

Urban Green Newcastle Public Information Policy

Title:	Public Information Policy
Version:	1
Date of Document:	6 May 2021
Owned by:	Senior Leadership Team
Approving body:	UGN Compliance Committee
Responsible Officer:	Jon Riley, Operations Director
Target audience:	Anyone with an interest in Urban Green Newcastle
Review date:	May 2024
Application:	Directors, staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, students and anyone working on behalf of Urban Green Newcastle.
Internal documents:	Complaints Policy Vexatious Complaints Policy
External or statutory documents:	The Freedom of Information Act 2000
Key Contacts:	Jon Riley, Operations Director Ali Brown, Marketing and Communications Manager

Policy Statement

Our vision is for more people to enjoy and benefit from our beautiful, vibrant open spaces, which are safe, welcoming, and provide a great environment for wildlife and people.

We want more people to enjoy these open spaces, and feel the benefits to their health and wellbeing; our parks and allotments to be safe and welcoming for all; and for local people to feel connected and committed to their parks and allotments.

Raising understanding and awareness of our parks and allotments is central to achieving our vision. Urban Green Newcastle will:

- Create opportunities for local people to collaborate and improve the experience of visiting the city's parks and allotments.
- Build relationships and work closely with volunteers and groups who share our passion for Newcastle's parks and allotments.
- Protect the environment and the city's thriving wildlife population.
- Welcome the views of parks and allotment groups and users, and anyone else that wants to contribute to their future.
- Work with partners to bring income and investment into Newcastle's parks and allotments.
- Be open and transparent with information.

We want to be approachable and accessible, and for people to understand what we are doing and why we are doing it.

As a charity we have limited resources. We think people want us to prioritise maintenance improvements and making our parks welcoming, accessible, and safe, so we have prioritised our resources in those areas.

We make information available to the public primarily through our website.

This policy explains what public information UGN will publish on its website and elsewhere, how we will manage ad hoc requests for information, and how we will monitor the quality of information we are providing to the public.

Urban Green Newcastle is a charity and we are not covered by the Freedom of Information Act.

Roles and responsibilities

Overall responsibility for this policy rests with the UGN Compliance Committee.

The Operations Director is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy.

The Marketing and Communications Manager has day-to-day responsibility for managing the communication routes described in the policy.

All employees have a duty to support this policy.

Statutory information

As a registered charity and company limited by guarantee Urban Green Newcastle must comply with statutory accounting and reporting obligations.

Our Trustees must prepare an annual report to accompany its accounts each financial year setting out how the charity has been governed, how it has furthered its charitable objectives and what it has achieved for its beneficiaries. This must follow the prescribed standards for [charity accounts](#).

Urban Green Newcastle's Accounts are published annually on the [Charity Commission website](#) and [Companies House](#).

Public information

Our website

Our website is the primary source of information about our activities and it is updated at least weekly.

The website includes a section of Frequently Asked Questions. This covers the most common *ad hoc* information requests (see below)

The minutes of our Board of Trustee meetings are published on our website.

Social media and e-newsletters

We continue to develop our marketing and brand, and stakeholders are kept informed through a newsletter, with regular posts on social media keeping the wider public updated.

Newcastle City Council councillors and other groups

Through our developing relationships with councillors and local groups, including Friends of Groups, there is regular correspondence regarding major events and activities to ensure that interested parties are aware of what is being planned.

Urban Green committees and working groups

We want everyone with an interest in Urban Green Newcastle's parks, allotments and green spaces to be able to contribute to their future via Urban Green Park Action. Collaborating to co-create management plans for all our parks, as well as advising on strategic issues such as biodiversity, play and youth provision, and

health and wellbeing. We are setting up, a series of groups which will help provide ideas and advice, and help create the future vision for greenspaces across the city.

Creating opportunities for local people to collaborate and improve the experience of visiting the city's parks and allotments via Urban Green Park Action

Understanding the need to speak to people, hear their views, and understand what will encourage everyone to get involved and share our passion via Urban Green Connect

Managing *ad hoc* requests for information

If members of the public do have a question about Urban Green Newcastle that is not answered by the above, staff should signpost them to info@urbangreennewcastle.org

Urban Green Newcastle have developed and maintained clear procedures for recognising and responding to all requests for information. These will be overseen by our Marketing and Communications Manager via info@urbangreennewcastle.org.

Our Marketing and Communications Officer will provide appropriate responses to all requests within the recommended timescales outlined by Urban Green Newcastle.

Nature of enquiry	Response time
General enquiry	Acknowledgement within 5 working days
	Information provided within 10 working days
Technical enquiry	Acknowledgement within 5 working days
	Information provided within 15 working days
Formal complaint	Acknowledgement within 5 working days
	Information provided within 15 working days

We reserve the right not to provide information, for example if:

- It is commercially sensitive.
- Releasing it would be contrary to the UK General Data Protection Regulation (the UK GDPR) or the Data Protection Act 2018 (the DPA2018).
- Staff capacity is limited.
- It would cost too much or take too much staff time to deal with the request.

Monitoring information provided

UGN will produce a monitoring report covering the enquiries received each financial year (1 April to 31 March). The report will be submitted to the Compliance Committee and will contain:

- Number of formal complaints, response times and outcomes.
- Number of general enquiries and technical enquiries received at info@ each month.
- Response times for representative sample of enquiries
- Website statistics
- Social media statistics

Repeated requests for information

Should a member of the public make a 'vexatious' or 'repeated' request for identical or substantially similar information, Urban Green Newcastle will inform the applicant in writing that it will not fulfil the request. When responding in this manner Urban Green Newcastle will offer assistance to the individual, by indicating why they consider the request is vexatious or repeated. Urban Green Newcastle will also indicate what recourse the applicant has if they are unhappy with this position (referring to our Vexatious Complaints and Complaints policies). All correspondence of this manner will be handled via our complaints@urbangreennewcastle.org

Complaints policy

If members of the public are unhappy with anything Urban Green Newcastle has or has not done, they can raise issues through our [complaints](#) process.