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Guidance

Biodiversity net gain: exempt developments

A guide to the types of development that will be exempt from the mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements.

From: [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#)
[\(/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs\)](#)

Published 29 November 2023

Last updated 2 April 2024 —

Applies to England

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Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is mandatory from 12 February 2024.

You can [view all of the BNG guidance in the BNG collection](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain>).

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Existing planning applications

If a planning application for a development was made before day one of mandatory BNG on 12 February 2024, the development is exempt from BNG.

[biodiversity-gains-as-a-developer\)](#)

Collection

[Biodiversity net gain \(/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain\)](#)

Variations of planning permission

Transitional arrangements also apply for variations to existing planning permissions. There is more information in the [planning practice guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>).

Developments below the threshold

A development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than:

- 25 square metres (5m by 5m) of on-site habitat
- 5 metres of on-site linear habitats such as hedgerows

A development 'impacts' a habitat if it [decreases the biodiversity value](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain#measuring-biodiversity-) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain#measuring-biodiversity->).

[Find out more about this exemption](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>).

Householder applications

These are applications made by householders as defined within [article 2\(1\) of the Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/article/2) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/article/2>).

It includes, for example, small projects like home extensions, conservatories or loft conversions.

Self-build and custom build applications

An exemption applies to this type of development when it meets all the following conditions:

- consists of no more than 9 dwellings
- on a site that has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares
- consists exclusively of dwellings that are self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in [section 1\(A1\) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/17/section/1) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/17/section/1>)

Biodiversity gain site

Developments undertaken mainly for the purpose of fulfilling the BNG planning condition for another development are exempt.

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An exemption applies to any development forming part of, or ancillary to, the high-speed railway transport network, comprising connections between all or any of the places or parts of the transport network specified in [section 1\(2\) of the High Speed Rail \(Preparation\) Act 2013](#) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/31/section/1>).

Other exemptions

The following are exempt by the [Environment Act 2021](#) (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30>):

- urgent crown developments
- developments that are granted planning permission by a development order (including permitted development rights)

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Published 29 November 2023

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