

Inclusive Quiet Areas Toolkit

A Practical Guide to Identifying, Assessing and Communicating Inclusive Quiet Areas

Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).

Purpose

This toolkit provides a practical framework that can be adapted by the public and private sectors, community organisations, researchers, and charities to identify, assess, and communicate inclusive quiet places that support wellbeing, accessibility, and connection to nature.

The toolkit is based on the [Bristol Quiet Areas Plan](#) but has been designed for use in any town, city, park, estate or public space. University of Gloucestershire research project site is [here](#)

Consider creating a single website where people can find information and share new, inclusive, quiet places. This could be easier to update and maintain than a separate app and could be used by other towns and cities in the future.

Key Principles

- Work with communities rather than for communities.
- Combine environmental evidence with lived experience.
- Design for confidence as well as accessibility and inclusivity.
- Consider the whole journey.
- Quiet does not need to mean silent.
- Use multiple ways of communicating information.
- Publish resources openly where possible.
- Build partnerships that can maintain the work beyond the project.

Part 1 – Before You Start

Define your aims

Examples include: Improving access to nature, supporting wellbeing, developing inclusive tourism, identifying restorative cool places, supporting planning or green infrastructure and creating a community quiet places map.

Build your team

Consider involving, for example: Local authorities, accessibility organisations, disabled people's organisations to provide lived experience, community groups, tourism organisations, environmental organisations, public health organisations, universities or schools, and residents.

Part 2 – Finding Inclusive Quiet Places

Identify potential locations using citizen science, local knowledge, the free [Hush City app](#), community nominations, existing parks and green spaces (e.g. [OS Open Greenspace](#)), blue infrastructure, green infrastructure mapping, environmental data, [Tree canopy cover](#) and [noise pollution mapping](#). Accessibility considerations, such as nearby public transport, accessible parking or drop-off within 50 metres, where possible.

Part 3 – Assessing Places

Use accessibility audits, soundwalk (paper – see appendix 1 and for digital surveys, the Hush City app), participant observation, environmental data, photographs, and audio recordings

Consider:

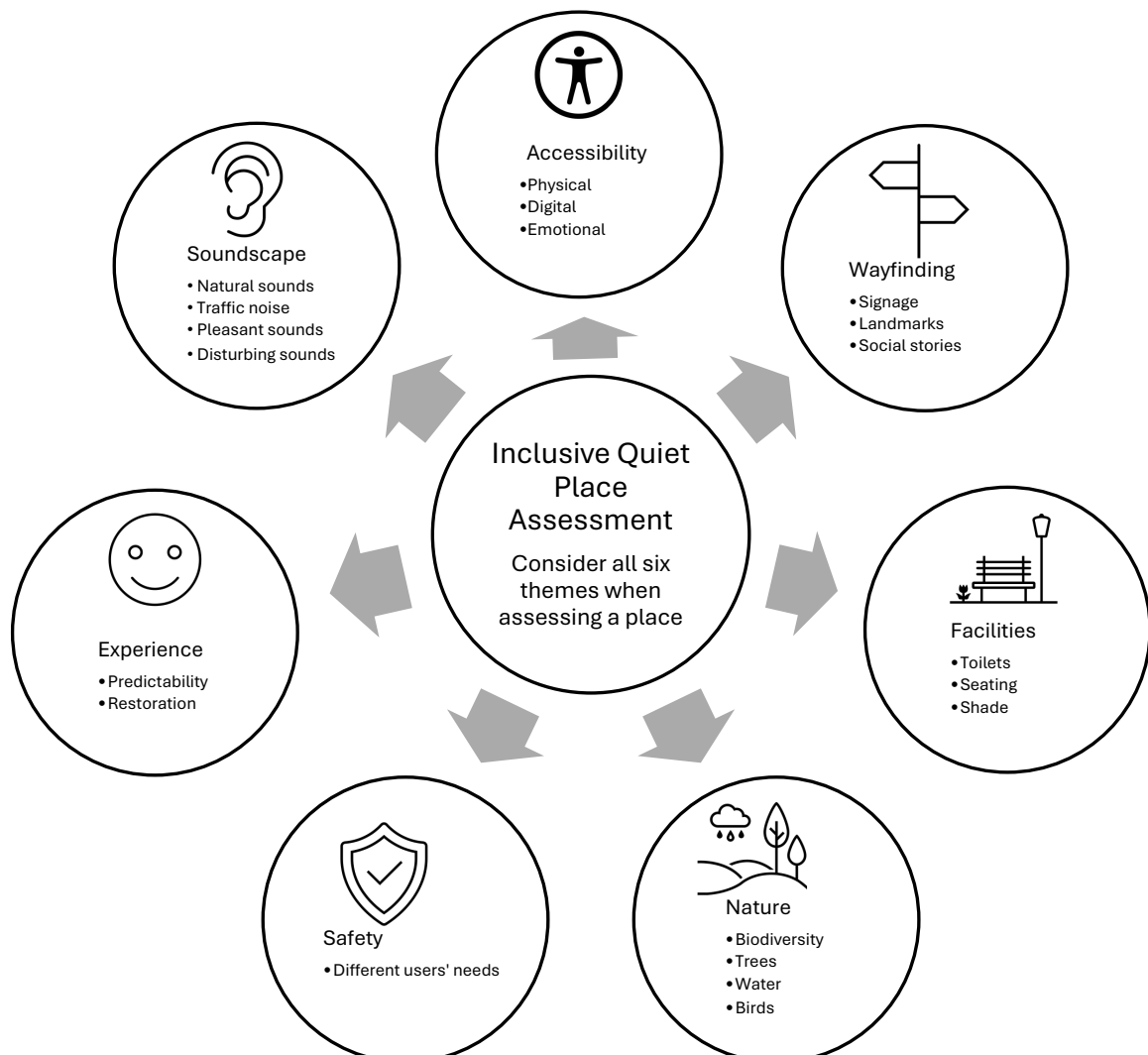


Diagram 1 - Inclusive Quiet Place Assessment Framework. The framework illustrates the seven interconnected themes used to assess the quality, accessibility and restorative potential of urban quiet spaces: accessibility, wayfinding, facilities, nature, safety, user experience and soundscape. Together, these themes provide a holistic approach to evaluating inclusive quiet places. Created by Sarah Jones-Morris as part of the Bristol Quiet Areas Plan.

Part 4 – Co-produce

Work with participants to develop:

Accessible Maps

 Quiet places

 Routes

 Toilets

 Facilities

 Google Maps

 GIS

Site Plans

 [Accessibility icons](#)

 Sensory information

 Route guidance

 Journey information

 Key features

Website

 Accessible information

 Downloads

 Social stories

 Journey information

 Soundwalk survey

Part 5 – Review

Before publication: Check accessibility, test with users, revise materials, use AI to sense-check against national guidance and best practice for accessibility review and quality assurance, evaluate with participants and retest. Review after 6 months or during different seasons to test 'quietness'.

Part 6 – Publish

Publish outcomes in multiple accessible formats. Examples: Website, printed guides, PDFs, GIS datasets, Open data, Creative Commons resources, visitor information and interpretation panels

Case Study

The Bristol Quiet Areas Plan demonstrates how this approach can be applied in practice through collaboration among a university, a local authority, accessibility organisations,

tourism partners, and people with lived experience. The methodology and templates can be adapted for different communities, places and purposes.

For more information, visit - <https://www.glos.ac.uk/research/bristol-quiet-areas-plan/> and the Visit West website <https://visitbristol.co.uk/bristol-quiet-areas/>

Appendix 1 – Soundwalk Paper Survey

Soundwalk Survey

Bristol Quiet Areas Plan
Understanding Quiet, Nature-Rich Urban Spaces

Adapted with permission from the Hush City App survey, developed by Dr Antonella Radicchi.

Estimated time for completion: Most people take around 5–10 minutes, but you can take longer or pause at any time. Make time to stop and listen. Minimal talking.

You can complete this yourself or with support.
You can skip any question.

Your answers are anonymous.

1 About This Place

Location name or description and [What3Words](#) prompt

What time of day is it?

- ☐ Morning
- ☐ Midday
- ☐ Afternoon

Weather

- ☐ Sunny
- ☐ Cloudy
- ☐ Windy
- ☐ Rainy
- ☐ Cold
- ☐ Warm

Are there people around?

- ☐ No one
- ☐ A few people
- ☐ Many people

What are people doing here?

- ☐ Passing through
- ☐ Sitting or relaxing
- ☐ Walking
- ☐ Talking
- ☐ Playing
- ☐ Working
- ☐ Other

2 Sounds in This Space

What sounds can you hear?

Natural sounds

- ☐ Birds
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Wind or leaves
- ☐ Wildlife

Human sounds

- ☐ Talking
- ☐ Children

Mechanical sounds

- ☐ Traffic
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Mechanical sounds
- ☐ Other

Which sounds feel positive or calming?

Which sounds feel disturbing or stressful?

3 How Does This Place Feel?

Please tick the option that best fits your experience.

How quiet does this place feel?

- 1 ☐ Very noisy
- 2 ☐ Mostly noisy
- 3 ☐ Neutral
- 4 ☐ Mostly quiet
- 5 ☐ Very quiet

How comfortable do you feel here?

- 1 ☐ Very uncomfortable
- 2 ☐ Slightly uncomfortable
- 3 ☐ Neutral
- 4 ☐ Comfortable
- 5 ☐ Very comfortable

How safe do you feel here?

- 1 ☐ Not safe
- 2 ☐ Slightly safe
- 3 ☐ Neutral
- 4 ☐ Safe
- 5 ☐ Very safe

4 Nature and Environment

What nature can you see?

- ☐ Trees
- ☐ Plants or flowers
- ☐ Grass
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Wildlife
- ☐ Little or no nature

Does nature help this space feel calmer?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Is there shade or somewhere cool to sit?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

5 Accessibility

How easy is it to move around this space?

- 1 ☐ Very difficult
- 2 ☐ Difficult
- 3 ☐ Neutral
- 4 ☐ Easy
- 5 ☐ Very easy

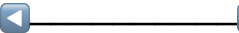
What helps this space feel accessible?

- ☐ Paths
- ☐ Seating
- ☐ Shade
- ☐ Green space
- ☐ Clear signs
- ☐ Quiet atmosphere

What could make this space better?

6 Overall Experience

Overall, how good is this place as a quiet space?

Noisy (1)  Quiet (5)

- 1 ☐ Not good
- 2 ☐ Slightly good
- 3 ☐ Neutral
- 4 ☐ Good
- 5 ☐ Excellent

Would you come here again to relax?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

7 Final Thoughts

Is there anything else you would like to share about this place?

You can describe sounds, feelings, or ideas for improvement.