Green Spaces Service Standard

Committed to keeping your estates safe, clean and well maintained

Our promise to you

This Service Standard applies to shared outdoor areas on council-owned housing estates including independent living schemes. These areas are looked after by the council's in-house Green Spaces team, with specialist work, such as tree works and weed control, carried out by approved contractors where needed. This includes grassed areas, shrubs, hedges, weeds on hard surfaces, trees and housing play areas.

1. Our Green Spaces team will always:

- wear a council uniform
- be polite, professional and respectful
- give their name and role if asked.

2. Regular grounds maintenance work

We recognise that residents see the shared areas of their estates as an extension of their homes and expect them to be attractive, well maintained, safe and secure places to live.

We use the Estate Services Policy to measure service delivery. This is a visual standard used to assess whether shared outdoor areas are being maintained to an acceptable standard. The Estate Services Policy is available on the council's website and clarifies the different gradings and how they are assessed.

We will:

- maintain shared outdoor areas so that estates continually achieve Grades A (excellent) or B (satisfactory) under the Estate Services Policy
- deliver regular grounds maintenance activities to help prevent estates deteriorating to Grade C (poor) or Grade D (unacceptable/service failure).

The Estate Services Policy looks at the overall condition of shared outdoor areas, including:

- grassed areas
- shrub beds and hedges
- weed control on hard surfaces
- trees located on communal areas.

3. Tree management on shared areas of estates

We will inspect trees on the shared areas of estates every three years to assess their condition and identify whether any planned works are required. These inspections are managed through the council's internal inspection and monitoring arrangements.

Where tree works are required, works orders will be issued and prioritised according to risk. Priority timescales are:

- Priority 1: within 7 calendar days
- Priority 2: within 1 month
- Priority 3: within 2 months.

Residents will not usually receive individual confirmation following routine tree inspections. However, if a resident reports a specific concern about a tree, this will be assessed and prioritised according to risk. Residents can request an update through the Neighbourhood Management team where they have reported a concern.

To help keep residents and visitors safe, we will aim to complete 99 per cent of Priority 1 tree works within the agreed timescale.

4. Playgrounds on housing estates

We recognise that areas designated for use by children must be safe spaces. We therefore undertake a series of inspections which seek to ensure that issues are swiftly identified and resolved without relying upon reports from residents. These inspections include:

- fortnightly and monthly inspections by the Green Spaces team to identify any hazards and make safe prior to repair
- independent quarterly and annual inspections to identify any hazards, ongoing maintenance issues or more fundamental issues associated with play equipment or the site.

5. Hard surface weed control

We know that it is important to ensure that weed growth on footpaths and other hard surfaces on estates is managed and not permitted to grow so it becomes unsightly or a trip hazard. To ensure our hard surfaces meet the Estate Services Standard we will undertake three weed-spraying applications per year:

- application 1 – March/April
- application 2 – June/July
- application 3 – September/October.

The exact timings of weed spraying applications will be subject to weather conditions.

6. How Standards are monitored

The Neighbourhood Management team will work with our Green Spaces team and their contractors to ensure that standards reflected in the Estate Services Policy are maintained. We will achieve this by:

- undertaking estate inspections and estate walkabouts with residents
- supporting and upskilling residents who want to work with us and become 'independent estate inspectors
- publishing the outcomes of our inspections, and inspections undertaken by 'independent estate inspectors', so residents can see how we perform against the Estate Services Policy
- reviewing performance with senior managers and resident representatives
- using your feedback to improve services ('You Said, We Did')
- reporting our performance, including outcomes from the annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) survey linked to the estate environment, and in the Annual Tenant and Leaseholder report to residents, lead Cabinet Members with responsibility for Housing, and the Regulator of Social Housing.

Information regarding the TSM survey and the annual report can be found at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/consultations-surveys.

7. Get involved

If you would like to accompany your Neighbourhood Management Officer, or become involved in undertaking estate inspections as part of an independent resident monitoring role, please contact the Resident Empowerment team by email residentempowerment@hillingdon.gov.uk or call 01895 277038 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (except bank holidays)).

Alternatively, you may wish to get involved by giving us feedback through surveys and consultations in connection with the services provided by our Green Spaces team, which will be advertised on the link above.

8. Accessibility

If you would like this document in another language or format, please tell us by using the contact details above.

9. If you are not satisfied

We realise that sometimes things can go wrong. If they do, we want to hear from you so we can put them right and learn from what has happened.

You can make a complaint through our online complaints process at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/complaints.

You can also submit a complaint by:

- sending a letter to Hillingdon Council, Civic Centre, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW
- calling us on 01895 277800
- visiting Hillingdon Council, Civic Centre, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW or speaking to one of our staff members.

If you're still not satisfied, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman by visiting www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk.

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