

Greatwell Places – Our estates commitments

January 2025

Tree works

Greatwell Places has a commitment to good arboriculture management.

We'll carry out detailed surveys on all our trees (communal and residential) every five years as a minimum.

We'll ensure they are safe and will identify any works that may be required. All findings are recorded with a location marker. Surveys are carried out by a qualified professional tree surgeon and all trees are managed with a primary focus on risk.

All identified works meeting the criteria below are then carried out by qualified tree surgeon to reach a national standard set out by the Arboricultural Association and the British Standards Institute. We check to make sure trees don't have nesting birds or roosting bats in them before we do any work. We also check all trees to see if they're protected by a conservation area or tree preservation order before we carry out works. If they are, we must file a planning application to receive permission prior to carrying out the work. The application can take up to 12 weeks. This is a legal requirement and failure to complete a planning application could lead to prosecution and a substantial fine.

Required criteria and our target response times for carrying out tree works

- If a tree has been damaged i.e. severe storms or has become unstable or dangerous (Made safe within two hours dependent on risk assessment).
- If a tree is obstructing a highway by way of emergency (Made safe within two hours dependent on risk assessment).
- Removing dead branches that may fall (Made safe within two hours dependent on risk assessment.)
- If a tree has been identified as causing damage to a built structure (28 days to carry out the work).
- In line with good practice such as re-pollarding (pruning) (Within 12 months).
- To facilitate a repair (In line with our repairs schedule).
- To instruct specialist arborists where required by risk assessment.
- We may remove trees to achieve a management objective. For example, if we'd like to replant with a more suitable species (Timescales are approximate and start from once the request is received by us).

What is not considered a reason for tree work?

It is nationally recognised that the following are not reasons for carrying out works to trees:

- Blocking of light
- Dripping sap
- Bird mess (solution: use bird scares or spikes to prevent birds perching on areas they are not wanted).
- Dropped leaves (solution: collect leaves and use them for compost or put them in your green recycling bag).
- Blocked television reception (solution: relocate the television aerial onto a taller mast or a different area of the building).
- Blocked satellite reception (solution: speak to your service provider as they're obliged to ensure you receive the product you pay for and can raise the satellite dish onto a mast).

Cleaning of communal areas in blocks of flats:

We deliver a cleaning service every four weeks throughout our blocks of flats with shared internal areas.

The cleaning specification includes:

- Sweeping (vacuuming where carpeted)
- Mopping
- Wiping down of surfaces using the appropriate cleaning products
- Cleaning reachable internal windows.

Cleaning of independent living schemes:

We provide weekly visits with the number of visits per week dependant on the individual Independent Living Scheme.

Where feedback is received from customers regarding the standard of cleaning, Greatwell Homes will use the data received and any other feedback received through the year to make any necessary changes. We'll inspect these areas on at least a quarterly basis, record findings and highlight identified follow-up works.

Grounds maintenance

We provide a grounds maintenance service. The grass will be maintained approximately eight times per year, to a visually appropriate level, this will also include a mulching option to encourage healthier grass growth.

Shrubs and hedges will be pruned twice a year where appropriate and cuttings will be removed from the site. We replant as necessary within the spring and autumn. Residents may carry out their own planting within communal areas, however, we reserve the right to remove any planting that is not adequately maintained.

During the winter period we complete a winter maintenance programme that will include work to beds and borders, shrubs and trees. We also replenish beds and borders with chippings.

Where feedback is received from customers regarding the standard of grounds maintenance, Greatwell Homes will use the data received and any other feedback received through the year to make any necessary changes. We inspect these areas on at least a quarterly basis, record findings and highlight identified follow-up works.

Removing litter, graffiti and fly-tipping

- Greatwell Places will aim to remove offensive graffiti within 24 hours
- Non-offensive graffiti will be removed within five days
- Litter picking will be done as a matter of course within our four-weekly schedule of grounds maintenance
- Fly-tipping will be responded to and cleared within five days
- Dangerous and hazardous materials that have been discarded on our land will be removed as quickly as possible. Where we believe the risk requires action, we will aim to do this within 24 hours (weather/substance dependant).

Wherever possible we will seek to identify the person(s) responsible and, in all such cases, we will **take action to recover our costs and/or work with the relevant authorities to secure a prosecution** where there is evidence that a crime has been committed.

We will inspect these areas on a quarterly basis, record findings and highlight follow-up works.