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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this award scheme is to acknowledge those beaches which meet 'Excellent' bathing water quality standards (the highest standard recognised under the revised bathing water directive) but which are also prized for their natural, unspoiled environment.

A 'natural, unspoiled environment' means that the special character of such a beach is not compatible with the level of infrastructure and intensive management generally associated with more urban, traditional seaside resort beaches that would qualify for either Seaside or Blue Flag Award.

Beaches eligible for this award will generally be:

- Managed carefully and in close consultation with conservation organisations to account for their environmentally sensitive nature as part of a management plan.
- If facilities and signs are present, which may or may not be some distance from the beach, they should be designed and located to minimise the visual impact on the landscape
- Be cleansed of litter sensitively without removing natural debris such as driftwood and seaweed.

The Green Coast Award will be presented to beaches on an annual basis, and refers to a section of beach which includes one water quality sampling point.

To be eligible for this award, the beach operator must provide evidence that they have addressed all criteria. Failure to do so may result in the removal of the award until these objectives can be met. Beaches are assessed during the season preceding that in which the Awards are made.

At all times throughout this text, the term 'must' indicates that the action is mandatory, while 'should' indicates that the action is advised.

INFORMATION TO BE DISPLAYED FOR BEACH VISITORS

Sufficient Information must be displayed at the beach to enable beach visitors to make an informed choice whether to enter the bathing water and to also locate with ease the facilities and services if any are offered.

1. A code of conduct that reflects local rules governing the use of the beach and surrounding areas.
2. Information about bathing water quality.
3. A map of the beach indicating different facilities, sensitive areas and/or points of interest.
4. A promotional mark (plaque, flag, banner), along with basic information about the Green Coast award or an indication of where to find this information. This must include contact details of Keep Wales Tidy.
5. Evidence that the interests of any protected sites and rare or protected species have been addressed in liaison with recognised local conservation organisations. This should encourage visitors to consider the sensitivity of the natural environment and local flora and fauna.
6. The logos or other contact information of the organisations which have contributed to the guardianship scheme or management plan.
7. Information on local environmental events or activities which are relevant to the beach or adjoining natural sites.

BATHING WATER

The bathing water must have achieved “Excellent” standard under the current EU Bathing Water Directive.

8. To be eligible for entry to the award scheme the bathing water associated with the beach must have attained ‘Excellent’ standard as outlined in the Bathing Water Directive Bathing Water Directive 2006/7/EC. The calculated quality over the previous four years (where available) result must be posted.
9. The Beach Operator must highlight wastewater discharge points and riverine inputs within one km of the Award area to the National Operator and the public.

SAFETY

The safety equipment and services provided must, so far as is reasonably practicable, minimize the possibility of harm to beach users.

10. The Beach Operator must ensure a site-specific risk assessment has been carried out by appropriately qualified personnel. Suitable and sufficient control measures identified by that process must be put in place.
11. So far as is reasonably practicable, easy and safe access to the beach must be provided for all, including people with impaired mobility

12. Any significant incident which results in serious injury or loss of life, or significant harm to the environment on the beach must be notified to National Operator as soon as is reasonably practicable and at most within two weeks.

LITTER AND WASTE

The beach and adjoining facilities must be clean.

13. There must be no obvious visual impact from litter or sewage-related debris (SRD) on the beach. The beach, intertidal area, backshore and any surrounding areas connected to the beach operation including carparks and amenity areas must be substantially free of litter, with no potentially harmful materials such as broken glass.
14. The beach operator should operate in accordance with the best practicable environmental option in cleaning the beach.
15. Properly secured and covered litter bins in adequate numbers should be made available for litter. These should be of suitable character and appearance and sited where appropriate to the surroundings.

BEACH MANAGEMENT

The beach must be well managed in partnership with the local community to protect and promote the local environment.

16. The Beach Operator must develop a guardianship scheme for the beach with local community and/or environmental groups, and act in agreement with them in managing the beach.
17. Dogs and horses may be permitted in the award area unless local regulations prevent it. Owners should be encouraged, by the provision of suitable facilities and signage at access points, to clean up after their animals when using the beach.
18. The Beach Operator must provide adequate access and parking facilities and where possible suitable access for disabled people. Parking on the beach must be prohibited.