

Checklist: Opening up outdoor spaces



How do you ensure parks and public spaces are COVID-secure as lockdown restrictions ease?

These 10 actions will help you prepare for increased footfall – while maximising operational efficiency and value for money.

1. Prioritise maintenance services in high-usage areas

To ensure outdoor spaces are ready for visitors to enjoy safely, plan rotas now to increase the frequency of grass cutting and other grounds maintenance requirements. Regular communication with your grounds maintenance partner is key here, especially as the weather improves and people spend more time outside.

2. Check trees are maintained

Many local authorities and housing associations scaled back tree works during lockdown. Now's the time to do a full check to make sure trees aren't overhanging any lights, equipment or signage.

3. Make outdoor sports and recreation facilities more accessible

Consider making green space available to local gyms for free (since many won't open until later). We've also worked with councils to offer no-cost tennis and golf. This frees up staff who would otherwise have manned kiosks, reducing transmission risks and allowing us to reallocate resource to higher priority requirements.

4. Install clear signage to promote social distancing and/or one-way systems

Signs should be placed at regular intervals so people can see them from any direction. Make sure the font is big enough to read from more than 2 metres away. It's also important that social distancing notices be visible on operator hi-vis vests.

5. Prepare play parks and outdoor gym equipment

If play parks and/or outdoor gym equipment have been closed during lockdown, complete a deep clean before reopening. Then, increase cleaning and inspections in line with heavier usage. Opt for eco-friendly disinfectant – Tivoli uses the same product the Football Association uses to disinfect stadiums (it's 99.9% effective).

6. Review whether it's possible to install sanitising stations near high-touch areas

Is there a secure, fixable location where you can offer this to users?

7. Check lighting in parks and outdoor recreation facilities

Make sure floodlighting is working and that the on/off times align with the lengthening days.

8. Look out for increased drug paraphernalia and PPE waste

Face masks, gloves and other PPE must be treated as clinical waste and handled using protocols like those used for drug waste. At Tivoli, we've offered this service for more than 30 years, and our operatives have specialist training.

9. Step up resident communications around local waste centre opening times and to discourage fly-tipping

Public information campaigns are key to minimising fly-tipping, so make sure people know any new protocols for booking tip slots. Also, remind people they need to take responsibility for their own waste, checking their builder or man with a van has the correct paperwork.

10. Install more (and bigger) bins

A big lesson from the end of Lockdown 1 was the major litter increase in parks, beauty spots, tourist destinations and coastal locations. Placing bins at more regular intervals encourages people to use them. And in busy areas, install larger bins – they need emptying less frequently, which also makes waste collection more efficient.

Get help with safe, efficient opening of outdoor spaces

Tivoli supports local authorities and housing associations nationwide with grounds maintenance, interments, street cleaning, litter collection, tree works and more. Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, we've played a vital role helping them maximise operational efficiency and value for money.

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