

Environmental Services Policy



Directorate: Communities
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Document Information

Scope:

This policy aims to:

- Ensure that grounds maintenance works are performed in accordance with all legislative requirements.
- Provide clearly defined roles and responsibilities to identify and coordinate each activity.
- Outline the standards of service.
- Promote industry best practice.
- Provide a clear and robust process for full accountability.

Service Standards / Performance Measures / Corporate Strategy:

Service Standards

- All communal grassed areas will be cut once every two weeks during the growing season (normally April – October)
- All hedges and shrub beds will be maintained twice per year
- All bedding plants will be changed and rotated twice per year
- Weed control will be applied at each site visit in attempt to suppress growth
- All litter will be removed from communal grassed areas at each site visit before cutting
- Dangerous fly-tipping will be removed within one working day
- All other fly-tipping and rubbish will be removed within a maximum of five working days
- All reports of infestation in communal areas will be inspected within five working days
- All caretaking and cleaning tasks on high rise, low rise and sheltered blocks will be completed in accordance with the relevant schedule set out in this policy.

Document Information

- Offensive graffiti will be removed within one working day.
- All other graffiti will be removed within a maximum of five working days.

Performance Measures

- % of neighbourhoods (including high rise blocks) rated as excellent following customer surveys

Risks:

Risk 1

Failure to create clean, safe and sustainable neighbourhoods leads to properties becoming undesirable and increases % tenancy turnover and void re-let times.

Mitigation – Regular inspection by Environmental Services Co-ordinators including customer inspection to assess standards across all neighbourhoods.

Risk 2

Failure to reduce fly-tipping costs results in continued significant costs to the business which could be better used to re-invigorate neglected open spaces.

Mitigation – Implement the Environmental Crime Strategy to re-charge the cost of fly-tipping disposal and prosecute offenders where this is possible. Monitor hotspots within neighbourhoods to target preventative action in conjunction with Neighbourhood Teams.

Risk 3

Failure to complete tasks associated with environmental services leads to dissatisfaction and a perception that the service does not represent value for money. complaints.

Mitigation – Effective monitoring of service standards and implementation of a new performance framework to drive up the standard of task completion. Implementation of new structure to effectively place resources to deliver a consistently high standard of service.

Related Policy/Procedure & Documents:

- Communities Strategy

Related Legislation / Relevant Regulation:

Salix Homes is required to comply with statutory requirements and rules and guidance issued by the Government.

Whilst the following list is not exhaustive, the requirements laid out have been taken into account when formulating this policy and all staff will refer to the documents listed for further clarification or seek legal advice where necessary:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)
- The Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)
- Occupiers Liability Act (1957 and 1984)

Document Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Countryside and Wildlife Act (1981) • Highways Act (1980) • Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act)
<p>Retention & Legal Basis for Storage:</p> <p>No personal data is shared / captured during this process. The full process and all documents served are stored within Salix Homes customer relationship management system (CRM) and held indefinitely.</p>
<p>Stakeholders:</p> <p>A review of services was carried out and the service structure reorganised based on feedback from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Senate • High Rise Forum • Leaseholder Forum • Staff • Customer Satisfaction survey results
<p>Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)</p> <p>A DPIA assessment was completed in August July 2019 by the Environmental Services Manager. It was found that no DPIA was required.</p>
<p>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</p> <p>A EIA assessment was completed in August 2019 by the Environmental Services Manager. It was found that no EIA was required.</p>

Introduction

1. Salix Homes is committed to providing aesthetically pleasing internal and external communal areas, which enhance our properties and improve the living experience of our customers. We recognise the benefits of creating clean, safe and sustainable areas for our customers to enjoy, and are fully committed to providing a high quality, value for money service.

Grass Cutting – High Rise Blocks & Sheltered Schemes

2. During the growing season (predominantly April to October), the Environmental Services team will cut all communal grassed areas at least once every two weeks. The task will encompass a full litter pick of the area prior to cutting it.
3. Grass clippings will be removed from site following the mowing and, where cuttings have spilled out onto pathways of other areas, these will be blown back onto the turf once the activity has been completed.

Grass Cutting - Neighbourhoods

4. During the growing season (predominantly April to October), the Environmental Services team will cut all communal grassed areas at least once every two weeks. The task will encompass a full litter pick of the area prior to cutting it.
5. Grass clippings will not be removed from site following the mowing however, where cuttings have spilled out onto pathways or other areas, these will be blown back onto the turf once the activity has been completed.

Hedge Maintenance

6. Hedges will be maintained twice per year by the Environmental Services Team. The first visit will be carried out during the winter months, prior to the commencement of the growing season and the second visit will commence towards the end of the summer season. This will however, take into consideration the current state of the hedge (e.g. hedge is still in flower). Hedge maintenance will be avoided between March and August as this period is the main breeding season for nesting birds.
7. The maintenance of hedges will include pruning and debris clearance along with weed control at the base. It is noteworthy that any clippings will be mulched and placed back into the soil at the base of the hedge. In doing this, key nutrients are re-introduced to the soil and the mulch provide a natural weed barrier, keeping the hedge aesthetically pleasing.

Shrub Bed Maintenance

8. Shrub beds will be maintained twice per year by the Environmental Services Team. The first visit will be carried out during the first months of the growing season and the second

visit will commence at the end of the growing season however, this will take into consideration the current state of the shrubs (e.g. shrubs are still in flower).

9. The maintenance of shrub beds will include pruning and debris clearance along with weed control at the base. It is noteworthy that any clippings will be mulched and placed back into the shrub beds. In doing this, key nutrients are re-introduced to the soil and the mulch provide a natural weed barrier, keeping the shrub beds aesthetically pleasing.
10. Bedding plants within the shrub beds and communal planters will be replaced on a twice yearly basis. This will be done at appropriate times during the year to ensure we get the maximum duration of flowering from the plants across both summer and winter seasons.

Weed Management

11. Salix Homes uses different weed control methods. Methods vary depending on the species and site characteristics. We choose methods that have the least adverse effects on people and the environment. Current control methods are:
 - Herbicide application
 - Manual control
 - Organic control
12. Salix Homes applies herbicide application at site visits to control weeds and manage the borders between grassed and paved areas. This application acts as a suppressant to prevent weeds from emerging during the growing season.
13. In instances where non-native invasive species (i.e. Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam etc.) are reported and confirmed, Salix Homes will apply herbicide directly to the weed on a regular basis until the growth control has been managed and the plant has been destroyed.

Litter and Fly Tipping

14. Salix Homes will carry out regular litter collection of grassed areas under its ownership prior to the commencement of grass cutting.
15. Salix Homes will report any fly tipping or dumping to other land owners as appropriate. Should a reported problem not be dealt with appropriately by the landowner and where we judge that the problem is causing a nuisance to our customers, we will ask permission to clear the land ourselves and seek reimbursement from the land owner.
16. We will work with our customers to ensure that refuse is disposed of safely, tidily and in the correct containers. Salix Homes will work with partners to determine preventative measures to prevent fly tipping, encourage waste recycling, and will take enforcement action as deemed appropriate.

Pest Control

17. Salix Homes is responsible for the treatment of infestations of pests and vermin in communal areas of its properties, both internal and external. Where appropriate, we will take quick and effective action to address any infestations on communal open space under its control.
18. The treatment of pests and vermin within the individual property of a customer and/or the individual garden attached to a property of a customer is the responsibility of the customer to treat, including payment of the treatment.
19. All reports and treatment of pest issues that arise as a result of programmed works taking place on a scheme will be paid for through the programmed works budget for that scheme.

Caretaking

20. Salix Homes is committed to ensuring the communal areas in and around high-rise blocks are maintained to a high standard. As a minimum, the following caretaking tasks will be completed by the Environmental Services Team:
 - Sweep and mop the ground floor entrances, lifts and chute rooms every day.
 - Sweep and mop stairs and landings and wipe down handrails every week.
 - Remove litter from entrances, stairwells and lifts every day.
 - Wipe down doors in communal areas and paint work to remove grime and dirt weekly.
 - Remove racist or abusive graffiti/fly posting within one working day; and remove other graffiti/fly posting within 5 working days of being identified
 - Remove bodily waste and drug litter within 1 working hour of being identified
 - Pick up litter to outside areas of the block daily and sweep any car parks of communal pathways weekly.
 - Manage bin rooms and ensure that bins are rotated as necessary and cleaned once every three months.
 - Reporting of communal repairs and monitoring health and safety matters within the block.

Low Rise Cleaning

21. Salix Homes is committed to ensuring the communal areas in and around low-rise blocks are maintained to a high standard. As a minimum, the following tasks will be completed by the Environmental Services Team:
 - Sweep and mop communal areas and sweep out bin stores weekly

- Wipe down communal doors and clean glass weekly
- Wipe down handrails weekly
- Pick up litter from outside areas once a week
- Remove bodily waste and drug litter within 1 working hour of being identified.
- Reporting of communal repairs and health and safety issues within the block.

Sheltered Cleaning

22. Salix Homes is committed to ensuring the communal areas in and around sheltered accommodation are maintained to a high standard. As a minimum, the following tasks will be completed by the Environmental Services Team:

- Remove litter, sweep mop and Hoover all communal areas daily
- Clean and polish all communal areas daily
- Replenish all hand soaps and paper towels as required
- Clean all toilets, kitchens and public rooms daily
- Remove bodily waste and drug litter within 1 working hour of being identified.
- Reporting of communal repairs and health and safety issues within the block

Graffiti

23. Damage to Salix Homes property or land caused by acts of vandalism will be repaired as quickly as possible.

24. Salix Homes will fully investigate all acts of vandalism and graffiti to property in common areas. Appropriate enforcement action will be taken against all known perpetrators of vandalism to property and where possible we will recover the costs of any works necessary to make good the damage.

25. Salix Homes will take a positive approach to working with other agencies to discourage acts of vandalism.

Snow and Ice

26. Where grit bins are provided, Salix Homes will ensure that these are checked weekly throughout the winter months (November to March) to ensure they are stocked and replenish them when required.

27. Salix Homes operatives will ensure that grit or rock salt is spread on all pathways during the winter months at high rise blocks and sheltered schemes, when weather forecasts predict icy conditions. Throughout the same period, any snow fall on pathways at high rise blocks and sheltered schemes will be removed and all pathways re-gritted.

Recycling

28. Salix Homes will work with customers, local community groups and partners to increase recycling within our communities. Salix Homes will look to facilitate the recycling of furniture and other household goods, which are in good and working condition, and provide these to other customers where they are needed.
29. The environmental services team will work with customers in high-rise blocks to recycle using the communal facilities to ensure our recycling capacity is maximised.