

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Site Address:

Land On Egerton Street (pre. New Jerusalem Church), Middleton, Rochdale, M24 4QD

Client:

Zest Eco Ltd.

Assessment Date:

24th October 2025

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council. The proposal is described as:

The construction of 7 terraced houses with associated gardens and parking [Unsubmitted].

BNG assessment methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: **BNG Methodology and Legislation – 2025.**

The results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit and BNG assessment may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.

Version Control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Nicola Baxter, BSc, MSc, Graduate Ecologist	27/10/2025
Proof	0.2	Elen Griffin BSc (Hones), MRSB, Senior Ecologist	03/11/2025
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Updated	2.0	Nicola Baxter, BSc, MSc, Graduate Ecologist	04/03/2026

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Site Location and Context

A baseline habitat map is provided in **Appendix 1**, a post development habitat map in **Appendix 2**, a proposed development plan in **Appendix 3**, headline BNG results in **Appendix 4**, and condition assessments in **Appendix 5**.

The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference SD 85057 05251 and has an area of approximately 0.083ha.

The site comprises an area of overgrown grassland surrounded by red brick walls and HERAS fencing. The site is situated in Rhodes, a suburb of the town of Middleton, in the Rochdale district of Greater Manchester. There are no trees or built structures within the site. It is surrounded by urban developments. Aerial imagery shows the local landscape to have an urban character, with several small copses in close proximity to the site. Water bodies can be found nearby, such as the River Irk located ~190m to the south. Such features likely enhance the area for a variety of species, including bats, amphibians and reptiles. The soils are described by Soilscape LandIS database as freely draining slightly acid sandy soils, these soils are identified as having low fertility and support a wide range of acid dry pastures and woodland with potential for lowland heath.

This report should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- ❖ Statutory Baseline BNG Metric – Land On Egerton Street, M24 4QD – v2 (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2025)
- ❖ Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) - Land On Egerton Street, M24 4QD (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2025)

Executive Summary

- ❖ From the calculations the current area-based habitat value on-site is 0.62 units. No linear-based habitats were recorded at the time of the site visit. To achieve a minimum +10% uplift for the area-based habitat value a minimum of 0.68 units are required.
- ❖ As the site will be utilised for 7 residential terraced properties with minimal communal space the BNG trading rules are foreseen to be a constraint: the retrospective removal of individual trees must be made up for on a like-for-like or like-for-better basis. In other words, unless sufficient amounts of individual tree habitats are proposed, the site will generate a trading error for the loss of these habitat types.
- ❖ The updated plans show the site is to be used for residential properties, as per the BNG user guidance no habitats can be created with BNG offsetting in mind within any areas proposed to be private residential gardens. This includes any trees, green roofs, or wildflower meadows which may be proposed within such residential curtilages. Semi-natural habitats such as mixed scrub and trees should therefore be provisioned within communal areas under central management.
- ❖ Given the proposed vegetation clearance of the site to facilitate the provisioning of urban infrastructure, including large amounts of sealed surfaces, it is unlikely that net gain will be achieved within the site's red line boundary. Off-site compensation will likely be required, and can be done by purchasing biodiversity units from existing habitat banks. Recommendations and guidance on this is included in the relevant section of the report.

Introduction

BNG Informative		
Habitat Degradation Statement	Date reflected by BNG calculations	22 nd April 2020
	The baseline biodiversity value of the site is not derived from the site as observed during the PEA field survey (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2025), as a review of satellite imagery show evidence of habitat degradation on-site, specifically the loss of four individual trees. Therefore, the baseline biodiversity value of the site is derived from assumptions inferred from historic satellite imagery (i.e. GoogleEarth).	
	Historical imagery < 22 Apr 2020 > > 	Historical imagery < 10 Mar 2025 > > 
Irreplaceable Habitat Statement	No irreplaceable habitats as listed under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations (2024) are currently present nor were present before 30 th January 2020.	

Metric Version & Publication Date	Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool first published 29 th November 2023 with last updates to metric tools and user guides on 3 rd July 2025.		
BNG Target Uplift	+10%		
National Character Area (NCA)	54 - Manchester Pennine Fringe		
Strategic Significance	Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is the responsible authority for drafting the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council. Their LNRS is available at: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/natural-environment/our-plan-for-nature-recovery/		
	Habitat	Baseline / Post-Development	Justification
	All	All	Low – Following publication of the LNRS, as the site does not sit within any areas mapped as opportunity areas of local nature sites.
Limitations			
A review of satellite imagery showed the site had four individual trees present in 2021. There were no trees on the site at the time of the site visit and no approved planning applications for the site, therefore the condition of the trees had to be assumed positively using historical bird eye satellite imagery as historic street view was not available. As the trees were only visible on satellite imagery from 2018 - 2021 the size of the trees has been assumed to be small.			

Baseline

Baseline Biodiversity Value: On-Site

Area-Based Habitats (A-1)

Habitat	Area (ha)	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Bramble Scrub	0.004ha (0.02 units)	Areas where the bramble coverage exceeds 75% are mapped separately from the grassland. These are located along the eastern and southern boundary lines with a pocket to the north of the site.	Habitat condition pre-determined as ' N/A ' as detailed within the Statutory Biodiversity Condition Assessment Supplement..	Low significance
Modified Grassland	0.079ha (0.47 units)	The site is dominated by unmanaged and overgrown modified grassland. The sward is tall, averaging ~60cm, there are no areas of bare ground or physical damage. Areas of tall forbs run alongside the southern and western boundaries. Areas of scattered scrub are located along the western and eastern boundaries with a pocket to the north of the site. The scattered scrub is predominantly bramble with <75% cover and buddleia. Species list can be found in the PEA (Arbtech Ltd, 2025).	Good: passes 6 of 7 criteria including essential criterion A. Assessed using the 'Grasslands Low Distinctiveness' habitat type condition sheet.	
Urban Tree	Moderate: 0.0163 (0.13 units)	A review of satellite imagery showed four trees to be present on the site in 2021. The trees were not evident in 2017 satellite records, suggesting an establishment date between 2017 and 2021, and a maximum age of four years. Therefore, these trees are considered small and immature. Within the context of the BNG Metric Condition Assessment, the lack of development time means there is negligible potential for the formation of veteran features or specialist ecological niches.	Moderate: passes 4 of 6 criteria. 4no. small	

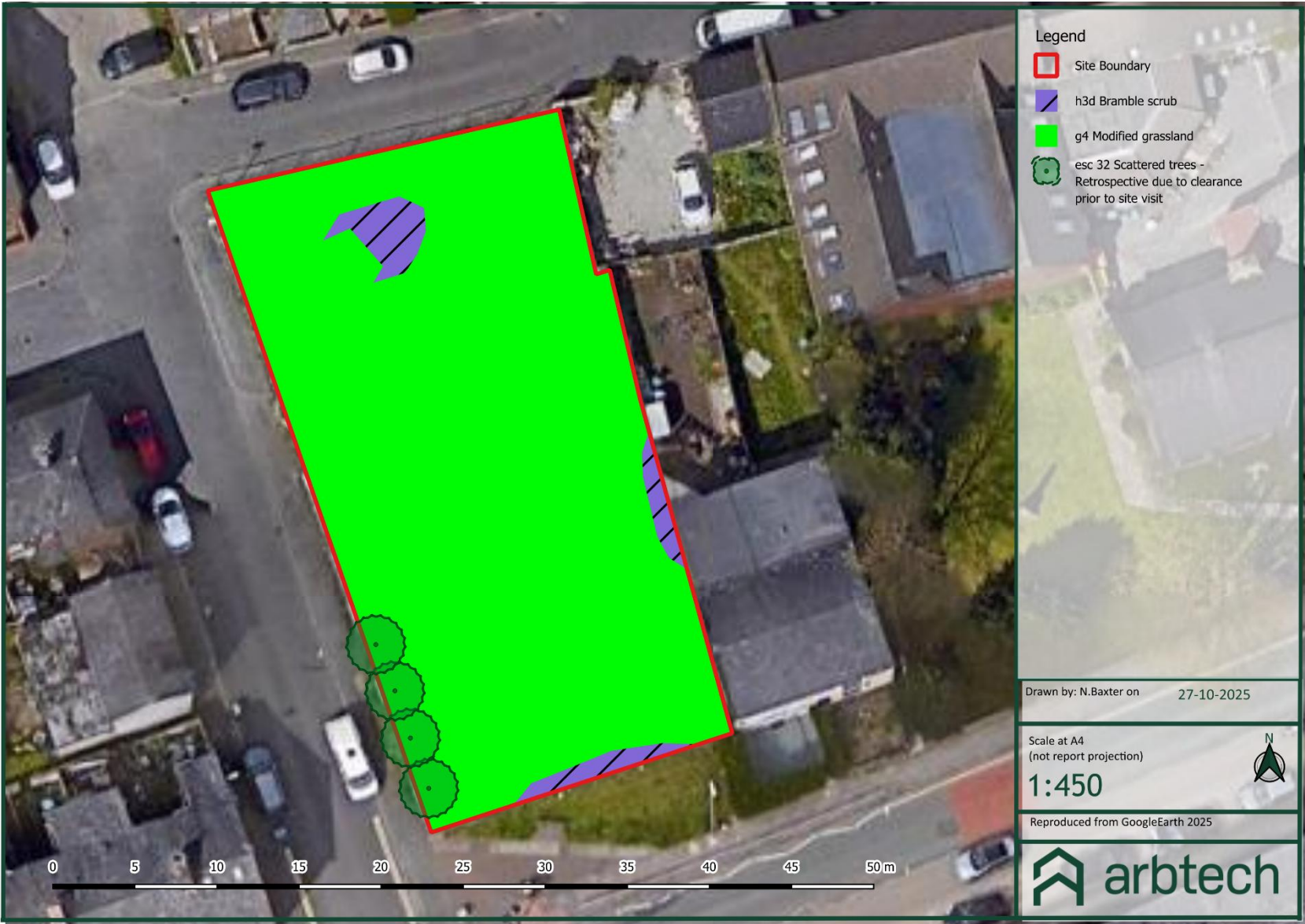
Baseline Biodiversity Value

	Habitat Type	Biodiversity Units Generated
Area-Based	Modified Grassland	0.47
	Bramble Scrub	0.02
	4no. Urban Trees (Moderate Condition)	0.13
	Total	0.62

Results, Discussion, and Next Steps

BNG Informative	
Results and Discussion	The site generates 0.62 area-based habitat units. To achieve a minimum +10% uplift, a minimum of 0.68 area-based habitat units are required. A post-development BNG assessment must be undertaken to discern the net change of biodiversity value as a result of the proposed development.
General Recommendations	Trading rules are foreseen to be a constraint: the retrospective removal of individual trees must be made up for on a like-for-like or like-for-better basis. In other words, unless sufficient amounts of individual tree habitats are proposed, the site will generate a trading error for the loss of these habitat types. No habitats can be created in BNG within any areas proposed to be private residential gardens. This includes any trees, green roofs, or wildflower meadows which may be proposed within such residential curtilages. Semi-natural habitats such as mixed scrub and trees should therefore be provisioned within communal areas under central management. Given the proposed vegetation clearance of the site to facilitate the provisioning of urban infrastructure, including large amounts of sealed surfaces, it is unlikely that net gain will be achieved within the site's red line boundary. Off-site compensation will likely be required, and can be done by: ❖ creating the required habitats off-site (i.e. outside the red line boundary) <i>N.B. this will require a baseline ecological survey to determine the baseline value of the off-site parcel of land ideally within the curtilage of the LPA or within the same National Character Area (NCA), and the off-site land must be registered with the government;</i> ❖ purchasing biodiversity units from existing habitat banks <i>N.B. such habitat bank should ideally be within the curtilage of the LPA or within the same NCA; or</i> ❖ purchasing statutory biodiversity credits from the government <i>N.B. metric rules dictate if statutory credits are required, double the amount of credits will be required to compensate for a single unit deficit.</i> The mechanism for securing this off-setting will need to be proposed to and confirmed by the LPA and would be linked to the application through a planning obligation Section 106 (s106) agreement. The proposed habitat compensation should be of an appropriate distinctiveness to meet the trading rules of BNG.

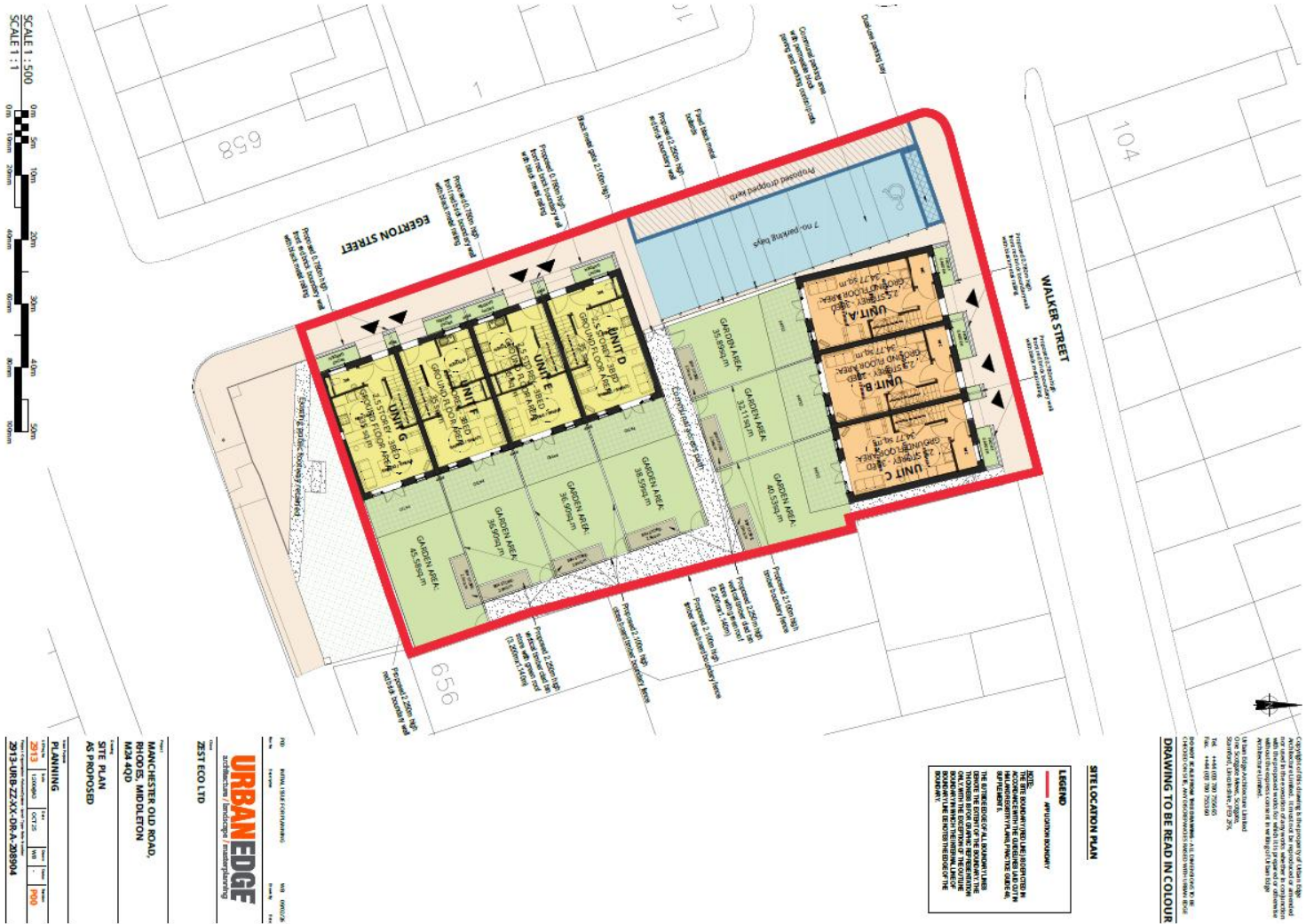
Appendix 1: Baseline Habitat Plan



Appendix 2: Post-Development Habitat Plan

Not available at the time of writing.

Appendix 3: Proposed Development Plan



Appendix 4: Headline BNG Results

Land On Egerton Street (pre. New Jerusalem)		Return to results menu	
Headline Results			
Scroll down for final results ⚠			
On-site baseline		Area habitat units	0.62
		Hedgerow units	0.00
		Watercourse units	0.00
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)		Area habitat units	0.00
		Hedgerow units	0.00
		Watercourse units	0.00
On-site net change (units & percentage)		Area habitat units	-0.62
		Hedgerow units	0.00
		Watercourse units	0.00

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.62	0.68
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00

Appendix 5a: Baseline Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets

Modified Grassland; assessed using 'Grasslands Low Distinctiveness' habitat type condition sheet:

Condition Assessment Criteria:			Condition Achieved (Y/N)	Notes/Justification
A	There must be 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² , including at least 2 forbs. Note – this criterion is essential for achieving moderate condition.		Y	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m2 present, including at least 2 forbs
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.		N	Sward height was uniform due to lapsed management
C	Some scattered scrub (including bramble) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area. Note - patches of shrubs with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.		Y	Scrub present accounts for <20% of the total grassland area
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.		Y	Physical damage present in <5% of the total grassland area
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).		Y	Bare ground is <10%
F	Cover of bracken less than 20%.		Y	No bracken observed
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981).		Y	No invasive non-native species found at the time of the site visit
Essential criterion achieved (Y/N)			Y	
Number of criteria passed			5	
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ✓	
Passes 6 or 7 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A		Good (3)	✓	
Passes 4 or 5 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A		Moderate (2)		
Passes 0, 1, 2 or 3 of 7 criteria; OR 4, 5 or 6 of criteria but failing criterion A		Poor (1)		

Urban Trees; assessed using 'Individual Trees' habitat type condition sheet:

Condition Assessment Criteria		Condition Achieved (Y/N)	Notes/Justification
A	The tree is a native species (or more than 70% within the block are native species).	Y	Condition assumed positively due to clearance prior to site visit and lack of detailed historical street view imagery
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Y	Trees considered individual trees and thus automatically pass this criterion.
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	N	The trees are visible on satellite imagery between 2018-2021, not before. Therefore, size is assumed small and age assumed immature.
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by anthropogenic activities such as vandalism or herbicide use. There is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Y	Condition assumed positively due to clearance prior to site visit and lack of detailed historical street view imagery
E	Natural Ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	N	The four trees were not visible in 2017 historical satellite imagery and are therefore considered to have a maximum age of approximately 4 years (as of 2021). Due to their immaturity and small size, the development of ecological niches is not anticipated.
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y	Condition assumed positively due to clearance prior to site visit and lack of detailed historical street view imagery
Number of criteria passed			4
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓
Passes 5 or 6 of 6 criteria		Good (3)	
Passes 3 or 4 of 6 criteria		Moderate (2)	✓
Passes 0, 1 or 2 of 6 criteria		Poor (1)	