

YOUR
ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES



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About your service.

Our purpose is to make a positive difference in the communities we serve.

We will achieve this by:

- Providing an efficient and professional service which offers value for money
- Maintaining, managing and improving the green spaces in our care
- Responding quickly and effectively to customer needs and feedback

This handbook outlines clear and transparent standards for your environmental services.

It also explains how we monitor and measure our services to ensure we meet our customers' expectations, every time.

Ian Hulme
Environmental Services Manager





Grassed areas.

20 visits per year: 16 grass cuts per year from March – October and four winter visits. Other grassed areas, such as meadows, may be cut at different times throughout the year.

- During the growing season grass is cut on a twice-monthly cycle. Visits are scheduled and fall into either the first and third week of the month or the second and fourth
- All grass sites are inspected and litter picked before mowing
- Once grass cutting has started, we finish without delay unless bad weather prevents us from doing so
- We ensure that grass cutting machines are suitable for the size of area being maintained
- Grass cutting machines are sharp, properly set, and cut evenly and cleanly
- Obstacles and edges on estate sites are treated with herbicide in spring to reduce strimming visits and maintain tidy edges
- The strimming of edges and obstacles are completed at the same time as grass cutting
- We use a cut-and-drop grass cutting method using special mulch mowers. This practice is environmentally friendly and improves the soil to promote better lawn health
- All pathways and hard surfaces are blown clean after mowing is completed
- Leaves are removed or mulched from all communal areas as part of general grounds maintenance visits



Shrub beds and hedges.

- Hedges are maintained so that there is no obstruction to footpaths, roads, windows, parking areas and sight-lines.
- Encroachment growth on shrubs and hedges is pruned as and when required. Due to bird nesting restrictions between March and September, a full and thorough check is made for nests and work will be suspended if any are found.
- Hedge reductions and hard pruning is completed between October and February.
- Pruning is carried out according to the correct horticultural practice for the type of shrub or hedge. In all cases, self-seeded trees, dead, diseased, and damaged material is removed.
- All planted areas are kept free of weeds and litter. Weeds in beds and hedge bases are spot sprayed with herbicide.
- After pruning all cuttings are removed or mulched to the base of the shrubs.
- Shrub beds are edged off as part of programmed winter works for a neat and tidy appearance.

Hard surface areas.

20 visits per year: 16 visits from March – October and four winter maintenance visits between November and February.

- Hard surface areas include bin stores, bike sheds, car parks, pathways and yards
- Hard surface areas are kept weed and litter free as far as is practically possible. All sites are maintained on the scheduled visit and any issues reported
- Herbicide is used on all hard surface areas as required
- Moss is sprayed before scraping and only removed after it has died back. Moss is treated year-round

Invasive/non-native weeds

Onward has a legal obligation to control certain invasive species on land it owns and manages.

Our Environmental Services Team attend sites where invasive species are growing. They treat with herbicide and manage the infestation.

Japanese Knotweed

All sites are photographed and measured at assessment stage and before each treatment so the spread and vigour of the infestation can be recorded and monitored.

Neighbouring properties and land with Japanese Knotweed present will be notified as landowners have a legal responsibility to treat, control and stop the spread.

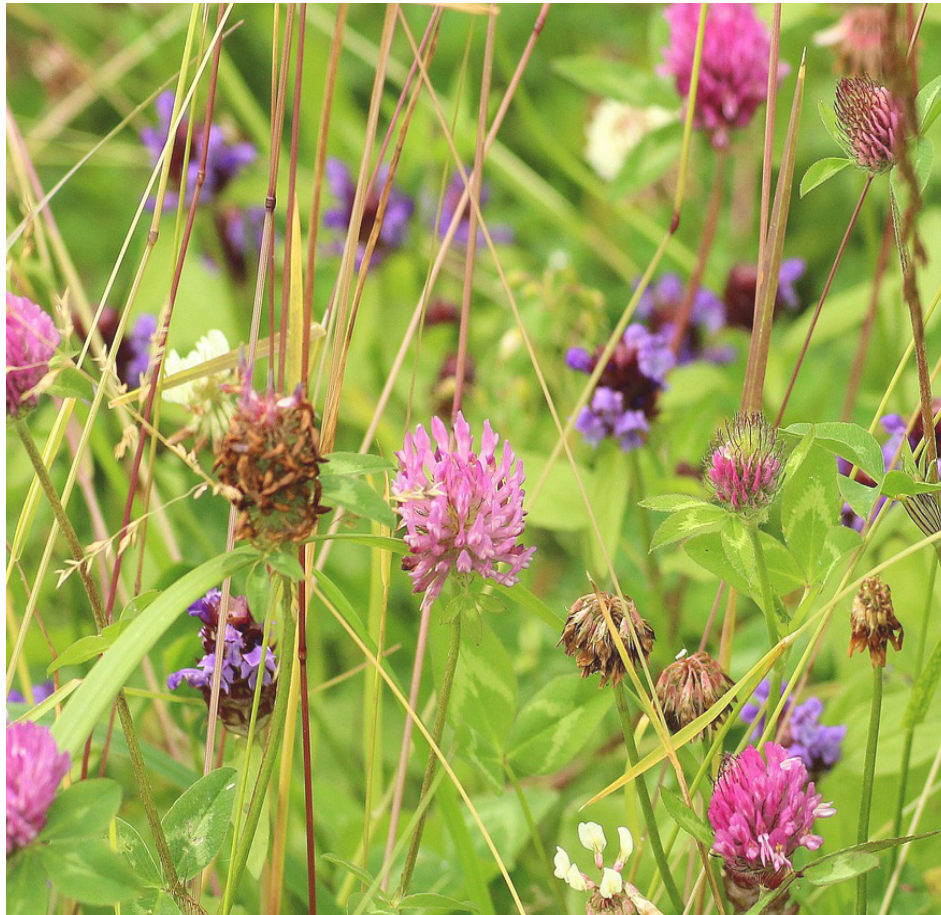
All sites will be treated twice a year to control spread.

Giant Hogweed

Giant Hogweed enquiries will be responded to immediately and if verified will be prioritised for treatment.

All other enquiries about invasive weeds are reported to the management team.





Sustainable landscapes.

Onward is committed to sustainability and reducing our carbon footprint. Where possible, we make every effort to establish sustainable landscapes in our neighbourhoods.

- More tree planting
- Introducing wildflower meadows
- Low maintenance ground cover plants and shrubs
- Spring and summer bulbs
- Mulching beds where possible for weed suppressant and moisture retention
- Neighbourhood improvements



Trees.

As part of Onwards tree policy and management plan, all trees within our ownership are surveyed and risk assessed within a 3-year timescale. All identified routine maintenance works are carried out in accordance with British Standard BS3998 between September – February due to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

- All tree work is completed by trained, NPTC qualified Arborists working to relevant industry guidelines and timescales. Routine maintenance is completed during winter, and urgent work is carried out as and when required
- Tree surveys and condition reports are only undertaken by our in-house qualified Tree Specialists
- Tree stumps are ground out where possible. Where not possible, they are left to 500mm and treated with herbicide, so as not to create a trip hazard
- Where stumps are ground out we soil and re-seed where necessary
- All debris from tree work is removed from site

Our responsibility for tree management.

Trees make a considerable contribution to our neighbourhoods. They absorb pollution and CO₂, help reduce noise levels, provide shade and shelter, and offer habitat for a range of wildlife. So it's important that we look after trees and keep them in a safe condition.

As your landlord we are responsible for all management and maintenance of trees growing on our land.

How we prioritise requests for tree work:

We WILL prune or remove trees that are:

- Dead, diseased or dying
- Dangerous (i.e. through storm damage)
- Causing damage, or likely to cause damage, to property
- Breaking Highway Regulations
- Identified as part of our maintenance programme

We WON'T prune or remove trees that are:

- Blocking sunlight
- Interfering with TV/phone signal
- Obstructing views
- Interfering with private vegetation

Help us keep you and our trees safe.

In order for us to manage and maintain our trees effectively, we need your cooperation:

- REPORT any tree-related issues as soon as you notice them
- ALLOW our officers, consultants and contractors access to your property when necessary

We will write to you when a routine tree survey is due. This service is free of charge.

Tree Safety dos and don'ts.

DO get written consent before you plant any trees on land owned by us, including in your garden, open spaces, or shared areas.

DON'T prune or remove any trees on land owned by us, including in your garden, open spaces or shared areas.

DON'T attach washing lines, lights, brackets and other objects to trees, as this creates weak points and causes damage.

Report a tree issue.

To report a tree issue call 0300 555 0600

We will respond within 24 hours to discuss your issue and, if the tree work criteria are met, we will arrange an inspection within 28 days.

DO NOT try to deal with any damaged trees yourself. Many of our trees are protected and it is a criminal offence to prune or remove them without legal consent from the local authority.

We seek to maintain a high standard and quality of indoor cleaning and window cleaning in the communal areas of our properties. We constantly monitor the quality of the cleaning undertaken by either our in-house team or contractors through weekly joint inspections and audits.

Indoor communal cleaning:

In communal areas of our properties, we clean and remove litter and junk mail from the following areas:

- Entrances and lobbies including external steps
- All communal spaces
- Stairways and lifts
- Defined bin stores

In these communal areas we also clean:

- Walls
- Floors
- Woodwork, frames and hard surfaces
- Internal glass
- Light fittings

All our communal properties are cleaned on a fortnightly basis unless specified and agreed within the contract.

Window Cleaning:

Any accessible external windows at the front or rear of our communal properties are cleaned

Communal doors, frames and ledges are wiped down

Our contractors use a reach and wash pole system using ionized water to repel dirt and debris from windows

All our communal properties are cleaned on a monthly basis unless specified and agreed within the contract

Addressing fly tipping and improving waste management in our neighbourhoods.

Onward is committed to working with customers, communities and partners to keep our schemes and neighbourhoods tidy. We know that litter, waste and fly tipping is an important issue for many of our communities. We have a role to play to deal with the consequences of litter and fly tipping and to challenge attitudes and behaviours towards our environment.

We currently spend over £100,000 of rental income on tackling fly tipping and litter each year. This is your money that we could better invest in new or existing homes and communities across the region.

Our role.

Onward has a role to play in promoting and providing effective recycling and waste management systems that work for our customers, especially those living in flats with communal areas and communal bins. We also have a responsibility to remove dumped waste from our properties and help reduce fly tipping.

Our role in tackling incidents of fly tipping and improving waste management varies depending on whether the incident:

- is a repeat or one off
- poses an immediate fire or environmental health risk
- relates to an individual property or scheme
- impacts a neighbourhood where Onward manages a significant number of homes



Our approach.

The aim of our approach is to reduce the cost, scale and frequency of fly tipping incidents, improve our waste management and improve customer satisfaction.

We will work with residents, the local authority and other partners in each of our neighbourhoods to clearly define a collaborative approach to dealing with fly tipping, litter and waste management locally.

Our principles.

We have developed the following set of principles which guide our approach in each neighbourhood.

- Responsive – we will develop a set of service standards for dealing with fly tipping so our customers are clear about what to expect from us when they report an incident
- Collaboration – we will be well connected and work in partnership with local authorities, contractors and communities to effectively manage our neighbourhoods
- Communication – we will communicate clear and useful information to residents in relation to fly tipping and waste management
- Proactive – where there are repeat or wide ranging issues in a neighbourhood, we will put in place initiatives or long term measures in partnership with local communities
- Accountability – we will ensure that where issues arise, individuals are held accountable for their actions through a proactive but fair approach to enforcement
- Fit for purpose – we will ensure that waste management arrangements at our schemes and neighbourhoods are fit for purpose and help to prevent fly tipping
- Learning – we will learn from best practice and make use of new technologies in waste management where possible



Tell us how we're doing.

We're always looking to improve our services with the help of satisfaction surveys, resident feedback, inspections and learning from complaints.

If you have any feedback about your experience of our services, or suggestions for improvement, we'd love to hear from you. Email us at EST.feedback@onward.co.uk or call us on **0300 555 0600**

If you would like to give us regular feedback or work with us to improve our services, why not join our Customer Engagement community? Email us at customerengagement@onward.co.uk or call us on **0300 555 0600**

Making a complaint

We don't always get things right first time. If you do have any problems contact us straight away and we'll do our best to rectify the issue quickly.

Online	via 'My Onward'
Over the phone	0300 555 0600
Email	EST.feedback@onward.co.uk
In writing	Onward Homes, 2 Christie Way, Renaissance Court, Manchester M21 7QY

We will respond to your complaint in line with our Complaints Policy.