

Cool spaces – criteria for 2026

Key information

Publication type: General

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Setting out the criteria

Cool spaces can offer respite and recovery in the city during periods of hot weather and may contribute to reducing heat-related harm to health. Cool spaces are not a substitute for medical care if an individual is unwell due to overheating, but provide opportunities to shelter from the sun, cool down and rest.

Indoor spaces on the GLA Cool Spaces map are separated into two tiers:

1. Tier 1 indoor spaces have the core amenities that Londoners can expect from a cool space, are open at least five days a week and at least from 10am to 5pm.
2. Tier 2 spaces may not have all the core amenities or may be open less frequently.

The criteria for listing the spaces are set out below.

Once boroughs, community groups, faith-based and other organisations register their sites, the GLA Resilience team will validate them and assign a cool space tier based on the criteria on this page. The location and relevant information of the cool spaces will be shared with the public online.

For any questions or comments, please send an email to:

cityresilience@london.gov.uk

1. Tier 1 Indoor Cool Spaces

Accessibility

- Open to all at least 10:00 – 17:00, at least 5 days a week.
- Free of charge.
- Accessible to wheelchair users.
- Staffed.

Amenities

- Lower temperature than outdoors¹ (air conditioning available, if specified).
- Free seating space for rest and recovery.
- Free drinking water (e.g., tap, water fountain, water cooler).

Toilets on site or within a short distance and signposted.

2. Tier 2 Indoor Cool Spaces

Accessibility

- Open to all during specified hours, at least 2 days a week.
- Free of charge.
- Clearly states **if not** accessible to wheelchair users.
- Staffed.

Amenities

- Lower temperature than outdoors^{Reference:1} (air conditioning available, if specified).
- Free seating space for rest and recovery.
- Free drinking water (e.g., tap, water fountain, water cooler).

Clearly states **if** there is access to toilets on site or within a short distance.

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References

- [Reference:1](#) Individual tolerance to heat varies with those who are more vulnerable (older people, those with an underlying health issue, etc.) affected at relatively lower temperatures than the rest of the population. However, at higher temperatures, younger people can also be at risk, particularly if they are physically active. The UK Health Security Agency Heatwave Plan for England recommends indoor temperatures at or below 26C for care homes and hospitals. However, if someone is feeling too hot, it is important that they move quickly to a cooler environment where they can rest and recover. Few buildings in London have air conditioning, but many will be sufficiently cool to provide respite.