



## Environmental Services Policy

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Environmental Services Policy
<b>Status:</b>	Final
<b>Approved by:</b>	Board – May 2021
<b>Drafted by:</b>	Barry Warner
<b>Date approved:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
<b>Date effective from:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
<b>Customer consultation:</b>	Great Places Panel
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	May 2023

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Environmental Services Policy covers the following areas of work:

- Grass Cutting to open sites and communal grounds
- Restoring gardens to an acceptable standard at void properties
- Provision of an assisted gardening service for vulnerable tenants
- Arboriculture (tree management)
- Shared and Communal Grounds
- Additional works (Ad-Hoc requests, community projects which will be evaluated upon request)
- Mobile Cleaning Service
- All works carried out by the Group in line with this policy will be undertaken by the Group's direct labour organisation, Wythenshawe Works, or specialist contractors.

## **2. KEY OBJECTIVES:**

Wythenshawe Community Housing Group is committed to the provision of an excellent Environmental Services to ensure the satisfaction of its tenants and leaseholders, to protect the value of its housing stock and achieve value for money. In order to achieve this, the Group will:

- Ensure colleagues are clear on the objectives of the WCHG with regard to Environmental Services
- Ensure colleagues are provided with appropriate training
- Ensure that our service to all customers reflects WCHG tenancy agreements, leases, legal requirements, best practice and regulatory guidance under the HCA's Regulatory Framework 2015 requirements
- Work collaboratively with all key partners to ensure that we achieve these objectives
- Produce service standards in consultation with our tenant involvement mechanisms
- Use insights from Data to drive our services to meet customer needs
- Collect feedback from customers on an annual basis through satisfaction surveys and explaining clearly our service standards to allow them to judge our performance against these standards. We will use this feedback to enhance our data and to drive services to meet customers' needs
- Make best use of our GIS system to record all land WCHG is responsible for, our tree stock and the intelligence we gain to drive our services to support WCHG corporate plan to be a data and digital led organisation.

## **3. SERVICE AREAS**

All service areas are underpinned by a suite of service standards, see appendix I

### **3.1. Grass Cutting Service**

All open grassed areas owned by the Group will have a 21-day cutting cycle target without collecting cuttings. This method maximises efficiency, minimises labour costs, maximises the life of equipment and machines and eliminates the cost of grass cutting disposal. All WCHG

sites will be litter picked prior to cutting. Street cleaning, including litter picking across all other areas of Wythenshawe, (road side verges, pathways, streets etc.) remains the responsibility of Manchester City Council .

### **3.2. Restoration of Empty Homes gardens**

When a property is re-let the garden will be cleared and left in a clean and tidy condition to enable the incoming tenant to maintain the garden using domestic gardening equipment. Any hazards such as fish ponds and unsafe structures will be removed. Where existing features such as sheds, decking, flagging ornamental beds are assessed and deemed fit for purpose these will be left on site for the new tenant unless the new tenant requests their removal. The new tenant will sign a disclaimer to accept responsibility of the item when they sign the tenancy agreement with Tenancy Management.

WCHG do not offer a gardening service where there is a mutual exchange of properties, customers accept the condition of the garden as part of the exchange.

### **3.3. Assisted Gardening Service**

The Assisted Gardening service is available to vulnerable tenants who have difficulty maintaining their garden and meet the criteria set out in the WCHG Assisted Gardening Policy. WCHG will aim to deliver up to 8 garden maintenance visits each year between April and September which will involve grass cutting. Cuttings are not removed from site. Shrubs/hedges will be clipped twice per year and any green waste generated will be placed in the green waste bin at the property. Decorative flowers and border maintenance are not undertaken.

### **3.4. Arboriculture Service**

The Group will maintain a tree register listing the location and type of all trees it is responsible for. The register will record details of all inspections and any work carried out. Each tree will be inspected every 4 years at which time routine pruning will be carried out only if required and in line with the 4 D's; Dead, Dying, Diseased or Dangerous. Additional work will only be carried out if it will benefit the health of the tree

- An Out of Hours procedure is in place for Assure24 or the OOH duty manager to follow to determine if an OOH site visit is required.
- The Group will consider an annual budget provision to supply and plant new trees to support Wythenshawe Garden City principles and the Environmental Sustainability Strategy pledges.

### **3.5. Shared and Communal Grounds**

The Group will provide a gardening service to shared and communal grounds and will aim to carry out up to 17 maintenance visits per year. Grass cuttings will be removed from site unless access or weather prevents this. Where applicable and with the consent of the majority of resident's services can be flexible to meet customers' requirements as part of the service charge setting process.

### **3.6. Additional services**

The Group will provide additional services dependent on resource availability and demand. This will also include the removal and upon request the return of personal items stored within communal areas in line with our fire safety management policy whereby all communal areas will be kept sterile.

The Brook which runs through Wythenshawe provides an important function for draining away excess water in periods of heavy rain, during these periods we inspect the Brook each day it rains to ensure it is flowing freely removing any waste from site.

Other examples of additional services are:

- Winter gritting
- Community projects (bulb planting)
- Japanese Knotweed identified will be dealt with in accordance with statutory regulations

### **3.7. Mobile Cleaning**

The Group will provide a cleaning service to properties with communal areas; each area will receive a regular cleaning service in line with our service standards. This includes a cleaning service and full Building checks at weekends and over Bank Holidays for high rise buildings, in line with our fire safety management policy. High Rise building will receive 1 full clean per week and 1 daily visit to carry out building Inspections and cleaning to foyers, lifts and to rotate bins. Low rise building will receive 1 full clean per week including building inspection. Cottage flats will receive 1 full clean per fortnight including building inspection. Any defects or repairs will be reported for rectification, fly tipping within the grounds and waste left in internal communal areas will be reported for removal. Where applicable and with the consent of the majority of resident's services can be flexible to meet customers requirements

## **4. WASTE MANAGEMENT**

### **4.1. Grass Cuttings**

The Group provides a cut and drop grass cutting service meaning grass cuttings are not collected. Disposal of grass cuttings is a high cost exercise involving specialist waste disposal services because it is classed as toxic waste. Grass cuttings will only be collected where service charges are applied.

### **4.2. Other waste**

The Group is committed to recycling as much waste in line with the targets set in the Environmental Sustainability Policy. All waste generated through the delivery of environmental services will, where practicable, be segregated collected and recycled. The Group will publish its waste generation statistics and its re-cycling achievements to support the local authorities' strategy on re-cycling. In addition, the Group will work with MCC to

identify fly tipping, asbestos & dog fouling that will be responsibly dealt with in partnership with MCC.

## **5. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Group will set an affordable annual zero-based budget for Environmental Services that will be used efficiently in order to deliver Value for Money. This will include the use of appropriate seasonal work contracts to ensure staff resources are deployed in the most cost-effective way. Monthly performance reporting and data collection will ensure the Group monitors, reports and manages performance to achieve value for money. We will publish our performance management through our publications, web site, newsletter and scrutiny group.

## **6. BENCHMARKING**

The Group is a member of the Greater Manchester Estate Services (GMES) benchmarking group and will attend quarterly meetings to discuss and compare service standards, performance and costs. We are also part of the Housing Quality Network Estate Services Benchmarking Club (established August 2018) In addition to this we are part of the Environmental Waste and recycling work stream which is partnership with MCC

## **7. LEASEHOLDERS**

Leaseholders will receive the same level of service delivery as all tenants, unless local pre-agreed amendments are made to the service. Leaseholders will be charged for the services provided by the Environmental Services Team in line with the relevant policy.

## **8. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- Asset Management Strategy
- Assisted Gardening Policy
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy
- Garden Enforcement policy
- Lone working policy
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Mobile Services procedure for weekend cover
- Empty Homes policy
- Rechargeable repairs and Recoverable Costs policy
- Tenancy support policy
- Safe guarding policy
- Group Health & Safety policy
- Leaseholder service charge policy
- Fire risk management policy
- Responsive Repairs Polic

## Appendix I

### This is a full list of Service Standards that underpin the Environmental Services provided by WCHG Grounds Maintenance

#### 1. Shared Grounds

Shared grounds will receive up to 17 maintenance visits per year; we aim to carry out 13 visits between April and September and 4 visits between October and March. This will be dependent on weather, in periods of inclement weather maintenance visits may be delayed.

<b>AREA</b>	<b>STANDARDS</b>
<b>Grassed Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grassed areas will be cut on each visit, the area will be litter picked before being cut, cuttings will be removed from site unless inclement weather or access prevents cuttings from being collected.</li></ul>
<b>Hedges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hedges will be trimmed back a minimum of 3 times per year with all cuttings removed from site</li></ul>
<b>Planting beds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beds will be weeded 3 times per year and all waste removed from site.</li></ul>
<b>Paths and Hard Standing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pathways and hard standing areas will be sprayed twice per year to control weeds and swept as required</li></ul>
<b>Shrubs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shrubs will be pruned in accordance with the plants needs or the location where they are growing.</li></ul>
<b>Pets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We do not carry out maintenance to gardens where there is animal fouling; it is the pet owner's responsibility to remove any fouling prior to the maintenance visit.</li></ul>

<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This service does not include landscaping or improvements.</li> </ul>

**Grounds Maintenance**  
**2. Open Space Grass Cutting**

<b>AREA</b>	<b>STANDARDS</b>
<b>Open space grassed areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We aim to cut up to 13 times per year between March and October dependant on weather conditions</li> <li>• Grassed areas will be litter picked before cutting starts</li> <li>• Cutting cycles can be affected by breakdowns, unforeseen issues and more importantly inclement weather, when the cycle is affected by any of these it may take time to catch up leading to a delay in the start of the next cycle</li> </ul>
<b>Grass cuttings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grass cuttings are not collected, cuttings arising from our operations will be blown back onto the grassed area</li> </ul>
<b>Weed clearance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strimming of weeds around obstacles such as bollards, knee rail fencing etc. will be carried out twice per year</li> </ul>
<b>Edging off and repairs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edging off and repairs will be carried out over winter at sites identified during the time we are grass cutting to enable resources to be targeted in the most effective way</li> </ul>

**Grounds Maintenance**  
**3. Empty Homes Gardens**

<b>AREA</b>	<b>STANDARDS</b>
<b>Grassed areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Grassed areas will be returned to a state where it can be cut by a domestic lawn mower, we will fill in divots, holes etc. but do not landscape to improve or alter the original 'lie of the land'</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Where necessary we will apply top soil and seed to areas of poor grass growth to re-establish the grass</b></p>
<b>Hedges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hedges will be reduced to comply with WCHG Garden Regulations, this will be a height of 1.37 metre (4ft 6") to the front and 1.83 metre (6ft) to the rear</b></li> </ul>
<b>Beds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All beds will be hoed off to remove all weeds</b></li> </ul>
<b>Paths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Paths will be scrapped to remove weeds and moss</b></li> </ul>
<b>Shrubs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Decorative shrubs will be pruned as per the plant's needs, unsightly shrubs will be removed</b></li> </ul>
<b>Hard standing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Formal hard standing such as access path and driveways are the responsibility of the void property manager</b></li> <li>• <b>Informal hard standing will be assessed and where deemed fit for purpose these will be left on site, where hard standing is deemed not fit for purpose it will be removed and the area made good with soil and seed</b></li> </ul>
<b>Outbuildings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Any outbuilding that is deemed dangerous will be removed</b></li> </ul>

<b>Boundaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garden work will be carried out up to the boundary of the empty property and no further, gardens that have been shortened by fencing etc. will be reinstated to the original boundary</li> <li>• Where the boundary has been altered and waste has accumulated we will only clear waste to the original boundary, the remainder of the waste will be reported to Tenancy Management with the addresses of the affected properties and if necessary added to the list of no-man's lands that require clearing</li> </ul>
<b>Waste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All waste will be removed from site and where possible segregated into type for recycling, specialist waste removal such as asbestos will be referred to the relevant contractor</li> </ul>

**Grounds Maintenance**  
**4 Assisted Gardens**

Customers on the Assisted Programme will receive a maximum of 8 maintenance visits between April and October. This will be dependant on weather, in periods of inclement weather maintenance visits may be cancelled.

<b>AREA</b>	<b>STANDARDS</b>
<b>Grassed areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grassed areas will be cut on each visit; we do not remove cuttings on the programme</li> </ul>
<b>Hedges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hedges will be trimmed back a maximum of 3 times per year with all cuttings placed into your green bin</li> </ul>
<b>Winter work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no winter visits</li> </ul>
<b>Waste</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will only remove waste generated</li> </ul>

	<p>from our activities, we do not remove existing waste or bulk items such as white goods, settee's etc.</p>
<b>Pets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We do not carry out maintenance to gardens where there is animal fouling, it is the pet owner's responsibility to remove any fouling prior to the maintenance visit, if fouling is not removed the visit will be cancelled</b></li> </ul>
<b>New requests for Assisted Gardening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Many new requests will already have an overgrown garden, in these instances we will carry out what work we can within the time allotted for each garden, it may take several visits before we can cut back all overgrowth, on overgrown new requests we will prioritise safe access to the front door, rear door and pathways around the property.</b></li> </ul>

**Mobile Cleaning Services**  
**5 High Rise Flats**

<b>AREA</b>	<b>STANDARD</b>
<b>Cleaning Duties – External and Communal Area and Block</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clean entrance windows and doors – weekly</b></li> <li>• <b>Brush and mop foyer – daily</b></li> <li>• <b>Brush and mop floors and landings - weekly</b></li> <li>• <b>Brush and clean stairs and banisters – weekly</b></li> <li>• <b>Clean walls and intercom panels – as necessary</b></li> <li>• <b>Clean lights – as necessary</b></li> <li>• <b>Clean service cupboard doors – as necessary</b></li> <li>• <b>Litter pick around the building - daily</b></li> </ul>
<b>General cleaning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Check and if required clear rubbish chutes – daily</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean and disinfect refuse hoppers – monthly</li> <li>• Clean doors to rubbish chutes on landings – as necessary</li> <li>• Brush hopper room floors and remove spillages – weekly</li> <li>• Mop floors, wipe doors and internal windows – weekly</li> <li>• Hose down bin room doors, windows and wipe/mop – as necessary</li> </ul>
<b>Ventilation Louvers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wipe clean where fitted – weekly</li> </ul>
<b>Lifts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brush and mop floors – daily</li> <li>• Clean walls- weekly</li> <li>• Clean facias – weekly</li> </ul>
<b>Other rooms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brush and mop laundry room (if applicable) – daily</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Duties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repairs – Communal/External Areas</li> <li>• Carry out basic repairs – as necessary</li> <li>• Report day to day repairs/fault – as necessary</li> <li>• Check Fireman’s switch and key board</li> <li>• Check lift safety edge</li> <li>• Report emergency repairs – as necessary</li> <li>• Chase repairs not done – as necessary</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the check sheet in the communal notice board – after each visit</li> </ul>
<b>Daily building inspections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure access and parking for emergency services are clear</li> <li>• Check entrance doors are secure</li> <li>• Check lighting</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Check that fire doors close automatically</b></li> <li>• <b>Check dry riser valves</b></li> <li>• <b>Check and clean inlet box doors</b></li> <li>• <b>Check access to inlet box</b></li> <li>• <b>Check drain valve</b></li> <li>• <b>Check landing valve box doors</b></li> <li>• <b>Check landing valve outlets</b></li> <li>• <b>Check door runners to lifts</b></li> <li>• <b>Check landing and lift buttons</b></li> <li>• <b>Check lift alarm</b></li> <li>• <b>Check lift lights</b></li> <li>• <b>Check lift room security</b></li> <li>• <b>Check tank rooms</b></li> <li>• <b>Check service cupboards and keep clear</b></li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Update communal notice boards – as necessary</b></li> </ul>
<b>Weekly building inspections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Make sure access and parking for emergency services are clear</b></li> <li>• <b>Check entrance doors are secure</b></li> <li>• <b>Check lighting</b></li> <li>• <b>Check that fire safety doors and ensure they close automatically</b></li> <li>• <b>Check riser cupboards</b></li> <li>• <b>Check Electrical cupboards</b></li> <li>• <b>Check bin room, bin chute, chute rooms and chute door</b></li> <li>• <b>Check stairways, stairwells and hand rails</b></li> <li>• <b>Check communal storage areas</b></li> <li>• <b>Check intercom</b></li> <li>• <b>Report any issues or repairs identified</b></li> </ul>
<b>Other Rooms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Check service cupboards and keep clear</b></li> </ul>

**Mobile Cleaning Services**  
**6 Walk up Flats (low rise)**

<b>AREA</b>	<b>STANDARD</b>
<b>Cleaning Duties – External Area and Block</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean entrance windows and doors – weekly</li> <li>• Brush and mop floors and landings – weekly</li> <li>• Brush and clean stairs and banisters – weekly</li> <li>• Clean walls and intercom panels – as necessary</li> <li>• Clean lights – as necessary</li> <li>• Clean service cupboard doors – as necessary</li> <li>• Litter pick around the building - weekly</li> </ul>
<b>General cleaning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mop floors, wipe doors and windows – weekly</li> <li>• Hose down bin room doors, windows, floor and wipe/mop – as necessary</li> </ul>
<b>Ventilation Louvers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wipe clean where fitted – weekly</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Duties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out basic repairs – as necessary</li> <li>• Report day to day repairs/fault – as necessary</li> <li>• Report emergency repairs – as necessary</li> <li>• Chase repairs not done – as necessary</li> </ul>

<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Update communal notice boards – as necessary</b></li> </ul>
<b>Weekly building inspections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Make sure access and parking for emergency services are clear</b></li> <li>• <b>Check entrance doors are secure</b></li> <li>• <b>Check lighting</b></li> <li>• <b>Check that fire safety doors and ensure they close automatically</b></li> <li>• <b>Check riser cupboards – where applicable</b></li> <li>• <b>Check Electrical cupboards– where applicable</b></li> <li>• <b>Check bin room, bin chute, chute rooms and chute door– where applicable</b></li> <li>• <b>Check stairways, stairwells and hand rails</b></li> <li>• <b>Check intercom</b></li> <li>• <b>Report any issues or repairs identified</b></li> </ul>
<b>Other Rooms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Check service cupboards and keep clear</b></li> </ul>

**Mobile Cleaning Services**  
**7 Cottage Flats**

<b>AREA</b>	<b>STANDARD</b>
<b>Cleaning Duties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sweep down and mop stair and landings – fortnightly</b></li> <li>• <b>Wipe down walls – as necessary</b></li> <li>• <b>Dust and wipe down, banisters, ledges – fortnightly</b></li> <li>• <b>Wipe down communal front door - fortnightly</b></li> <li>• <b>Clean service cupboard doors – as necessary</b></li> <li>• <b>Hoover carpet at front door – fortnightly</b></li> <li>• <b>Litter pick to front path - fortnightly</b></li> </ul>

<p><b>Fortnightly building inspections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Check communal front door is secure and locks properly</b></li> <li>• <b>Check communal stairs for any defects</b></li> <li>• <b>Check communal lighting</b></li> <li>• <b>Check banisters are secure</b></li> <li>• <b>Check floor coverings are safe for access</b></li> </ul>
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**Other Services**  
**8 Winter Gritting**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>AREA</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STANDARD</b></p>
<p><b>Places served</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>WCHG provides a limited winter gritting service to grounds around sheltered schemes, multi occupancy properties (high rise), community centres and communal grounds of vulnerable people’s properties</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>When the service is provided</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We monitor the Met Office web site to obtain up to date forecasts to ensure we grit only when the forecast predicts snow or icy weather that will prevail</b></li> <li>• <b>When we experience severe cold weather the Met Office forecast is checked hourly and if there is a forecast for snow or icy conditions that will last, we will grit</b></li> <li>• <b>If the forecast for the weekend predicts snow or icy conditions gritting is carried out of Friday with the aim to put enough grit down to last until Monday</b></li> </ul>