

Environmental Services

Setting the standards of your contractors

Welcome



We are passionate about high quality services and real value for money. We provide a range of services for many of our customers helping them to keep their shared gardens, open spaces, internal areas and external areas clean and tidy.

It's very important that our properties are maintained by our contractors, depending on the type of work this might be through regular visits or as and when required or seasonally. You may be paying a service charge for the regular maintenance of your property. Your service charge will cover a variety of spaces in both the communal areas and outside the property.

Ensuring quality whilst maintaining value for money has always been a key priority for us. We work with the very best contractors to ensure affordable rates, quality of work and a high level of Health and Safety standards.

We have worked with our customers to develop the specification and service standards whilst a core team of contractors to deliver Environmental Services including **Grounds Maintenance, Communal Cleaning** and **Window Cleaning services**.

Our contractors are local and family run businesses, social enterprises and national organisations.

This guide explains the services covered by our service charges and how we monitor service performances.

Please note, if you're in a retirement living or supported living home please speak to your local site manager for contract specifications.

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Local Services for our customers

We asked you what you wanted from your services. You told us you wanted local people providing high quality services. We listened and have procured the services of a variety of local contractors.

How does this affect me?

This will allow you to experience an improved service of maintenance from us. We have spent a lot of time ensuring we only provide the best for our customers and your feedback has been paving the way for some exciting changes across our services!

- Any issues will need to be reported to our Customer Hub, see the contact us page for details.
- All contractors will be wearing ID badges and will drive vans with the Midland Heart Logo
- Environmental services will be delivered throughout the year, with the main maintenance being delivered between March and October.
- We hold regular meetings with the contractors to monitor their performance and discuss ways in which we can make a difference within our neighbourhoods.



Employing Local Labour

We encourage our contractors to employ people who live close to the place of work. Helping our customers to thrive and achieve the best for their communities. We feel its really important to involve our customers in what we do. We are currently recruiting customers to be part of our estate champion programme to help us improve our services.

We now have customers acting as Estate Champions

These are volunteers working with us to monitor the communal service and report any issues with their neighbourhoods. They carry out monthly inspections to confirm the service has been provided and meets the specification.

We give training and support to customers who volunteer as Estate Champions.

If you are interest in becoming an Estate Champion or want to find out more, contact our Customer scrutiny team

Customerscutiny@midlandheart.org.uk



Your Contractors



Keeping up standards

We have 5 main areas where we manage our services



**Shared garden and
Open Spaces**



Places we live



**Shared internal
Areas**



Environment



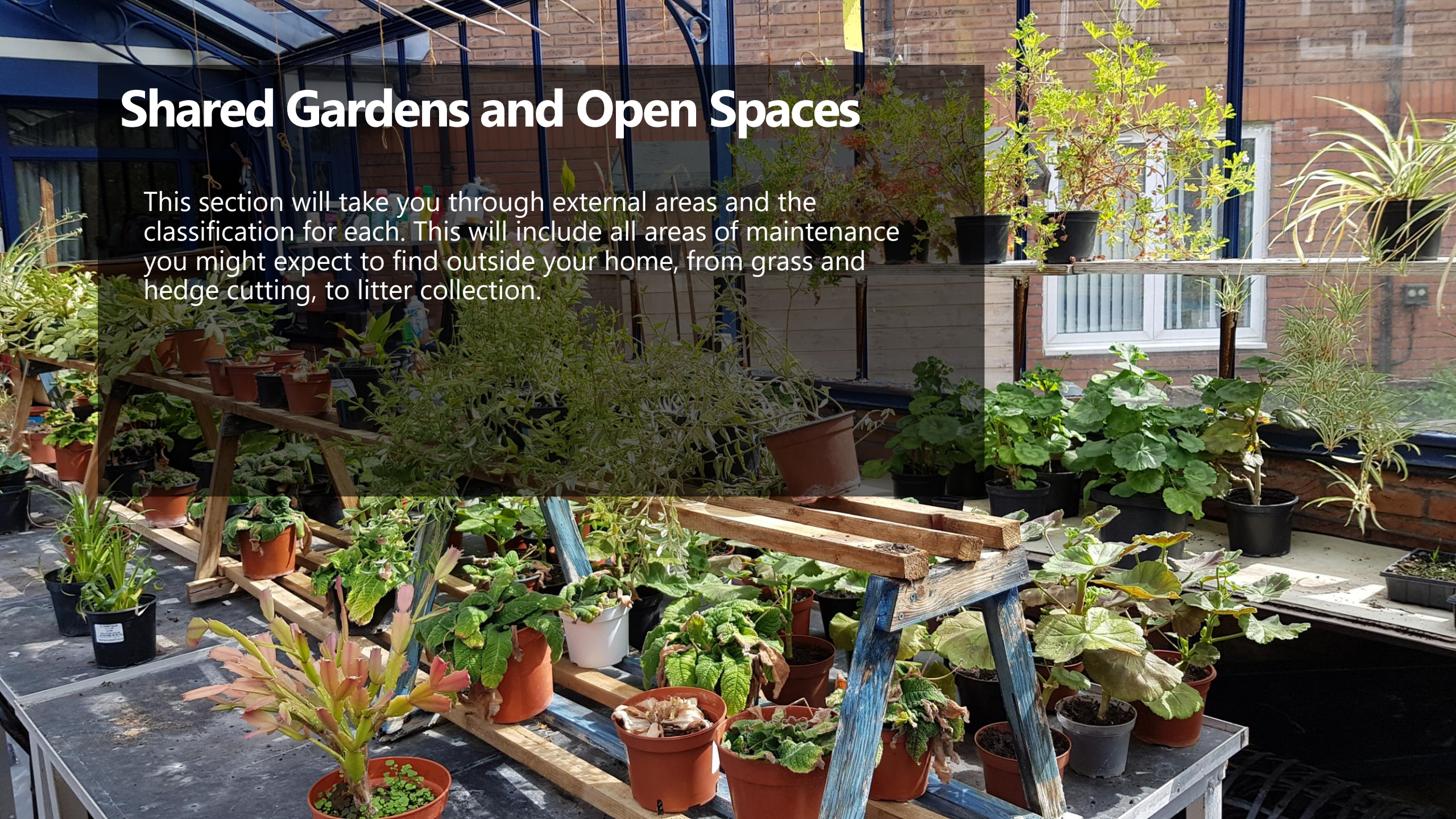
External windows

The purpose of this guide is to help customers, staff and contractors judge the quality of environmental services contracts by providing picture examples of what constitutes a Pass or Fail. These are then used as part of our contractor meeting and key performance indicators.

We encourage our customers to use this guide to assess the services in your area against the specification we expect contracts to deliver.

Shared Gardens and Open Spaces

This section will take you through external areas and the classification for each. This will include all areas of maintenance you might expect to find outside your home, from grass and hedge cutting, to litter collection.



Grass Cutting

(Cut and drop)

With a cut and drop service you can expect to see a small amount of grass cutting in places. All grassed areas are to be left neat and tidy. Grass should be cut no lower than **25mm** and grow no longer than **125mm**.

Pass



Fail



Report



Grass Edging

This is the area of grass that borders the lawn area and includes grassy areas around tree bases. Trim/edge all grassed areas to paths, borders, beds, and at the building line to the same height as the grassed areas.

Pass



Fail



Report



Maintenance of Planted areas, Hedges and Shrubs

All planted areas and Hedges and Shrubs must be tidy, pruned or cut to maintain a neat line and definition. This will be complete as and when required.

Pass



Fail



Report



Litter picking

We expect our customers to treat the external area of the property as they would in their own home, this includes ensuring litter goes into the nearby bins. Our contractors will Litter pick all shrub and flower beds, borders and hard surfaces each visit. Clear and remove all leaf fall throughout the year

Pass



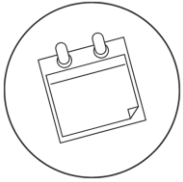
Fail



Report



Frequently asked Questions



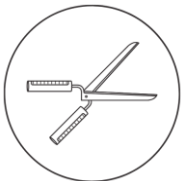
How often will you be cutting the grass?

You will receive 18 cuts during the growing season (weather permitting, March to October) which works out that your grass should be cut every 2 weeks



Why don't you cut all the shrubs at the same time?

Many shrubs go through a flowering period, and bulk pruning can stop this flowering from happening. To keep shrubs looking their best, pruning is carried out once they have finished their flowering period, which is also much better for the environment and local wildlife.



Only one side of the shrub outside of my door has been pruned, why is this?

We carry out what we call a 'containment prune' in areas where there is a likelihood of the shrub blocking access to properties, particularly if there is a need for disabled access. The rest of the shrub is then left alone as long as it is healthy and at an acceptable size.

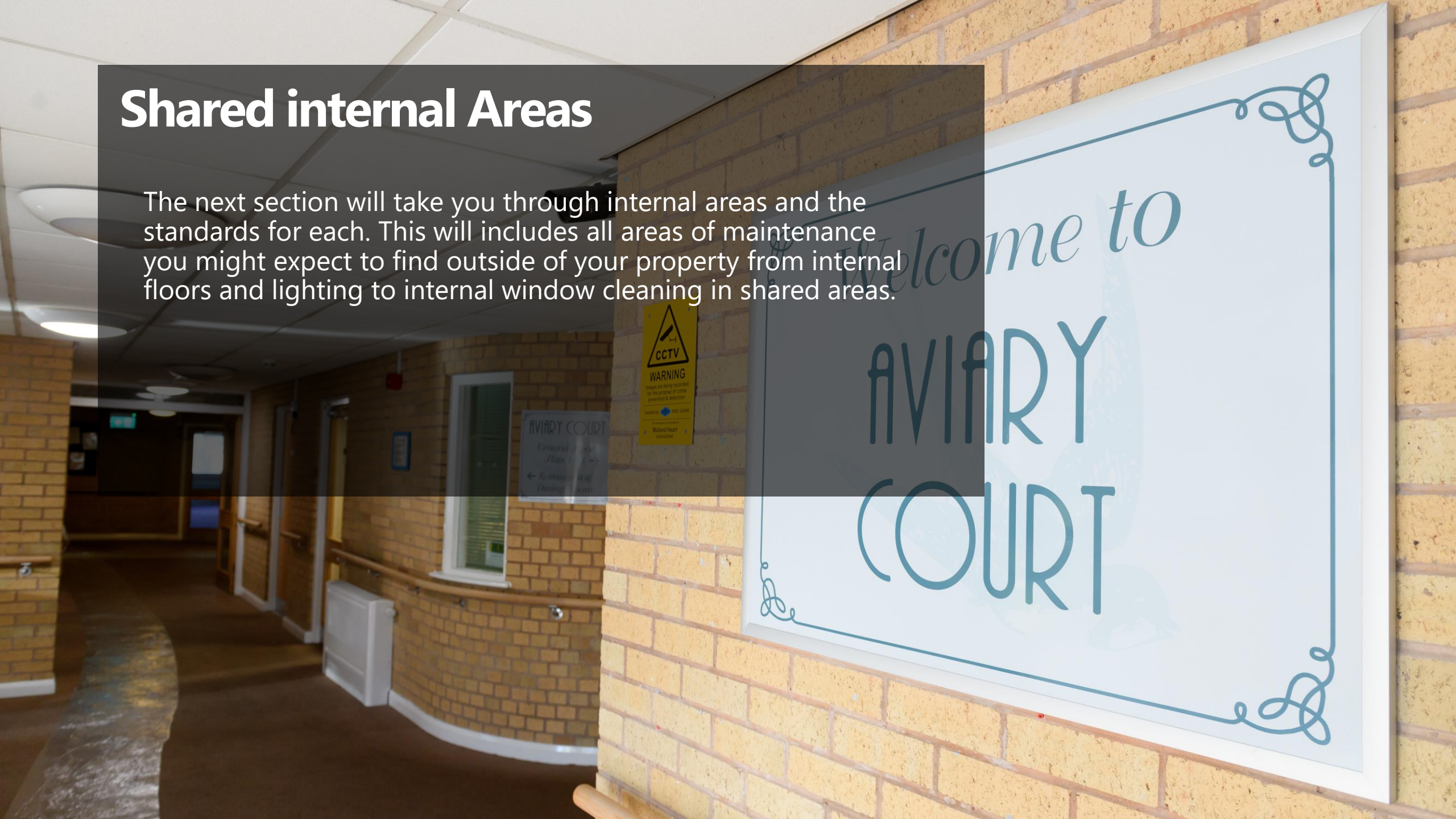


What will the contractors do if its pouring with rain?

If they feel the weather is so bad that they are unable to cut the grass, they will do other routine works such as litter picking, trim/edge all grassed areas to paths.

Shared internal Areas

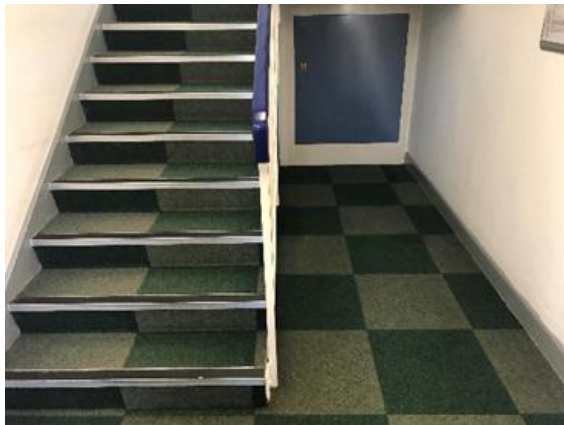
The next section will take you through internal areas and the standards for each. This will include all areas of maintenance you might expect to find outside of your property from internal floors and lighting to internal window cleaning in shared areas.



Flooring

Its important floors within shared areas are kept both clean and clear.
We expect our customers to play their part and ensure rubbish is disposed of in the correct way and ensure arears are kept clear to ensure fire exit routes are accessible. To guarantee this our contractors will vacuum carpeted areas (where electric points are available) or sweeping and mopping of non-carpeted floors.

Pass



Fail



Report



Shared Internal Areas

Ledges and Sills

Every element of your property is important to us, including the smaller areas such as stairs, rail, sills and ledges. Our contractors will ensure that your communal surfaces areas are swept, vacuumed and wiped down where necessary keeping your areas tidy and clean.

Lighting

The lighting within your communal areas should be working at all times and our contractors will ensure they are kept clean and free from a build up of dust and cobwebs.

Lifts

Your lift and lift cage should be kept clean, tidy and both dust and cob web free at all time.

Our contractor will ensure that floors within lifts have been mopped clean and have been disinfected. They'll also make sure all sweepings have been collected, the area is litter free and any graffiti is dealt with in a timely manner.

Internal Window Cleaning

All interior windows should have been washed clean and left smear free. All surrounds, sills and ledge should also have been wiped to remove any surplus water.

Cleaning of Minor areas

This includes the cleaning of smaller areas within your shared spaces. This includes skirting boards, walls doors, and door frames all of which will be kept clean and dirt free.



External Windows

It's important to us that your homes look clean and smart. Window cleaning is an integral part of our cleaning contract to you and we'll ensure external windows are cleaned on a regular basis and left smear free.

External Windows

High Level Window Cleaning (above ground level)

Our contractors will use high reach poles to easily access your windows and use pure water which ensures there are no streaks and powdery deposits. Windows are left wet and will dry naturally. This allows our contractors to complete their jobs safely whilst bringing significant cost benefits to our customers.

Low Level Window Cleaning (at ground level)

Our Contractors only use traditional window cleaning methods on easy reach ground floor windows for safety reasons. Your windows should be left clean, streak free with minimal surplus water.

Window Frames

Low Level window frames, where accessible will be wiped down and cleaned, with excess water removed whilst the contractor is cleaning your window.

Pole System

The pure water cleans the windows without the use of detergents, using the water flow and a flexible brush to loosen dirt. The water goes through a purification process to ensure windows are left as clean as using traditional methods.

PLEASE NOTE: if you try and dry your windows after they have been cleaned using this system, you will cause the window to smear. Window Cleaning will still take place during wet weather

Places we Live

Your neighbourhood is a really important part of your local community and while we expect our customers to ensure they play their part in keeping their areas clean, our contractors will also be out to maintain areas. If something in the area just doesn't look quite right just give us a call and our contractors will respond in a timely manner.

The next few pages will show you what constitutes as a fail.



Places we Live

Litter

Pass

External areas are clean and free from litter, dead leaf foliage will be tidied and collected where possible and all small scale refuse has been collected and removed from the site.

Fail

Neighbourhood is heavily littered with a significant amount of rubbish and general waste. This is an ongoing issue in the neighbourhood.

Fly-tipping

Pass

Your external areas are free from large abandoned items.

Fail

There is at least one instance of fly tipping in the area and it is taking place on a regular basis.

Environmental hazards

Pass

There are no hazardous items.

Fail

There is evidence of one or more of the following present: Hypodermic needle(s), bodily fluid i.e. urine, blood, faeces, paint, tyres, pharmaceutical waste, items in communal areas that could pose a fire safety risk. This also includes internal and external safety risk e.g. unsafe paving.

Places we Live

Graffiti/ vandalism

Pass

Walls and external communal areas are clear from any vandalism or graffiti.

Fail

There is at least one or more acts of graffiti or vandalism.

Stray dogs and fouling

Pass

External areas are free from dog fouling and there are no issues of stray dogs.

Fail

Frequent issues with frequent dog fouling and/or issues with stray dogs.

Places we Live

Abandoned vehicles

Pass

There are no occurrences of of abandoned vehicles.

Fail

One or more vehicles have been abandoned.

Unsafe road or footpath

Pass

Roads and footpaths within schemes are safe, well maintained and there is little to no damages or wear in external areas that could pose a health and safety risk.

Fail

Roads and footpath within schemes should be as safe as possible with no hazards or damage which could be a health and safety risk. This could include broken paving slabs, raised walkways with railings missing.

Guttering or external appearances

Pass

Guttering is free from any excessive build up of debris that might affect the drainage system

Fail

There is a build up in the guttering system of natural debris that could potentially affect the drainage system.

Places we Live

Internal and External repairs

Each of our properties are different in size and shape, so we have put together a guide below to give you an idea of the repairs we are responsible for:

- External security lights
- Damaged paving slabs (on Property)
- Broken or cracked windows
- Broken or damaged external doors
- Damage on outside wall or roof
- External pipe work
- Entrance areas (shared spaces)

Internal and external decoration

We are responsible for the upkeep of communal spaces so please let us know of any of issues with the following areas:

- Peeling paint on external doors or walls
- Improving flooring
- Updating doors and windows

Environment

As well as your general maintenance and communal services, we will maintain all communal trees and pest issues, bulky waste and Hazardous issues that affect your property. These are carried out by our specialist contractors who will possess the relevant licenses and health and safety training to ensure the work is carried out without posing any risk to residents/public.

We'll also maintain invasive weeds within your property or communal areas. The following pages will explain a little more about what our contractors do.



Environment

Japanese Knotweed

This is what is termed as an 'invasive weed' brought into Europe from Asia as a decorative border plant. It is now a real problem in urban areas due to the damage it can cause to all sorts of structures - such as concrete and pavement - and the speed that it grows at.

We work closely with our specialist Japanese Knotweed contractor, The Grounds Care Group who use their professional expertise to identify and remove Japanese Knotweed in a timely and safe manner.

What to do if you believe you have Japanese Knotweed in or around your property? Please contact us, details can be found on the contact us page.

Tree Surgery

We carry out tree inspections on all of our communal trees approximately every 3 years. There are so many different species of tree therefore we use a specialist to help us with this work. Any trees that pose a danger to people or a property will be removed or made safe in a timely and safe manner by our contractors.

Bulky Waste clearance and Pest control

We also use a specialist Contractor called Orbis to carry out our work such as:

Removal of "fly-tipped" or dumped items in communal areas that aren't going to be collected by local authorities and/or the Rangers Service.

Eradication of pests within communal areas and those that are our responsibility.
Disposal of hazardous waste.

Contact Us

If you would like help to access or understand any of our information call us on 0345 60 20 540 or email us at: contact@midlandheart.org.uk

Further information

We have produced an interactive guide to tell you more about your contractors and our environmental services, to view these please visit:

<https://www.midlandheart.org.uk/my-home/environmental-services/>