



Neighbourhood Care Policy

March 2025

MONITORING, APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
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1 Policy Purpose

- 1.1 This Policy reflects the FCHO commitment to providing customers with healthy, safe and presentable open spaces, by ensuring external and internal shared communal areas are maintained to service and regulatory standards and focussed on maintaining the safety, quality and decency of our assets.
- 1.2 FCHO recognise that the quality of these services is critical to determining how satisfied customers are with their home and landlord.
- 1.3 In addition, it will fundamentally support the delivery of our Homes Strategy, and the need to preserve and improve the value of our stock.
- 1.4 FCHO will use this policy to support the delivery of our strategic objectives, particularly to provide Great Neighbourhoods and ensure that we meet all statutory, regulatory and contractual obligations in ways that customers recognise. We will enable customers to hold us accountable for its delivery.

2 Policy Details

This policy defines the service provided by FCHO to meet our environmental responsibilities for shared internal and external communal areas, biodiversity, estate works, Arboriculture, open space grass cutting, cleaning, window cleaning, waste removal and any other associated tasks/requests.

We reserve the right to alter, add to, or modify estate services in the interests of good estate management for the benefit of customers or in order to achieve value for money.

This policy applies to all FCHO customers.

2.1 Shared and Communal Grounds

FCHO will provide a gardening service to shared and communal grounds and will aim to carry out up to 16 maintenance visits per year during our cutting cycle, which normally takes place between March and October and a minimum of bimonthly maintenance visits in the remainder of the year. Grass cuttings will not be removed from site, but pathways and hardstanding must be left clear.

2.2 Arboriculture / Tree Works

Tree work will only be carried out using the methodology the 4 D's; Dead, Dying, Diseased or Dangerous.

FCHO's Tree Policy details all other requirements including confirmation of our 4-year inspection programme completed by our Arboriculture Officer.

Where a tree or branch falls and impacts on a third party's property, the third party will need to make any claim through their own insurance against FCHO.

2.3 Open Space Grass Cutting

All open grassed areas owned by FCHO will receive a minimum of 16 visits during our cutting cycle target without collecting cuttings. Open Spaces receive at least one monthly visit to clear litter for the remaining months of the year.

2.4 Biodiversity

Neighbourhood Care will deliver improvements to our Neighbourhoods in consultation with customers and external partners to improve the biodiversity and appearance of our open spaces.

We will work within procurement guidelines and contracts to ensure we use the safest and sustainable products.

2.5 Estate Works

FCHO will carry out all elements of estate works to areas owned as detailed in the specification for Neighbourhood Care and will undertake the following in line with Best Practice.

- Weed spraying (currently completed using approved chemical process)
- Hedge Cutting
- Shrub Bed clearance and Landscaping
- Maintenance of landscaping associated with garage sites and landlocked areas

Tenants and homeowners are responsible for the maintenance of their private gardens, which includes hedges within the boundaries of their own home.

2.6 Communal Cleaning

Neighbourhood Care will provide a cleaning service to properties with communal areas; each area will receive a regular cleaning service in line with our service standards (maximum of 25 visits per year)

2.7 Window Cleaning

Neighbourhood Care will clean internal communal block windows on every cleaning visit.

External communal windows are cleaned bi-annually by a sub-contractor.

The window cleaning for each new development is agreed on handover.

2.8 Waste Removal

Waste generated by our activities and collected from our neighbourhoods is disposed of through our waste management partners to allow for the maximum recycling and segregation opportunities.

Hazardous and other waste will be removed in line with legislation relevant for the type of waste.

FCHO will work with our Local Authority to ensure all opportunities for the efficient disposal of waste are considered and to inform customers of any changes in legislation.

2.9 Vandalism and Graffiti

We will respond and attend to reported graffiti within 48 hours, if it cannot be removed by us we will utilise our sub-contractor framework.

2.10 Dog Fouling

Customers must not allow any animal to foul in any communal areas, including gardens, footpaths and play areas. If fouling occurs the customer is responsible for clearing it and getting the area thoroughly cleaned and if necessary disinfected (for example if the animal fouls inside a communal corridor or carpeted areas). Failing to do this may mean the customer will be recharged the cost of clearing and cleaning.

We will collaborate closely with our colleagues within Neighbourhoods and the Local Authorities to investigate all concerns received into dog fouling within our neighbourhoods.

2.11 New Developments

Neighbourhood Care will be consulted on all new developments and advise on landscaping and communal design.

After each defects period the scheme will be handed over and maintained by the team.

2.12 Ad Hoc Tasks and Requests

- Ad hoc garden clearances
- Winter gritting as per Snow and Leaf Procedure
- Community projects
- Japanese Knotweed identified will be dealt with in accordance with statutory regulation

2.13 GIS/Cadcorp

Neighbourhood Care is responsible for ensuring the data associated with the relevant geographical information software for grounds maintenance is up to date, subject to the ownership data being updated annually.

2.14 Safety Inspections/Playgrounds

The purpose of the inspection is to ensure that our published standards have been met; to identify and manage any health and safety issues or other risks.

Neighbourhood Care will complete inspections of our playgrounds, open spaces and communal areas as detailed in the relevant procedures.

We will report repairs or maintenance issues arising from the inspection and these will be dealt with in line with our Responsive Repairs Policy.

2.15 Service Charges

Neighbourhood Care is responsible for providing information to allow the accurate setting of service charges for the functions it undertakes and in relation to the Service Charge Policy.

2.16 Specification

Neighbourhood Care will provide a detailed specification for the methods and procedures it uses to maintain the neighbourhoods as detailed in this policy.

The specification will be reviewed every 5 years by the relevant customer engagement protocol e.g. Customer Voice Panel

2.17 Equipment and Materials

FCHO will ensure that the most sustainable equipment, materials and chemicals are used during the delivery of this Policy, considering the environment and Value for Money.

3 Legislative and other guidelines

The following guidelines are associated with the tasks undertaken by Neighbourhood Care

- PUWER
- Tree Management (All work will be specified in accordance with the British Standard BS 3998:2010 – Tree Work – Recommendations. Only fully trained in-house teams and tree contractors capable of carrying out this standard of work will be used.
- The High Hedges Act (Part 8 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) in respect of maximum hedge height may apply where natural light is being blocked by the growth of a predominantly coniferous (evergreen) boundary hedge
- Chemicals and Cleaning materials (COSHH)
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014
- Common and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Housing Act 1996
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990

3.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

FCHO is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, based on protected characteristics. We will take account of the needs and differences of all colleagues, customers and other stakeholders which may arise in line

with this policy. We believe that everyone should be treated fairly and equally regardless of their difference.

3.2 Related Policies

- Tree Policy 2023
- Service Charge Policy
- Pest Management Policy