when people get older and can't move around so much there is no where to downsize to. They have to leave. Could we get together and start a housing co-op so people can stay?

Please use page 25 if you wish to add further comments answering the question.

POSITIVE COMMENTS	NEGATIVE COMMENTS	CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENTS
the school is a really positive asset in our community	<p>there is loads of litter left on the pavements beside the school and the shop</p> <p>there is no housing for young people or old people</p> <p>too many empty shops</p>	<p>Get the school kids involved in designing litter solutions bins, recycling – make it fun!!</p> <p>Maybe the community should get together and develop a housing co-op: housing for young and old so no one needs to move away</p> <p>Can shop units not be so used for other things – flexible space</p>

It might be helpful to look at the respondent details (age, postcode, etc.) to identify any common issues that particular groups of people have within the place.

Key points to consider when analysing comments:

- Do not dismiss something that might be important just because it doesn't come up regularly as an issue.
- Be careful to avoid any biases that might influence the results – it can be helpful if the person reviewing the comments takes a note of their views in advance and cross- references results at the end.
- It is important to cross-check results with others that were involved in the assessment – this will help to remove any biases or errors in grouping comments and analysing feedback.

Finally, think about how to present the results – further guidance on this is included on page 41-42 in the [Place Standard Learning Resource](#).

Next steps

Using the 'Next Steps' page

Start thinking about how to take action on the main issues identified for improvement.

This can be done by participants themselves using the 'Next Steps' page if they are completing the Place Standard tool themselves. An explanation and 'think about' points are provided to help with this.

Facilitators can include this 'Next Steps' stage as part of a single workshop session. Alternatively they could consider Next Steps via a further session involving the original participants once all the other results have been gathered and considered.

Identify the **actions** and the **partners** that can help to deliver each action. Link this back to the aim of the assessment to see whether the actions will achieve what the Place Standard assessment set out to do. Use the 'think about points' to support the discussion.

Remember to **communicate** with the participant group(s) about the proposed actions. This is especially important if the proposed actions have been identified by facilitators (see guidance on reporting below). Better still, consider follow-on processes to co-design and co-deliver an action plan together with the community and other partners.

Some actions will need more planning and time to deliver than others. Smaller actions can be taken forward quickly. Early action can help to build momentum and engagement with partners and with the local community.

Preparing a Report

Prepare a **report** of the results – this should also outline the process for the Place Standard assessment – who, when, how, etc. The report should be prepared in plain language with the results clearly presented. It might also be helpful if the proposed actions are presented on a map of the place.

The report should be shared with everyone that took part in the Place Standard assessment(s), as well as any key partners and local groups, and other people that were unable to take part in the assessment.



Make the report publicly available so that everyone can read it. People should be able to understand the main issues for improvement that were identified through the assessment, and how they can support delivery of the actions.

A suggested report template is available on Page 51 in the [Place Standard Learning Resource](#) in case you need it.

You can repeat your assessment over time – this can help to keep people involved and interested, particularly where there have been positive changes.

If you would like more information and suggestions about how to use the Place Standard tool, evaluate the results, prepare reports and move on to action, take a look at the **Place Standard Learning Resource**. Find out more at:

<https://www.ourplace.scot/place-standard-guide>

5. How to manage a workshop

This section provides a short guide to facilitating a workshop – both for those who are new to the tool and those with previous experience.

If you have more than one facilitator at your session, you can use this guidance as a basis for briefing them. Facilitators need to be clear on why the tool is being used and the purpose of the workshop, including who will be attending and the timescales for the session.

Facilitators have a vital role to play in ensuring a Place Standard session runs smoothly and that everyone feels informed and able to participate. After all, the conversations that take place during the Place Standard assessment are the key part of the Place Standard tool.

Plan

Firstly, planning your workshop is important. Make sure everyone knows the relevant times and dates, and that all of the materials and staff resources will be ready and available on the day.

It can be challenging to facilitate and record a conversation at the same time, so you may want to have a designated scribe to record details of the discussion and the scores.

If the workshop exceeds 12 participants it may be useful to have more than one facilitator and scribe and break the workshop groups into tables of 6 to 8 people.

During the workshop

At the start of your workshop session:

- Introduce yourself.
- Clearly state the purpose of the workshop.
- Highlight the area to be assessed.
- Invite participants to introduce themselves by providing their name and any organisation or group that they are part of.



In your introduction:

- Underline that you are there to lead the assessment and facilitate the discussion. You are not there to influence views and final decisions but it may be helpful if you challenge assumptions, particularly if these views are not shared by everyone in the group.
- Inform participants what the data collected will be used for.
- Find out who is aware of the tool and/ or who has used it before. Understanding this will help you to pitch your workshop and identify what support may be needed for delivery of any actions.
- Ask participants to record their details (i.e. age, gender, postcode etc). Let them know that the data will help the organisers of the assessment to analyse the results and identify if there are specific issues for some people in your place. It will not be shared.

Assess

Using the 14 themed pages

For each theme there is a headline question and a series of ‘think about’ prompt questions.

You can start with any theme, at any point in the Place Standard compass. For each theme, consider and discuss each headline question and any ‘think about’ prompts that are relevant (see above for help with prompts).

Remember to ask people about how they think the place would feel at different times of the day, week and year, and if the weather makes a difference.

Remind people to think about the place from their own perspective, but also to consider others in their community that might be different to them, for example age, ethnicity, disability, visual/ hearing impairment, and so on.

Each theme can then be scored based on whether people think the place needs more, or no, improvements. All 14 themes should be discussed and scored. As well as scoring, it is important to record the reasons why people gave the scores they did, both positive and negative. Boxes are provided to help with this.

You might need more time to explain some of the 14 themes and the effect that they have on health and wellbeing. In particular, “Identity and Belonging” and “Influence and Sense of Control” may be difficult for some to understand.

Continue around the compass until all the themes have been discussed.

You may find there is an overlap between themes – this shows how connected the different physical and social aspects of places are and may help people to think about their place from different perspectives.

As a facilitator you can refer back to things that have already been said in a previous theme and then move on to explore other aspects of that theme.

Also, the place can be discussed and scored as a whole group, or if time is limited split into smaller groups that can either do the full assessment or focus on a few of the themes each then add them together and compare notes afterwards.

PLAY AND RECREATION

Play and recreation can improve the quality of our lives and our health and wellbeing. Good opportunities for play are essential for children's development. Places with a range of formal and informal indoor and outdoor spaces and events encourage children, teenagers and adults to play and to enjoy leisure, culture and sporting activities.

How good are the spaces and opportunities for play and recreation in my place?

Here are some things to think about:

- What opportunities are there? (play, sports, culture, arts, leisure)
- Are there places that everyone can enjoy? (children and young people, adults and older people, non-disabled and disabled, vision/ hearing impaired, locals and visitors)
- Are spaces and facilities well used? (easy to get to, free or affordable, safe and well maintained, fun and welcoming, different times of day or year)
- How else could we make the most of what we have? (streets close to home, vacant and derelict land, playgrounds, natural spaces, libraries and public buildings, hosting activities and events)
- Are there any issues? (access, location, lighting, noise, cost, public toilets, traffic, weather, play not welcomed by the community)

Please rate the place on a scale from 1 to 7

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

What is good now?

How could we make it better in the future?

Please use page 25 if you wish to add further comment referencing the question 13

Defining what is Our Place?

One of the best ways to use the Place Standard tool is to do a walk-about of the place being assessed.

Another way is to use photographs and maps that participants can refer to – or even make marks or comments on - as they are working through the 14 themes..



Preparing for a walk-about

You will need to identify an area for the walk-about.

It is usually helpful to do some planning in advance. This may include several routes depending on the number of groups.

Facilitators should make sure they have the correct route map with them, and be aware that they will lead their group on the walk.

Participants will find it helpful to have one of the following:

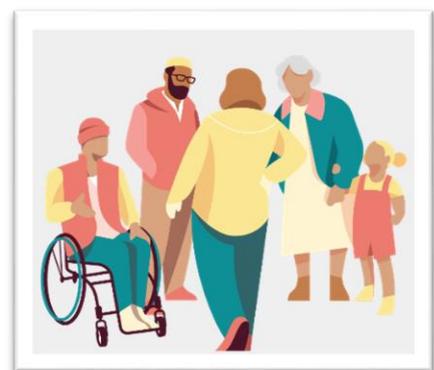
- A copy of the Place Standard booklet
- A copy of the 14 headline questions and somewhere to write down key points from their discussion
- Access to the [online tool](#) from a mobile phone or tablet with internet connectivity.

A camera can also be useful to record key points of interest (positive and negative) and remind people where and what action they think needs to be taken to improve the place for the future.

During the walk-about

During the walk-about:

- Be flexible, you do not need to follow the whole route that has been planned – you can still carry out an assessment on the pre-defined area
- Encourage people to identify things that are good in their area and what could be improved for the future – take notes and photographs



- Scoring can be done on the walk if people are ready to, or once the walk has finished. There are no fixed rules – it will depend on the group
- Build in regular stops to discuss the area
- Be aware of people's mobility needs, speed of movement, and any potential obstacles on the route e.g. steps, uneven surfaces, lighting – being aware of these can help people to think about where and how the place could be improved for people with mobility difficulties and/or visual or hearing impairment.

Recording and scoring

Bringing people back together after the walk is an opportunity to discuss and review their findings, reflect on the feedback from others, and identify common findings. People can either remain in the same groups they had during the walk, swap groups to share findings, or discuss in a single group.

The purpose of the session is to get people to reflect on their findings – if you do not have a lot of time, keep moving the discussion through the 14 themes.

More time might be needed to discuss some of the themes from the walk. If a theme discussion stops or slows down, ask one of the 'think about' prompt questions.

During the discussion session, make sure that:

- Everyone has the notes that they took and any scoring they did on the walk
- You have extra copies of the booklet or people have access to the online tool – this will help people record final scores and complete the compass diagram
- Your designated scribe records the conversation. You may wish to use a flipchart so that everyone can see what is being recorded. This will help to identify the main issues and key actions, and inform any reports
- Someone records the scores and draws the compass diagram – try to do this as you discuss each theme and if there is a difference of opinion record the details.

Keep an eye on the time and issue gentle reminders to make sure that you leave enough time for each of the 14 themes, and a discussion at the end for review and next steps.

Review

Using the 'Review' page'

The purpose of the review session is to use the Place Standard assessment to identify the main issues for improvement and actions that may be needed to address these issues.

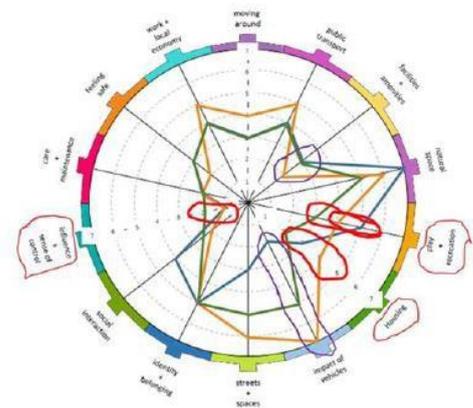
Think about both the scores and comments, and any differences in an individual's scoring.

Patterns may emerge where, for instance, young people have scored some themes differently from older residents. If the assessment is based on a larger town or settlement, different issues might arise for specific parts of the place.



The illustration below shows how you can use the compass diagram to assess the differences in scores in an assessment.

Where there are large differences, it is really helpful to you record these and the reasons given. Also, how many people differ from the agreed score, and the strength of feeling or priority that people attach to that particular theme. This will help you to identify and prioritise future actions.



You should encourage groups to identify the main issues for improvement and any actions that spring to mind to address these for each theme.

Before the end of the review session, it can be helpful to provide short feedback on what has been discussed and agreed. If the discussion has been broken down into smaller groups, someone from each group could provide this feedback, followed by a general discussion amongst all the groups.

Next steps

Using the 'Next Steps' page

Typically this will be most valuable once results have been collated. This may involve bringing the results of other workshop(s) with a range of views together. If this is the case, make sure that this should be advertised to the group.

Alternatively this may be carried out by the facilitators within the one session, based on the output of that particular workshop. In this case you should highlight that groups will be consulted on the proposed actions before the report is adopted or more made public.

Closing the workshop

It is important to let people know what will happen after the review workshop.

Let them know that the data gathered will be handed to the Place Standard event organiser, and fed into the development of, for example, a local community plan.

If there has been more than one Place Standard assessment, remember to let people know that the final output will reflect the findings from all of the various discussions, including their input.

Let everyone know about any further action planning work, design workshops or review stages that they may wish to be involved with.

If there are no further planned workshops let everyone know of opportunities to check back before the report is adopted or made public.

Let the group know what to expect in terms of further communication, when, how, by what medium (direct email, public meeting, update on a website).

Also consider providing contact details that they can use to stay in touch with your project to find out more

Thank people for their time and feedback.

Make sure to do an evaluation with participants.

Gather the materials and make sure they are handed over to the event organiser.

Appendix 1: How to include a walk-about

Split a large group into smaller groups or pairs – ideally between 4 and 8 people – for each to carry out the assessment.

A facilitator is important to lead the workshop. A good facilitator will encourage discussion, keep everyone on topic, challenge assumptions where appropriate, and ensure that everyone's views are heard and valued equally. Support for the facilitators is included in the guidance.

Materials

People will need to have a copy of the Place Standard tool booklet or online access. The following materials may also be helpful:

- A blank wheel/ compass diagram.
- A map of the area that is being assessed.
- Pens and post-it notes to record the discussion.
- A camera.
- Sticky dots to mark on the map.

Timing

A workshop can last anywhere between a couple of hours up to a full day, and sometimes even longer. It will depend on the size of the area that is being assessed, the depth of discussion and the preferences of the people involved.

You might need more time to explain some of the 14 themes and the link with health and wellbeing. However, if you do not have a lot of time keep moving the discussion through all 14 themes. The assessment can be completed in an hour, although discussion will be short.

The table on the following page provides a suggested timetable how to use the Place Standard tool with a group in a half-day workshop session.

A full-day workshop follows the same format as the half-day workshop, but allows for extra time for a walk-about (one and a half to two hours) and further discussion while scoring and reviewing each assessment (two hours).

Build in a longer feedback session to allow people to talk about their views and priorities for action – particularly if people have split into smaller sub-groups to do the walk. You could also have a wider range of speakers to set the scene before the walk-about, and to explain in detail each of the 14 Place Standard themes.

Appendix 2: Suggested approach for a half-day workshop

09:30 – 10:00	Overview of the area. Introduction to the Place Standard tool	You may want to invite someone from the local area to speak. It is important to share how to use the Place Standard tool and its scoring system.
10:15 – 11:15	Walk about the area that you are assessing. This works well with someone who knows the area (who can act as a guide) or if you have explored the area in advance of the workshop.	Build in regular stops to discuss a theme(s) and score. Scoring can be done on an individual basis or in smaller groups, or not at all during the walk. There are no rules – your approach will depend on the group you are working with. It can be useful to assign themes to individuals, pairs or groups depending on the total number of participants. Note the strengths and opportunities for improvement in the area. Mark any key locations on a map if possible. Take photos if there is a camera. Be flexible: you do not need to follow the whole route that has been planned – you can still carry out a full assessment. Be aware of people’s mobility needs, speed of movement and any potential obstacles on the route such as steps, uneven surfaces, lighting, and so on.
11:15 – 11:30	Break	A comfort break is important. If possible, make refreshments available.
11:30 – 12:15	Scoring and Review	Complete the scoring in groups, noting your reasons for each rating. If you completed this during the walk about, review your scores and comments. Plot your 14 scores and join the dots to complete a compass diagram.
12:15 – 12:50	Feedback	Allow each group to feedback on their main issues for improvement and why
12:50 – 13:00	Next steps and close	Make sure to thank everyone for their time and input. Tell people what will happen next, especially if this is one of a number of Place Standard assessments and results from all workshops need to be combined. Complete participant evaluation forms.



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