Biodiversity Audits

A step-by-step guide from SOS UK.

1. Before doing the review

Assemble a team. Ideally involve people who know about the maintenance of your building(s) and grounds, and also energy and water supplies and waste management. You could involve staff, volunteers, visitors, members, students, parents, local residents, or even trustees. Allocate different sections of the review to different members of the team, depending on their interests or expertise.

Set a timescale. You need to decide how much time to allow for people to find answers to the review questions – some require a little investigation. You also need time to evaluate the findings and agree an action plan during the review.

Update your colleagues. Help everyone to understand the purpose of the Biodiversity Review. Tell them about the Green Impact programme and why your team is taking part. If you have invited external participants to take part, you could give them a tour of the building.

2. Undertaking a review

Complete review questions. Make sure to include notes under 'ideas for action'.

There will be some questions you can answer straight away, and some will require doing a walk-around or talking to other staff. You should try to quantify answers wherever possible. This will help you set clear targets when you come to write your action plan, for example:

Example Question	Yes, No or N/A	Notes / Ideas for action
Are there any pollinating insects around?	**5 insects** noticed during the course of the audit	Look up native wildflowers, identify an area for them and approach the grounds team to propose creation of habitats for more pollinating insects.
Is there litter?	**Yes**	Identify particular areas needing attention and arrange regular litter picking/request bins for that area. Litter is a hazard to wildlife and biodiversity!

3. After Completing the Review

Collate your findings. List your 'Ideas for Action' under each section. Prioritise specific areas and identify potential actions as a result of what you find.

Create your action plan. Agree your priority topics, action points, targets and timescales to improve biodiversity in your chosen area. Consider how you are going to monitor and evaluate your key projects and how you will create learning experiences and community engagement.

Keep a dated copy of your completed review. A piece of documentation will be helpful for your toolkit submission. The results of your review can also help you evaluate your progress over time - you might look back at previous reviews to check that you are continually addressing new issues.

Grounds and Biodiversity. Grounds and gardens can make an important contribution to protecting and improving biodiversity. Ensuring that the grounds are well managed and kept litter free is vital to this. Grounds also help to improve the mental health of colleagues, improves local air quality and it's a great way to do your bit for the local community. Grounds and Biodiversity projects are great for getting practical too – improving, planting, growing, maintaining the grounds is something which lots of people can take enjoyment in.

GROUNDS – LANDSCAPE FEATURES	Yes, No, or N/A	Notes / Ideas for action
Is there a management plan or similar for improving the grounds?		
Do visitors / visiting groups / volunteers / other non-staff help to carry out improvements work?		
Are the grounds a rich environment to encourage interest?		
Is there seating?		
Is there shelter and shade?		
Are there any artistic features?		
Are there any play features?		

BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE FEATURES	Yes, No, or N/A	Notes / Ideas for action

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Do you have any green space / planting around the property?		
Is there a wildflower area?		
Is there a log pile or similar for small mammals and insects?		
Is there a marsh area?		
Is there a meadow?		
Are there hedgehogs?		
Is there a woodland?		
Are there any nettles?		
Are there any bird / bat boxes?		
Are there any bird feeders?		
Are chemical pesticides avoided?		
Is use of peat avoided?		

If you require any further help, please contact your Sustainability Team.