



PRESS RELEASE

Amenity Standard Receives Widespread Welcome

Following its recent launch, the Amenity Standard has been very much welcomed by all sides of the amenity sector and is already being incorporated into tender documents and specifications going forward. The Amenity Standard, when held and displayed, demonstrates that all operational activities undertaken are at the highest professional standards and fully comply with all regulations, codes of best practice and follow all best practice guidance.

The Standard is being administered by the Amenity Forum and any Amenity Standard organisation must be a member of an approved assurance scheme. Organisations will not pay any extra to be part of the Standard; only the fees required to be a member of the relevant assurance scheme. The Forum audits the scheme operators involved not the individual organisations. At launch, three assurance schemes were recognised but discussions are on-going with all sub sectors of the important but diverse amenity sector about recognising further schemes or indeed in development of new ones. Indeed recently, a further scheme is seeking recognition applicable to distributors who supply products to local authorities, contractors and others.

The establishment of the Amenity Standard is seen very much as a game changing moment for the sector seeking to provide the public and all involved with the assurance that amenity management operations wherever undertaken are safe, appropriate and at the highest standards. Integrated management approaches are core to this, making use of all methods available to achieve optimum results.

Further information about the Standard can be obtained at www.theamenitystandard.co.uk. There is also information on the Standard at the Forum's Get Moving website www.getbritainmoving.uk. This website is very much public facing seeking to inform on all aspects of amenity management to non-specialists.

The Amenity Standard was formally launched in Scotland at a specially convened conference in February and will be central to a further conference being organised in Wales in May. The Standard has the backing of all national governments throughout the UK and is very much aligned to thinking as the UK government seeks to review the National Action Plan relating to weed, pest and disease management in the coming months. If you are an organisation providing amenity management either for clients or indeed in house, make sure you are delivering at the Amenity Standard and, if you wish to discuss how this can best be achieved, contact admin@amenityforum.net

Steve Hewitt, Manager for the Standard, said "What goes on in the amenity sector is often unpublicised and unrecognised but those who operate within it are those creating safe, healthy amenity and sports surfaces fit for purpose. This applies to our streets and pavements, our roads and rail, our parks, our sports pitches, golf courses and more. The Amenity Standard is designed to give assurance to all who use such facilities that operations are carried out to the highest professional levels of best practice. In future, we would like to see that all amenity operations can demonstrate the Standard giving assurances equivalent to seeing the Red Tractor when buying food"

Notes to Editors

The Amenity Forum is the non-profit making voluntary initiative and the independent body bringing together professional organisations with an involvement in the amenity horticulture sector. This is a very diverse industry responsible for the landscape management of urban areas, highways and rail network, sports grounds, parks, industrial and utility sites. To establish and maintain these areas to a high standard, the sector requires access to pesticides, efficient equipment and trained and qualified staff. The organisation was formed in October 2003 as a key action to support the Voluntary Initiative, an industry led project agreed with Government to reduce the environmental impact of pesticides.

The membership comprises of organisations from across this diverse industry, covering manufacturers, suppliers, trade associations, local authorities, major users, landscape, sport and leisure. Equally important are those members who represent training and qualification standards. The key Government agencies have an important observer role. The objectives of the Amenity Forum are:

To promote and encourage proper and responsible use of pesticides and integrated methods for the control of pests, weeds and diseases

To lead, coordinate and encourage achievement of “Best Practice” objectives in weed, pest & disease management

To ensure that all practices are sustainable and protect the environment with minimised risks to public health.

To run a communication programme to support these aims and to promote the image of the sector among stakeholders and the public.

To coordinate and encourage the establishment of sustainable qualifications, training and CPD activity, specifically for the Amenity sector

To organise activities within the Amenity Forum membership and linked organisations, such that Amenity Forum objectives are developed in a coordinated way

For further information on this press release or the work of the Forum, please contact the Secretary, Kate Hopkins, or the Chairman, Professor John Moverley OBE. Similarly, if you wish to register for future press releases, please let us know.

admin@amenityforum.net or email John.Moverley@amenityforum.co.uk