

Biodiversity Net Gain

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Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to development, and/or land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.

The Environment Act 2021 requires that new developments must provide a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity habitats secured for at least 30 years.

This mandatory requirement applies to all major applications received from 12 February 2024 onwards and all small sites received from 2 April 2024.

Biodiversity net gain is a mandatory condition on grant of planning permission. The condition will need to be discharged by submitting a specific Biodiversity Gain Plan application, which will need to be approved by the Planning Authority before commencement of the development.

A specific legal agreement/Section 106 agreement will need to be signed in relation to biodiversity net gain.

Further information is available here:

[Understanding biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Biodiversity net gain planning practice guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Major applications

Major planning applications will be expected to deliver a minimum of 10% biodiversity gains, with habitat management and monitoring secured for at least 30 years.

A major development requiring BNG is;

- erection of 10 or more dwellings or housing development on a site 0.5 hectare or more;
- erection of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created is 1,000m² or more;
- development on a site 1 hectare or more
- minerals and waste development

Minor applications

Minor planning applications are expected to demonstrate no net loss, and appropriate net gain, using the latest DEFRA Small Sites metric (or agreed equivalent) - from April 2024.

Further information on qualifying criteria is due to be published by the government prior to this requirement applying.

Exemptions

Developments exempted from providing the 10% mandatory biodiversity net gain include:

- Permitted development
- Urgent Crown development
- Development related to the high-speed rail transport network
- Development impacting habitat of an area below a 'de minimis' threshold of 25m² or 5m for linear habitats such as hedgerows, where no priority habitat is present
- Developments with a 0 baseline
- Householder applications
- Biodiversity gain sites (where habitats are being enhanced for wildlife)
- Small scale self-build and custom house building which:
 - consist of no more than 9 dwellings;
 - is an area no larger than 0.5ha;
 - consists of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding.