
firstchoice
NEIGHBOURHOOD CARE

**Please note the elements of the full specification are listed below but will only be completed if require and when needed on this site.**

**Grass_cutting**

This will be undertaken during a 34 week cutting season each year between March and late October across our neighbourhoods and all of our open spaces.

The grass to be kept between 25mm and 60mm in length at all times. Prior to cutting, the whole area must be checked and litter picked removing all rubbish, litter and any fly tipping All edges (without a mowing strip), gables, water channels and obstacles must be strimmed at each grass cut so all grass has a uniform height. Machines must be in good working order and blades balanced so no tufts are left. Any scalping or wheel marks must but put right within 3 working days by the relevant team.

This will be achieved through a targeted 10 working day cut after the each first cut of the year allowing a minimum of at least 16 cuts per season subject to weather and ground conditions.

During any cutting visit the relevant team must be aware of any shoots from bulbs/flowers etc. and areas of wildflower. Not all areas are marked on our maps and some residents do not tell us where they have planted.

On all subsequent cuts grass clippings are not collected but the relevant team must ensure they clear them from hard surface areas, shrub beds etc., before leaving the site.

On a rolling programme over a two year period the edging of the grass area where it meets the hard surfaces will be edged off in order to reform the edges covering all Housing, Communal areas and Public Open Spaces.

All areas must be kept weed free on an annual programme, all areas will receive a selective weed spray, this will need to be managed to cause as little disruption as possible to the residents. Using a specification contract it is suggested that we miss a week during our chemical spray and then leave for a week for the chemicals to permutate through to the roots on the second/third week depending on the grass growth.

As required gables, obstacles, water channels and trees and fence lines will have a mowing strip sprayed around them to be no more than 100mm wide.

Under no circumstance will a strimmer be used around a tree.

**Padlocks**

Where necessary the mowing and access gates are fitted with a suited padlock, this should be replaced and the gate left locked when all work has finished. Should the lock break contact the relevant member of staff for a new one, however should the lock get lost or not replaced the relevant team will be charged for a replacement, including any key cutting.

**Litter**

Prior to mowing the area must be litter picked.

On completion of mowing any shredded litter must be picked up

Whilst we are operating a specification contract, each site must by visited on a fortnightly basis and any litter picked up and any defects to the grass areas must be reported to First Choice Homes Oldham.

**During site visits and fly tipping should be removed from site before cutting where possible or reported to First Choice Homes Oldham.**

**Shrub bed maintenance**

The relevant grounds maintenance team is required under the contract to maintain shrub beds in accordance with 'recognised horticultural best practice'.

This requires:

- Beds to be maintained in a weed, leaf and litter-free condition and are not to be left in an unsightly condition.
- Residual herbicide to be applied as required maintaining a long term weed-free effect.
- Beds to be edged using an edging iron or machine following maintenance operations on a two year programme.
- Different species to be pruned at different times but finish all pruning prior to mid-March except early flowering species. After pruning all arising to be removed from site.
- Shrubs within the general housing areas are to be hard pruned once a year There is a health and safety requirement for a light prune to any shrubs that are overhanging footpaths or hard surfaces on every visit to that site.
- Whilst receiving a summer prune there may be a requirement for a summer clearance if the shrub bed has excessive weed growth or looking unkempt this may be as a result of a failed chemical spray. In this event Neighbourhood Care will carry out this work.

- All shrubs should receive a redefining prune once every two years; the aim is to reduce the shrubs between 33-50% in accordance with best horticultural practice.
- All climbers (e.g. Ivy) will be kept to a maximum of 2m. when climbing any property wall in a property we maintain. Operatives are asked to report any climber that exceeds 2m. in other properties we own for inclusion in ivy reduction and clearance programme.
- All climbers are to be kept at least 1 metre away from all gas flues.
- All self seeders are to be removed as and when they appear.

**Trees**

**Under no circumstances are strimmers allowed to be used around tree bases.**

As required the bases of the trees will be sprayed using a glyphosate based chemical. Once a year during winter the dead grass/weed growth around the trees will be dug out and cleared.

All Epicormics growth on trees has to be removed as and when it grows using best horticultural practice.

All trees will have a crown of at least 3m. Any branches less than 50mm (2inches) should be taken off using best horticultural practice and branches that are over 50mm (2 inches) need to be reported to the officer. Any branches that hinder the mowing operations can be trimmed back to the nearest break by the relevant grounds team.

All tree works up to 2m and felling up to 280mm will be completed by trained operatives (LANTRA or equivalent) with those requiring additional works to be undertaken by an approved arborculturalist from the approved supplier list.

All communal and highway trees will be fully surveyed every 4 years to ascertain what essential maintenance is needed.

This information is replicated in more detail in our Tree Policy.

**Self seeders**

All self seeders will be removed as they appear by the roots, any that have been allowed to grow should be dug out or cut down and treated with Ecoplug or similar (depending on the years chemical list).

Self seeders have a tendency to grow in grass areas, hedges, hard standings or footpaths, there may be some of these that have been allowed to become established. We will start on a two year programme to remove these, any self seeders that are in “Areas not in maintenance” will be dealt with in a separate programme. Any that are in a garage site that

is not in maintenance must be cleared and included within the overall quote when requested.

When removing self seeders from hedges thus leaving a gap that will need forming up suitable planting must be identified.

**Maintenance of hard areas**

The Grounds Maintenance Contract will cover all hard areas within our boundaries up to the footpaths or roads covered by the relevant Local Authority. As a general rule, roads and roadside footpaths are the responsibility of OMBC or relevant Local Authority. Any hard areas that are not considered part of the highway fall to Neighbourhood Care or the relevant contractor. All hard areas covered by the grounds maintenance contract, should be kept free of litter, obstacles and all organic matter at all times and growth abutting or overhanging pathways should be kept cut back.

Also they must be kept free of weeds and moss at all times (using chemical control if necessary) and edged on a two year rolling programme reducing to every year with an edging iron or machine  to prevent grass encroachment.

**Drying areas and owned car parks**

All drying areas and car parks to be kept weed free, any encroaching shrubs/hedges must be pruned back and all moss must be removed. A clear access to the drying area must be maintained at all times.

The purpose of the drying areas is for drying clothes if they are being used for anything other than this the relevant member of staff must be informed.

Any locks other than our grounds maintenance suited locks, should be removed.

**Management of litter**

All sites covered by the grounds maintenance contract should be maintained in a litter-free condition at all times.

It is up to the relevant team to decide upon the frequency of operations necessary to achieve this standard, however a minimum fortnightly litter pick is required.

Most litter bins on housing sites are not covered by the grounds maintenance contract as they are part of the relevant Council's street cleaning contract; however it is good practice to report any bin that is 75% full or overflowing, thereby reducing litter on the ground.

**Bedding**

We have identified key sites that will benefit from both summer and winter bedding, in the unlikely event of considerable periods of no rain they will be watered as part of the contract.

**Graffiti and vandalism**

Due to an increase of graffiti, operatives are asked to report all instances to the designated contact. There is also a requirement for any minor vandalism to benches, bins or other site structures to be repaired if possible, with more major issues to be reported to First Choice Homes Oldham.

**Invasive Weeds**

Legislation requires that any landlord or land owner must keep detailed records of their processes for dealing with

Japanese Knotweed

Himalayan Balsam

Giant Hogweed

In addition the above can only be disposed of from site by an authorised waste carrier.

Any treatments associated with new developments or water courses will be undertaken by a specialist Invasive Weed Contractor and records shared with FCHO

**Dog fouling**

Where possible work will be carried out if dog fouling is present. If the fouling becomes so bad that it inhibits the performance of the contract please contact FCHO.