

What is the Use Classes Order?

The [Town and Country Planning \(Use Classes\) Order 1987](#), as amended, groups common uses of land and buildings into classes. The uses within each class are, for planning purposes, considered to be broadly similar to one another. The different use classes are:

- **Part A**
 - Class A1 – Shops
 - Class A2 – Financial and professional services
 - Class A3 – Restaurants and cafes
 - Class A4 – Drinking establishments
 - Class A5 – Hot food takeaways
- **Part B**
 - Class B1 – Business
 - B1(a) offices excluding those in A2 use
 - B1(b) Research and development of products or processes
 - B1(c) Light industry
 - Class B2 – General Industrial
 - Class B8 – Storage and distribution
- **Part C**
 - Class C1 – Hotels
 - Class C2 – Residential institutions
 - Class C2A – Secure residential institutions
 - Class C3 – Dwellinghouses
 - Class C4 – Small Houses in multiple occupation
- **Part D**
 - Class D1 – Non-residential institutions
 - Class D2 – Assembly and leisure

What is a sui generis use?

Not all uses of land or buildings fit within the use classes order. When no use classes order category fits, the use of the land or buildings is described as sui generis, which means 'of its own kind'. Examples of sui generis uses include: scrap yards, petrol stations, taxi businesses, (these examples are not exhaustive).

Where land is, or buildings are, being used for different uses which fall into more than one class, then overall use of the land or buildings is regarded as a mixed use, and is also categorised as sui generis. The exception to this is where there is a primary overall use of the site, to which the other uses are ancillary. For example, in a factory with an office and a staff canteen, the office and staff canteen would normally be regarded as ancillary to the factory.



When does a change of use require planning permission?

A change of use of land or buildings requires planning permission if it constitutes a material change of use. There is no statutory definition of 'material change of use'; however, it is linked to the significance of a change and the resulting impact on the use of land and buildings. Whether a material change of use has taken place is a matter of fact and degree and this will be determined on the individual merits of a case.

If planning permission is required for change of use, there may be permitted development rights which allow change of use without having to [make a planning application](#).

Is movement between uses within the same use class development?

Movement from one primary use to another within the same use class is not development, and does not require planning permission unless a planning condition prevents changes within the use class.