

Grounds Maintenance Specification

Homeownership / June 2019 / Draft Version 1



Introduction

This specification is to be utilised to ensure the service provided, meets the aims and objectives below:

- a) Works be carried out economically and of a high standard
- b) Contractors work efficiently
- c) It allows performance to be judged and outlining how monitoring of standards of works will be undertaken.
- d) Most importantly, it meets the needs of the scheme and its residents.

Contractors must make themselves aware of all the content of the general specification as well as the detail contained in the individual scheme specifications that relates to the gardening services, frequency, and standards required.

Summary of requirements

- ⇒ To leave all grassed areas clear of litter and other debris, evenly mown, free of weeds and grass cuttings and edged.
- ⇒ To leave all planted areas free of weeds, litter and other debris, with clearly defined borders, and properly pruned plants and shrubs.
- ⇒ To leave all hedges neatly and evenly trimmed.
- ⇒ To leave all hard-standing areas free of litter, weeds, moss and leaves.

Specification

Grass cutting

- a) All grass areas will be cut as per the frequencies indicated in Appendix A. The contractor will need to ensure that the grass does not, at any time, exceed 40mm throughout the scheme. If it does; amendments to the programme will need to be made.
- b) If weather conditions stimulate grass growth, the contractor will be responsible for additional cutting required to ensure that the height of the grass does not exceed 75mm at any time.
- c) Grassed areas must be edged on each visit. Mechanical trimmers may be used, however small areas or areas near to patio doors for example should be hand edged.
- d) At the appropriate times during the year, fertilisers and or weed killers must be applied to keep the grassed areas in good and healthy condition. All fertilisers weed killers or pesticides must be applied strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. They must never be left unattended. On small grassed areas, the materials should be applied evenly by hand or by mechanical hand spreader. On larger areas spraying equipment can be used but not if the weather conditions are likely to allow the vapour to drift from its intended area.

- e) If weather conditions inhibit grass growth to negligible amounts between programmed cuts, the contractor will provide written confirmation to the Client Representative that cutting has not been carried out on the programmed date(s).
- f) In conditions of drought or persistent wet weather, The Contractor shall adjust the frequency and/or height cut required on each site as well as possible adjustments to the schedules.
- g) In extremely wet conditions where grass cutting may cause damage (e.g. divots) to the grass area, The Client Representative may instruct that the grass cutting is to be suspended until such time that the conditions allow the grass cutting to be recommended.
- h) Where exceptionally inclement weather conditions prevent The Contractor from carrying out programmed cutting operations, The Contractor shall immediately inform the Client Representative in writing. The written notification shall include the date(s) when it is anticipated that the grass cutting will recommence, which shall be as soon as weather conditions allow.
- i) The Contractor will not be allowed to use growth-retardant chemicals to maintain grass areas.
- j) All clippings are to be removed including any that spread onto paths, roads or hard-standings and be disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner. The Contractor is to provide details of disposal method if requested by Client Representative.
- k) Grass cutting shall be carried out up to the edge of paths, beds, etc. and site boundaries and shall include for cutting under or between railings and fencing, etc. and for all necessary edging and trimming at parameters. Corners and edges that cannot be reached by the mower must be cut by hand.
- l) The Contractor shall at all times during the period of the Contract, ensure that all machines engaged in grass cutting operations are sharp and properly set, to produce a true and even cut. Any damage from such lack of maintenance shall be made good by The Contractor in accordance with the terms and conditions in this specification.
- m) The Contractor shall also ensure that machines involved in mowing operations, are fitted with correct tyres (grass tyres) where there is any danger of causing damage to surfaces during mowing operations, and the operators are fully trained in the operation and use of such equipment. If damage attributable to The Contractor's omission to heed this condition is found, The Contractor will be responsible for the cost of full reinstatement to the satisfaction of the Client Representative. The mower should be fitted with the type of blade that will produce a standard of finish that is appropriate for the area.
- n) The Contractor shall at all times during the period of the Contract ensure that machines are properly guarded and maintained so as to present no danger to the operator or any person in the vicinity of the operations. The Contractor shall provide his staff with all safety equipment (boots, reflective vest, etc) and ensure that staff use these at all times they are engaged in work on the Client's Property.
- o) Prior to grass cutting, The Contractor shall collect and dispose of all litter, detritus, stones, leaf fall, horticultural waste material and clinical and chemical waste. The presence of sharps and needles are to be reported immediately to the Accent Contact Centre on 0345 678 0555. The sharps and needles will need to be removed

from site using the correct sharps equipment and procedure and disposed of in the correct manner.

- p) Any damage caused to trees, shrubs, fences and any other items within or around the grass; areas shall be immediately reported to the Client Representative in writing. The Contractor will be required, at their own expense, to make good all such damage within a maximum period of one calendar month.
- q) Any damage caused to the property due to the use of machinery, (broken windows from flying stones etc.) will be repaired by the Client and the cost met by the Contractor.

Shrubs, hedges and horticultural beds

- a) All tasks for shrubs, hedges and horticultural beds must be completed at every visit during the summer period and as required during the winter period.
- b) All shrubs, roses, climbing plants and hedges, shall be maintained to a good horticultural practice. Pruning shall be carried out to maintain the growth and shape of the shrubs to ensure that no obstruction is caused to pedestrians, vehicles, signs and sight lines. All boundaries must be edged and trimmed to make sure they are clearly defined.
- c) All weeds, litter and debris must be removed by hand and properly disposed of.
- d) Where shrubs are adjacent to buildings; the height is not to exceed the height of the windowsill and the girth not intrude to the detriment of other specimens in the area.
- e) Where hedges form a boundary, and are the responsibility of the Client the Contractor will, subject to consent from the adjoining owner, enter their land to carry out the required maintenance. Should the adjoining owner refuse consent the Contractor will inform the Clients Representative so the appropriate disclaimer can be sent.
- f) If weather conditions stimulate growth, The Contractor will be responsible for additional pruning required to ensure that all pathways, entrances, access ways and windows are kept clear.
- g) All shrubs, hedges and horticultural beds are to be maintained to ensure that they are free of weeds, roots, stones exceeding 50mm diameter, dead shrubs/horticulture, and other debris, refuse or waste.
- h) Any shrubs/horticulture that are removed due to them being dead or areas of bare soil shall be listed by the Contractor and a report provided to the Supervising Officer on a quarterly basis. The Contractor, with prior approval and a purchase order from the Supervising Officer shall undertake a consequential programme of shrubs/horticulture replacement.
- i) All beds are to be edged forked and hoed to allow proper soil aeration. The soil should be left with a fine tilth.
- j) All dead wood, and suckers must be cut out cleanly.
- k) All plants must be pruned, trimmed, thinned out, shaped and re-staked or tied as necessary depending on the type or variety of plant to prevent overcrowding.

- l) Ensure shrubs do not obstruct footpaths, other pedestrian areas, grassed areas, lighting to windows and vehicle sight lines.
- m) Any cut larger than 25mm diameter must be treated with an approved sealant.
- n) At the appropriate times during the year, fertilisers and or weed killers must be applied to keep shrubs and bushes in good and healthy condition.
- o) Hedges must be trimmed once during the summer and winter season or more frequently if appropriate for the species to maintain the shape of the hedge. All cuttings to be removed from site on the same day.
- p) Care should be taken to avoid damage of trees, shrubs, hedges and plants including roots. Any damage caused by The Contractor shall immediately be reported to the Supervising Officer, in writing. The Contractor will be required, at its own expense, to make good all such damage within a maximum period of one calendar Month.
- q) During dry weather conditions, where the Client has provided a water source The Contractor will be responsible for all necessary watering to maintain the growth of the shrubs, plants and hedges, etc. On some schemes, the Contractor will need to supply their own screw-in standpipe.
- r) If, in the opinion of the client Supervising Officer, shrubs, plants or hedges, etc. have been damaged as a result of a lack of water, these shall be replaced by The Contractor at its own expense.

Leaf fall

- a) All grassed areas and other horticultural areas (e.g. beds and hedges) shall be kept free of leaf fall and other fallen horticultural material (e.g. twigs and branches). The leaves etc. shall be collected, bagged and disposed of at the same time. On no account shall leaves, etc. be left in piles or stacks for subsequent collection.

Self-setting growth

- a) All self-setting growth from trees, shrubs and seeds is to be removed.

Trees - General Maintenance

- a) All epicormic growth up to a height of 2m above ground level shall be removed by The Contractor.
- b) A band of 150 mm around the base of each tree shall be maintained free of weeds and ivy. Any growth of ivy within the tree branches and trunk is to be removed
- c) Trees are to be maintained in a healthy condition, with all dead branches being removed. In addition, all branches that provide an obstruction or obscure sight lines shall be removed.
- d) Roots are to be maintained so as not to damage the tree or any building, structure or hard surface area in the vicinity of the tree. Any anticipated damage to buildings, etc is to be immediately reported to the Client Representative, in writing.
- e) All trees deemed by The Contractor to be dead or cause a safety risk shall be immediately reported to the Client Representative.

Trees – annual maintenance

- a) The client will employ an arborialist specialist directly to undertake tree surveys detailing the required works to each tree. This will form the basis of a planned programme of tree works.

Climbers

- a) All buildings and walls are to be kept clear of invasive specimens to avoid material damage to the structures unless specifically excluded by the Clients Representative. Shrubs/hedges are to be kept a minimum of 25cm away from the building and walls.
- b) Non-invasive specimens are to be kept under control and not allowed to bush out or detract from the visual aspect of the structures.
- c) All vents, flues, downpipes, windows, entrances and access ways are to be kept clear at all times.

Hard surfaces

- a) Hard surfaces refers, but not exclusively, to paving, tarmac, gravel and brick. Once during the summer and winter periods all the above areas should be treated and brushed clean.
- b) All surfaces are to be kept clean and free of any deposits/leaves by either use of a manual sweeping brush or an industrial blower/sucker or by any other suitable means. This task will include keeping clear all gully gratings within the area free from deposits/ leaves. The Contractor will remove each gully grating and clean the drain set.
- c) Where weeds or moss are present a suitable method of removal can be used at the discretion of The Contractor for this operation. This can be either through manual scrubbing using deck scrubbing brushes, hot/cold water and a suitable cleansing solution or use of hot/cold washing/jetting. Steel scrapers will be used to remove gum, wax, tar, etc. form the surfaces
- d) If The Contractor chooses to use hot/cold washing/jetting for such tasks it will inform the Supervising Officer prior to the operation.

Litter picking and waste

- a) The Contractor will remove all litter, debris and detritus from the grounds including up to the building entrance.
- b) Litter will be picked from all areas regardless of the degree of difficulty in picking such litter.
- c) The litter is to be placed into refuse sacks, sealed and removed from site.
- d) The presence of sharps, needles and other clinical waste are to be reported immediately to the Accent Contact Centre on 0345 678 0555. The sharps and needles will need to be removed from site using the correct sharps equipment and procedure and disposed of in the correct manner.
- e) The Contractor shall remove any residue or staining left by any litter or fouling with an approved anti-bacterial solution.

Detached Bin Stores & Compounds

- a) This section refers to all stores and compounds that are not located within the footprint of the main building.
- b) The Contractor will use any broom he considers necessary and appropriate (to the approval of the Client Representative) to sweep all floor coverings and hard surfaces leaving them clean, litter free and free of any deposits/fouling.
- c) Items of fly-tipping are to be reported to the Accent Contact Centre on 0345 678 0555

Rough verges/banks and vacant plots

- a) All rough verges/banks and vacant plots are to be cleared as per the frequency.
- b) All self-setting growth from trees, shrubs and seeds is to be removed.
- c) The Contractor will inspect the verge/bank and vacant plot on each visit and report any issues to the Client Representative.

Working Hours

- a) Works must be carried out between the hours of 8am and 5pm Monday to Friday. No work must be undertaken at weekends or bank holidays.

Appendix A – Frequencies

	Frequency
Number of visits	20 per year
Grass cutting	18 per year
Edging of beds	18 per year
Lawns: weed and feed	2 per year
Lawns: moss control	As required
Weeding beds	18 per year
Bushes and shrubs: shaping	6 per year
Bushes and shrubs: pruning	4 per year
Leaf clearance	20 per year
Hard surfaces: clearance	20 per year
Hard surfaces: moss and weed control	2 per year
Litter and garden waste removal	20 per year