

INDIVIDUAL GARDEN MAINTENANCE POLICY

31 January 2019

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Date effective from:	31/01/2019
Policy approved by:	Si Welch
Review Date:	31/01/2023

EIA Required?	<input type="checkbox"/>
EIA Completed?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Revision number:	02
Lead officer:	Jane Allen

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Stockport Homes Group (SHG) aims to improve the environmental quality of its neighbourhoods whilst meeting the needs and aspirations of tenants. In order to contribute to this, SHG works with tenants, private residents and private landlords to ensure that individual gardens are well maintained and free from rubbish. This promotes sustainable neighbourhoods that are clean, tidy and places that people want to live.

1.2 Tenants are required to maintain their individual gardens as a condition of their tenancy agreement.

1.3 Tenants who are over 70 years of age or disabled may be able to access the SHG Assisted Garden Maintenance Scheme which provides two visits a year

2 STRATEGIC LINKS

2.1 This policy links to

- The High Hedges Act
- Estate Inspection and Customer Walkabouts Policy and Procedure
- SMBC Tenancy Agreement
- SHG Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement
- SHG Assured Tenancy Agreement
- Void Management Policy
- Current Tenancy Visit policy
- Eyes Wide Open Policy Statement
- Trees Policy
- Introducing, Reducing and Amending Service Charges Policy
- The Lettable Standard
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Tenancy Breaches Policy and Procedure
- Fences, Hedges and Boundaries Policy
- Introducing, Amending and Removing Service Charges Policy and Procedure

3 KEY FEATURES OF THE POLICY

3.1 Tenants are expected to maintain their garden and keep it in a tidy condition and free from rubbish in line with Stockport Council's and SHG's Tenancy Agreement

3.2 An unacceptable garden may contain any of the following issues (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Overgrown and untidy grassed areas
- Overgrown or unauthorised planting of hedges, shrubs and trees
- Rubbish and litter
- Animal faeces
- Accumulation of refuse and overflowing recycling bins
- Untidy paths and ginnel/alley ways
- Unauthorised parking of vehicle (not on a hard standing)
- Unapproved structures (e.g. fencing, sheds, ponds)
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- Presence of hazards and/ or health and safety issues

3.3 Tenants must seek advice and permission from SHG in order to remove, alter or plant a hedge, fence or tree or before planting trees, shrubs or hedges.

3.4 Hedges must not exceed two metres in height.

3.5 Tenants must not attempt to deal with invasive weeds such as Japanese Knotweed, Ragwort and Hogweed without seeking advice from SHG first. In instances of any invasive weed, tenants must inform SHG via their Neighbourhood Housing Officer (NHO), Independent Living Co-ordinator (ILC) or the Greenspace Team.

3.6 SHG's Tree Policy contains details about what SHG will do regarding trees in individual gardens.

3.7 Private landlords, their tenants, or owner occupiers who have properties on SHG estates will be encouraged to maintain their gardens.

3.8 Privately owned/rented gardens that are a poor condition, such as filthy and verminous can be referred to the Housing Standards Department within Stockport Council.

3.9 During monthly estate inspections or any other estate/tenant visits, any unacceptable gardens that are identified by the NHOs or ILC will be recorded. The NHO/ILC will liaise with the tenant, private resident or private landlord and follow the garden maintenance procedure to deal with the condition of the garden. Tenants may be recharged if SHG has to carry out work to restore the garden to an acceptable standard.

3.10 SHG will endeavour to provide support eby using the Assisted Gardening Scheme where appropriate or by including gardens within the grounds maintenance contract for customers at a weekly charge and advice to tenants to maintain their gardens.

3.11 In some circumstances it may be necessary to take legal action if tenant fails to engage and all other avenues have been exhausted.

4 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 The impact of this policy has been considered and an EIA screening form has been completed. A full EIA is not required.

4.2 This policy is accessible to all including those with protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act. However, where appropriate action can be taken where necessary to take into consideration individual's needs or circumstances.

5 OWNERSHIP, MONITORING AND REVIEW

5.1 This procedure is owned by the Neighbourhoods and Support directorate. This procedure will be monitored by the Policy Review Group and reviewed in line with the Policy Review Group schedule.

5.2 Any queries with the policy should be forwarded to the Policy and Performance Officers on 0161 474 2859.