



WCHG Boundary Policy

Date of approval	12 September 2023
Responsible director	Paul Butterworth – Exec Director of Assets
Policy monitoring body	CX Committee
Resident input into policy	Great Places Panel
Date for policy review	August 2026
Linked strategies/policies	Garden Enforcement Policy Empty Homes Policy Repairs and Maintenance Policy Environmental Services Policy Assisted Gardening Policy
Version/date	V4.2 August 2023 FINAL

WCHG Boundary Policy

1. Background

- 1.1. The WCHG Corporate Plan includes the Great Place and Living Well Strategic themes, both of which confirm our commitment to maintaining the homes and services our customers receive. This supporting policy specifically outlines the approach we take to maintaining boundary hedges, fences and walls.
- 1.2. The WCHG Corporate Plan has two embedded cross cutting themes supporting the delivery of Value for Money and our carbon reduction ambitions. This policy reflects our responsibilities in these areas.
- 1.3. In addition, WCHG recognises the Garden City heritage that communities across Wythenshawe proudly support and this policy will continue to promote these principles.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to gates and boundaries comprised of a hedge, a wall, or a fence of different types, for example solid, perforated, wooden panels, or wire.
- 2.2. Boundaries within the scope of this policy include perimeter and divisional boundaries to the front and rear of properties and to communal areas.
- 2.3. Application of this policy is subject to any specific responsibilities set out in the customers lease or tenancy agreement.
- 2.4. Under the scope of this policy the maintenance of boundaries includes minor repairs, cyclical replacement, and work required to protect health and safety and provide an effective boundary. For purposes of this policy 'effective' does not constitute impenetrable and, for example it does not replace the customers obligation to supervise children, and keep pets under control in line with their tenancy agreement.
- 2.5. Effective boundaries may be formed from a mixture of fence types or hedges and do not need to be uniform throughout.
- 2.6. Under the terms of this policy WCHG will not remove hedge boundaries to replace them with any type of fencing or wall.

3. Landlord Responsibilities

- 3.1. WCHG will complete all boundary repairs that present an immediate health and safety risk in line with our Repairs and Maintenance Policy, as emergency repairs within a 24 hour completion timescale.

Fencing

- 3.2. WCHG will complete fencing repairs that do not exceed more than 2 fence panels, in line with our Repairs and Maintenance Policy. Such works will generally be classed as non-urgent and assigned a 40 day completion target.

- 3.3. For more extensive fencing work, WCHG will deliver a planned programme approach in partnership with a specialist contractor, in order to manage demand and achieve value for money.
- 3.4. WCHG will assess the work required against the following criteria:
 - 3.4.1. Confirmation that WCHG is responsible for the fencing.
 - 3.4.2. The level of health and safety risk presented by current condition.
 - 3.4.3. The access that is available to complete the work required
 - 3.4.4. Customer circumstances that may require reasonable adjustment to policy in line with the Equality Act.
- 3.5. WCHG will confirm the completion timescale and extent of the work that will be undertaken, with individual customers at the point of inspection. Completion timescales will vary in line with levels of demand and assessment of priority.
- 3.6. WCHG will when possible endeavour to match existing fencing when completing repairs. When this is not possible a mix of fencing types will be used to re-instate an effective boundary.
- 3.7. WCHG will deliver a cyclical programme of boundary gate and fencing inspection and redecoration, including the repair and or replacement of gates, fence panels and posts as required.

Hedges

- 3.8. WCHG will ensure that boundaries formed by hedges are cut back to a reasonable level in line with the re-lettable standard before a new tenancy starts.
- 3.9. WCHG may correct gaps between sparse trunks by installing metal chain link type fencing, or concrete posts and timber panel fencing, alongside additional planting of infill privet and shrubs.
- 3.10. WCHG will not replace a boundary hedges with fencing or walls.

Walls and gates

- 3.11. WCHG will maintain walls and gates in line with the WCHG Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

Other

- 3.12. WCHG will record the condition of all boundaries at the start of every new tenancy or property exchange.
- 3.13. WCHG will confirm specific tenant responsibilities such as fencing installed by previous tenants that exceeds the WCHG offer, at the start of each tenancy.

- 3.14. WCHG will endeavour to agree the fair apportionment of costs where work is required to boundaries with a private property, including the use of legal action if this is deemed appropriate, for example the appointment of a third party surveyor under The Party Wall Act to determine an award in disputed matters.
- 3.15. WCHG will investigate boundary disputes between tenanted properties and private properties. This includes establishing boundary locations, legal advice and re-aligning boundary if required.
- 3.16. WCHG will investigate issues related to unmanaged land between boundaries, sometimes referred to as 'no-man's land'. This could include the clearance of waste or corrective boundary work. When appropriate WCHG will seek to recover reasonable costs from tenants and private land owners.

4. Customer responsibilities

- 4.1. Customers are responsible for the maintenance of boundaries as outlined in their tenancy agreement or lease. This includes the regular cutting back of hedges.
- 4.2. For customers who started their tenancies after 1st April 2021 this includes the responsibility for repair of boundaries to the rear of their property.
- 4.3. Customers must ensure their property is clear and free from hazards for any boundary repair or replacement work to be undertaken.
- 4.4. Customers can request permission to complete boundary improvement work by completing The WCHG Tenant Improvement and Alteration Form that is available on our website.
- 4.5. Customers who install their own boundaries are responsible for maintaining and repairing them.
- 4.6. Customers may be recharged at the end of their tenancy if WCHG has to undertake any remedial work to boundaries the customer has installed, or is responsible for and has failed to maintain.

5. Complaints

- 5.1. Customers who are dissatisfied with the response or service they receive under the scope of this policy, can make a complaint in line with the WCHG Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy. Full details are available on our website.

6. Equality Diversity and Inclusion

- 6.1. WCHG will ensure that the WCHG Boundary Policy and procedure is accessible to all customers. WCHG recognises that customers of all races, ages, religions, gender, sexual orientation, literacy levels and disability should be treated equally and fairly. We

will make every reasonable effort to ensure that no-one is discriminated against directly or indirectly on the basis of any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. We recognise that some protected groups may be disproportionately impacted and will take additional steps in the application of this policy and make reasonable adjustments to ensure compliance with the Act.

- 6.2. This policy can be provided in a different format, translated, large print, easy read, braille, or an audio copy. Requests can be made by contacting us by phone on: 0300 111 0000 or: 0800 633 5500 or by email: inclusionanddiversity@wchg.org.uk.
- 6.3. A full Equality Impact Assessment was not deemed necessary for this policy.

7. Monitoring and Review

- 7.1. This policy will be reviewed every three years in consultation with the Great Place Panel, and approved by the Customer Experience Committee.
- 7.2. We will use routine performance management and budget management reporting to monitor the effectiveness of the procedures in place to deliver this policy.
- 7.3. We will outline colleague roles and responsibilities within the service delivery processes delivery, to ensure the appropriate expertise and support is in place for each element of the customer journey managed under this policy.