# What is PERS?

- PERS or 'Pedestrian Environment Review System' is a walking audit tool.

- It has been developed by TRL – Transport Research Laboratory. Version 2.0 of the software has had input from TfL to ensure that London specific requirements are catered for.

- PERS as an audit tool consists of two parts:

    - **Checksheet(s)** with accompanying guidance for use in the field to score environments and note comments *and*
    - **Software** that is used to store results and produce presentational output

- PERS is used to assess the level of service and quality provided for pedestrians across a range of pedestrian environments.

- PERS is used to review the following types of pedestrian environment:

    1. **Links** – Any footway, footpath or highway. They can be divided into sections if very long, into sides or reviewed in total.
    2. **Crossings** – Any designated or undesignated crossing where a pedestrian route intersects with a highway. You may choose to include side road junction crossings or not, dependent on the audit taking place.
    3. **Routes** – A way that links a trip origin and a trip destination, such as home to work. Routes are made up of any number of links and crossings.
    4. **Public Transport Waiting Areas** – Any designated area where people are required to wait in order to use public transport, such as bus and train stops. Larger PTWA's may be considered as interchange spaces.
    5. **Interchange Spaces** – The areas around and between public transport stops or termini. They allow travellers to change between transport modes. PERS should only be used to assess the external public interchange space (under local authority control), not the interior.
    6. **Public Spaces** – These vary in size from small plazas to parks. These are not specifically for pedestrians, but are used as part of a pedestrians' route.

- Although quantitative methods are used when reviewing pedestrian environments, within PERS much of the auditing is also qualitative, using the judgement of the auditor. This allows the 'feel' of an environment to be gauged and assessed.

- Because much of the reviewing is qualitative, it is essential that the guidance summary sheets are reviewed before conducting an audit.

- The auditor must always review a pedestrian environment from the perspective of the user and those most vulnerable.

- The PERS scoring system ranges from -3 to +3, where 0 is an average score as below:

Poor   Average   Good

-3   -2   -1   0   1   2   3
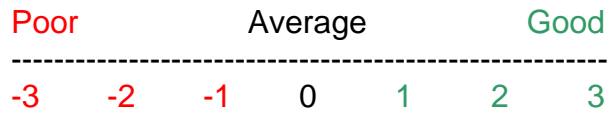
- The PERS software is weighted so that particular factors account for a larger proportion of the overall grading than others.

- PERS factors in the relative importance of some factors compared to others (e.g. Strategic routes are considered most important and so must score more highly to be rated the same as Local routes).

The Review Process

The key stages and process for conducting a pedestrian audit are detailed below:

- Stage 1 – Definition of the Study Area

The study area should be defined on a base map, with all the pedestrian environments – links, crossings, public spaces to be reviewed all displayed. All auditors should have a copy of the base map.

- Stage 2 – Identification of Review Stages

The complete list of pedestrian environments should be broken down and divided up amongst auditors. The guidance for auditing these environments should be reviewed.

- Stage 3 – On-Street Evaluation

The auditors review their assigned environment using the summary sheets and scoring guides. Scores and comments are noted down for later input into the PERS software.

- Stage 4 – Data Input and Analysis

The scores and comments gathered are entered into PERS software for each environment reviewed. The software assigns each environment and sub-sections an overall score.

- Stage 5 – Display and Review of Outputs

The PERS software can be used to generate reports and charts to display all aspects of the auditing data gathered.