



Raven
Housing Trust

Grounds Maintenance Photobook

Building
homes
**Changing
lives**

Grounds Maintenance Photobook

In December 2022, we appointed a new grounds maintenance contractor after a thorough two-stage tendering process involving residents, staff and contractors. We appointed Groundscapes as our new contractor, with the shared aim to provide services which are consistent in quality, value for money and which maintain shared areas to an acceptable standard.

This document sets out what standards you can expect from the shared outdoor area around your home. A group of Raven residents have approved these standards. Raven's contractor, Groundscapes, will carry out the work to meet these agreed standards.

You can find out more about Groundscapes by visiting their website: www.groundscapes.co.uk/



Responsibilities

Groundscapes will:

- Work to the highest standards of professional competence, courtesy and customer care using a professional and appropriately skilled workforce
- Show consideration towards residents at all times and not use any loud machinery outside regular working hours
- Have identification and wear the company's uniform at all times
- Arrive promptly with the correct materials, tools and equipment
- Comply with all Health and Safety Regulations as specified under the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**
- Give residents 24 hours' notice if they need to turn off any water, gas or electricity, except in an emergency



Groundscapes are not responsible for:

- Collecting grass clippings, except in sheltered housing schemes. This keeps costs down for residents and ultimately reduces rents and service charges
- Any grass, flowers, shrub beds, hedges or trees in resident's own private gardens
- Doing any work on grassed areas previously damaged by others
- Carrying out any work that is not part of the contract

The Standards

Any shared or communal outdoor areas will need to be kept to a certain standard, all year round. Rather than stating how often the grass should be cut, we expect the grass to be cut and maintained to meet this standard throughout the year.

This standard will be checked by Raven staff, residents and by Groundscapes using this photobook as a reference. The photobook is separated into five distinct areas of estate services:

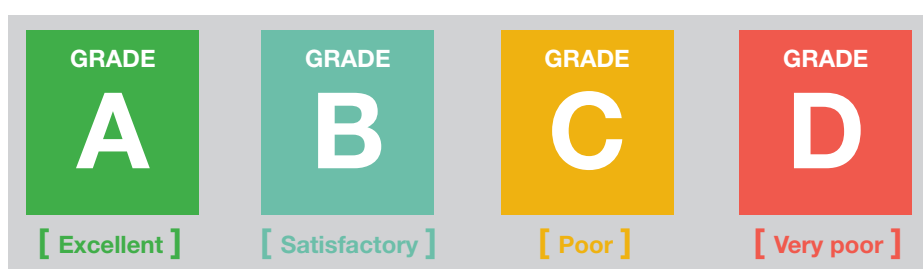
- Grass cutting
- Edges (by walls, paths and fences of grass areas)
- Hedges
- Pavements and paths
- Shrubs and flower beds

In addition to the above, Groundscapes will also have some responsibility for tree maintenance.

How we score your Estate

This guide has been produced to demonstrate how we will be monitoring the standard of grounds maintenance on your estate.

The photos for each area are divided into four different standards. These standards are graded:



Our contractor, Groundscapes, are expected to maintain all areas under contract to grade A or B standard. Where the standard of grounds maintenance falls to a grade C or D, we will take action and request that the contractor rectifies the service.



Grass Cutting

GRADE

A

The grass is cleared of all rubbish and debris before every cut (including heavy leaf fall during winter months). Communal areas are cut to an even height all over, leaving no areas uncut including along fences, walls, pathways and pavements. Patches of grass around objects are cleared manually using a strimmer. Grass cuttings are left behind on the area being cut (except sheltered housing schemes where we pick up grass cuttings). Grass cuttings are blown off paths and pavements back onto grass areas.



[Excellent]

GRADE

B

Grass in communal areas is tidy and quite short.



[Satisfactory]

GRADE

C

Grass in communal areas is in need of attention. The grass is long in places and in need of a cut.



[Poor]

GRADE

D

The grass is of very poor standard and in need of immediate attention. Grass is overgrown.



[Very poor]

Grass Edges

GRADE

A

Edges of communal grass areas are straight and clear of any weeds and debris. Areas not spreading over paths, flower and shrub beds.



[Excellent]

GRADE

B

Grass edges are tidy, but not all that straight. Soon they will be in need of attention and restored with routine maintenance.



[Satisfactory]

GRADE

C

Edges are not straight, visibly untidy and need of weeding. The grass may have grown away from its original line and is spreading over pathways, flower and shrub beds.



[Poor]

GRADE

D

Edges are very untidy, weeds are overgrown, and grass is long at the edge of the paths, flower and shrub beds.



[Very poor]

Pavements and Paths

GRADE

A

Edges are kept tidy, weeds and other growth are cleared from pavements and paths. A low-chemical spray is used on some visits (three times a year) to gradually kill weeds. Any dead weeds are removed within two weeks of spraying.



[Excellent]

GRADE

B

Pavements and paths are reasonably tidy and clear, although some weeds are starting to grow through from cracks and edges.

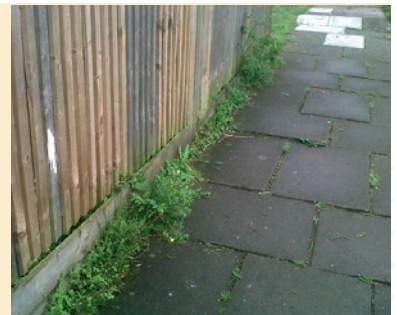


[Satisfactory]

GRADE

C

Weeds are visibly growing on pavements and paths. Edges are untidy and in need of attention.

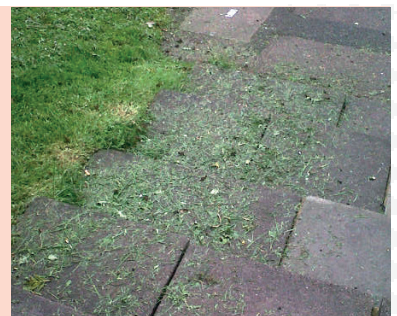


[Poor]

GRADE

D

Grass is covering the pavements and paths. Edges are overgrown, very untidy and in need of immediate attention.



[Very poor]

Shrubs and Flower Beds

GRADE

A

All shrubs and flower beds in communal areas are kept free of leaves, litter, weeds and other unwanted plants. The shrubs and flowers are pruned and cared for to ensure they stay strong and healthy.



[Excellent]

GRADE

B

Shrubs and flower beds are neat and tidy but may need attention soon.



[Satisfactory]

GRADE

C

Shrubs and flower beds are starting to look untidy with evidence of weeds and litter. Attention is needed to bring them back to A or B standard.



[Poor]

GRADE

D

Shrubs and flower beds are overgrown and weeds are thriving. Immediate attention is needed to bring them back to A or B standard.



[Very poor]

Hedges

GRADE

A

All hedges in communal areas are kept tidy and uniformly cut in a straight line or curve depending on the shape. Hedges will not be cut during bird nesting season (defined as 1st March – 31st July by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981), unless the hedge overhangs a public highway or footpath. All cut branches are to be removed from hedges.



[Excellent]

GRADE

B

Hedges are straight and tidy but may need cutting soon.



[Satisfactory]

GRADE

C

Hedges are starting to grow into or overhang paths and look untidy.



[Poor]

GRADE

D

Hedges are significantly overgrown and very untidy.



[Very poor]

Tree Maintenance

Groundscapes have some responsibility for trees including:

- Removing of saplings and any growth around the base of trees, up to a height of 2.5 meters
- Pruning back of low-level branches
- Removing any tree cuttings immediately
- Surveying any trees on Raven owned land over a three year cycle

If you believe there is an urgent problem with a tree, please call us on **0300 123 3399** during our office hours (Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm) and we will arrange to send out qualified tree surgeons.



Tree base cleared up to 2.5m



New growth around tree base will be cleared

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who do I contact if the standard of my communal outdoor area doesn't match either the A or B standard as shown in this photobook?

A: If you think the standard is below the B standard shown in this photobook, please call us on **0300 123 3399** or email raven@ravenht.org.uk

Q: The grass, hedges, shrubs and flower beds are overgrown. How many visits should I receive a year from Groundscapes?

A: Grounds maintenance services are based on monitored quality all year round, rather than frequency of visits.

Q: Urgent work is needed on a tree. How quickly will Groundscapes respond?

A: Please call us on **0300 123 3399** or email raven@ravenht.org.uk during office hours. Once we receive your inquiry, we will respond within 24 hours in urgent cases.

Q: Why don't you remove grass cuttings in our area? Can you remove them?

A: Grass cuttings are not removed to reduce costs for residents (except sheltered housing schemes where we pick up the grass). By not collecting grass cuttings; rents and service charges are reduced. If you want us to collect grass cuttings, please call us on **0300 123 3399**. There will be cost implications, and we will need to make sure all residents in your area agree to this before anything changes.

Q: There are hedges outside of my home that have never been cut and Groundscapes tell me it is not part of the work they are responsible for.

A: If you think these hedges are on Raven owned land, please call us on **0300 123 3399** or email raven@ravenht.org.uk and we will check if they are. If they are, we can add these to Groundscapes' contract of work.

Q: How do I give my comments on Groundscapes' service?

A: Please email your comments to raven@ravenht.org.uk

Q: What weed killer do you use?

A: We use a low-chemical spray three times a year to eradicate weeds on pavements and pathways gradually. The dead weeds will be removed within two weeks of spraying.

Q: Do you inspect and monitor grounds maintenance work?

A: Yes we do – everyone that works for Raven has a duty to report any issues with grounds maintenance on estates. We also employ an Estate Inspector, whose responsibility is to inspect and monitor the work of Groundscapes. We also have wardens, cleaners and trades staff who regularly provide us with feedback.

Customer Promises

Our Customer Promises lists the standard of products and services customers can expect from us. You can view our Customers Promises by visiting our website:

<https://www.ravenht.org.uk/about/about-us/our-customer-promise>

Contact

Raven Housing Trust
Raven House, 29 Linkfield Lane,
Redhill RH1 1SS

Call 0300 123 3399

Email raven@ravenht.org.uk

Visit www.ravenht.org.uk

“Have you
registered for
MyRaven?”

Building
homes
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