



Garden Boundary and Fencing Policy

Policy Name:	Garden Boundary and Fencing Policy
Status:	Version 7
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E&D Impact Assessed:	See GLT Paper
Customer Consultation:	Property Panel
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Wythenshawe was built to be a desirable garden city, with gardens, grassed verges, green spaces and many trees. Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (the Group) carries out a great deal of work across our neighbourhoods to ensure they are maintained to a high standard and the Tenancy Management Team work with customers to ensure the tenancy conditions are met and their gardens are well maintained, including their divisional and perimeter hedges which are a key feature of garden cities.
- 1.2 There are a significant number of properties where boundary hedges have been removed and replaced with fencing (and less commonly walls) of a variety of types, either by current or previous tenants, the Group, or by previous landlords. In addition, new properties constructed are typically provided with boundary fencing or walls as a mean of achieving secure by design standards.
- 1.3 Except where installed by the current tenant, the Group are responsible for the repair and maintenance of all boundary fencing and gates.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy will apply to all tenants of the Group whose property benefits from a private garden, or to the perimeter boundaries of communal gardens maintained by the Group.
- 2.2. Our Tenancy Agreement currently makes WCHG legally obliged to repair or replace any fencing provided by either subsidiary.

3. Policy

- 3.1. The Group will ensure that fencing and gates (except where installed by the current tenant) are repaired and maintained to provide an effective garden boundary.
- 3.2. All trees, shrubs, hedges and the like within a garden including those that form the boundary of a property are the responsibility of the customer to trim and maintain in line with the terms of the tenancy agreement and the Group's Garden Enforcement Policy.
- 3.3. In most circumstances, the Group will not replace with fencing, any hedges which form an effective property boundary. This is in line with the Group's wider Environmental strategy and the Greater Manchester zero carbon initiative.
- 3.4. Where the condition of hedges is such that an effective boundary is not formed, The Group may:

- Correct low level gaps between sparse trunks by installing 'metal chain-link' type fencing in conjunction with the planting of infill privet or similar shrubs to match existing (e.g. Berberis, Cotoneaster, Holly, Viburnum);
- Correct larger gaps within an otherwise satisfactory hedgerow which can't be repaired with chain-link, by installing concrete post and timber lapped panel or palisade fencing within the retained hedgerows.

3.5 Effective boundaries can be a mix of fence types, styles, height and materials including fencing, masonry and hedges, solid or perforated and although the Group will aim to provide a boundary of consistent make-up, it is not necessary nor policy to achieve uniformity, either across adjacent boundaries, or even within discreet hedgerows or fence lines. Appearance alone will not be considered grounds for undertaking remedial works.

4. Services

- 4.1. The Group will as part of its 5 year external redecoration cycle, inspect, re-stain/paint boundary gates and fencing (except powder coated metal) for which it is responsible under this policy, and where defective, repair or replace individual gates, fencing panels and posts.
- 4.2. At any time between cycles, customers may contact the Group to report issues with their garden boundaries or to request repair. On receiving a reported issue, the procedure summarised in the Fencing Request Process Map in **Appendix A** is to be applied.

5. Service Standards

- 5.1. The Group will respond to repair requests in line with the timescales determined by the Responsive Repair Policy, under which fencing repairs will typically be classified as Six Week Priority Repairs.
- 5.2. For work requests equating to the length of 2 panels or less (up to 4m or 13ft approx), orders will be raised directly in the Orchard Repairs system by the customer services team.
- 5.3. For work requests above 2 panel lengths (more than 4m or 13ft approx) details will be logged in Orchard by the customer services team for review and action by the Investment Team.
- 5.4. The Group will seek to recover the cost of repairing or replacing fencing or gates caused by wilful damage or negligent actions of tenants in line with the Rechargeable Repairs policy, or take other enforcement action under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement and Garden Enforcement Policy.

- 5.5. The Group will routinely monitor performance of the minor repair works as part of the overall repairs customer satisfaction survey process and will also survey customers receiving works ordered via investment team to ensure satisfactory standards are maintained.

6. Service Demand

- 6.1 The Group has an annual budget informed by the Stock Condition Survey to repair and maintain boundary fencing and gates and will review it periodically (at least annually) to ensure we are meeting the demand for the activity across the Group.
- 6.2 Dependant upon demand, timescales for delivery of routine fencing repair and maintenance activities may be impacted and adjusted accordingly within a financial year.

7. Works Undertaken by the Customer

- 7.1. Where a tenant wishes to undertake their own improvements to the boundaries of their properties, they must first seek approval of the Group and complete a Tenant Alteration application form available from the Customer Services Team. All requests will be reviewed and approved or rejected by the Group's Surveyor Team.
- 7.2. Completed works will be inspected with a photographic record added to Docuware (Group Documents Management system)
- 7.3. All items installed by the customer will become the responsibility of the customer to repair and maintain. Any installed items found to be requiring repair or maintenance at the end of tenancy, may be considered rechargeable and the Group may seek to recover the cost of any remedial works required.
- 7.4. A photographic record of boundary type and condition is recorded by the voids team prior to the start of each new tenancy or property exchange to facilitate application of this Policy and to ensure recharges are only sought for appropriate items.

8. Works Adjacent to Private Properties

- 8.1. Where a boundary requiring fencing work is shared with a private property, the Group will attempt to contact the owner and agree fair apportionment of costs.
- 8.2. If agreement cannot be reached, the Group will decide whether to pursue the matter under Party Wall Dispute procedures, or to stand the cost of the whole work if legal resolution likely to be disproportionately expensive, subject to Assistant Director approval.

9. Boundary Disputes and ‘No Mans’ Land

- 9.1. Boundary Disputes arising between tenants or tenanted and Private properties will be investigated by Tenancy Management, with support of Investment Team Project Surveyor where required to ascertain appropriate boundary locations, seeking legal advice where appropriate. Where realignment is required, this will be carried out applying the general principles of this policy.
- 9.2 Areas of unmanaged land between garden borders, sometimes referred to as ‘no man’s land’ can arise due to residents and home owners moving boundaries or creating new boundary lines. Such areas can attract waste of varying types which it has been found can be deposited and accumulate over time. Where practical to correct during tenancy, the tenancy management team can seek to clear area of ‘no- mans land’ liaising with the Ground Maintenance team, applying recharge principles where cause can be established. Any corrective boundary works will be undertaken in line with this policy. Where not practical during tenancy, a UDC will be applied and corrective work will be done when the property becomes void.

10. Responsibility

- 10.1. The Executive Directors of Housing and Director of Assets shall be responsible for the implementation and review of this policy and will ensure that the staff who are involved are trained in the implementation of this policy and any associated procedure.

11. Consultation, Monitoring and Review


- 11.1. The Garden Boundary and Fencing Policy will be reviewed every three years by Group Board with customer consultation.

12. Equality & Diversity

- 12.1. The Group will ensure that the Garden Boundary and Fencing Policy is accessible to its diverse customers and will take into account the different needs of customers when explaining the options available to them and in tailoring the service around customer need and where applicable ensuring alignment with the Group’s Adaptions policy.

13. Associated Policies

- Tenancy Management Policy
- Concessionary Gardening Policy
- Garden Enforcement Policy
- Estate Management Policy
- Responsive Repair Policy

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- Customer Care Policy
 - Complaints Policy
 - Adaptations Policy
 - Rechargeable Repairs Policy

Fencing Requests Process

