

gentoo



Grounds, Trees and Play Area Management Policy



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Accountable Executive:	Executive Director of Property
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For the full version history of this document, see the back page	

Please avoid referring to printed versions of this policy. Printed versions may quickly go out of date – the latest version will be on the Policy Hub or contact the Governance Team. For support and advice regarding the policy, please contact the Policy Owner.

1. Introduction

- This policy outlines Gentoo's approach to maintaining and managing external communal spaces, including landscaped grounds, tree stock, and equipped play areas. These services play a key role in supporting safe, attractive, and well-managed neighbourhoods, contributing to resident wellbeing and overall satisfaction.
- It applies to all Gentoo maintained communal open spaces and excludes internal communal areas, which are covered under separate arrangements. It also explains how these services are delivered, monitored, and funded, including references to service charges, safety inspections, digital record-keeping, and customer feedback.
- This policy aims to ensure services are delivered consistently and transparently, with supporting procedures in place to manage risk, respond to safety concerns, and meet legal, regulatory, and contractual obligations.
- Gentoo own and manage over 28,500 homes in and around Sunderland and are committed to ensuring that the external areas it is responsible for are attractive and safe. Gentoo wants customers to be proud of their local areas and will meet the requirements of any relevant regulations and legislation, while maximising the opportunities for customers to enjoy maintained areas.
- Gentoo has approximately 45,000 trees that it is responsible for. This includes trees on communal land, trees in customers' gardens which could impact the fabric of the building or be of risk and plantation tree stock.
- This policy covers Gentoo's approach to grounds maintenance and incorporates how we manage tree, estates and playparks. This policy should be read in conjunction with current grounds maintenance, play park and tree management procedures. The policy and procedures provide information on how Gentoo will manage its grounds maintenance and trees in a proactive manner, safeguarding the health and safety of everyone as its first priority as well as ensuring that its trees continue to make a positive contribution to the wellbeing of communities in the long term.

2. Scope

- This policy sets out Gentoo's approach to the management and maintenance of its external communal environments. It applies to all Gentoo-owned and managed external areas, including planted spaces, lawns, hedges, trees, and equipped play areas, and outlines how these will be maintained to ensure safety, accessibility, and quality for residents and the wider community.
- Gentoo is responsible for maintaining approximately 2.5 million m² green space and currently eight equipped play areas across its neighbourhoods. The organisation also manages around 45,000 trees, including those on communal land, trees in customer gardens where they present a risk, and plantation

stock. These assets form a vital part of Gentoo's neighbourhood offer and visual identity.

- The scope of this policy does not extend to internal communal areas, roads, or open spaces managed by third parties. It should be read alongside the supporting operational procedures for grounds maintenance, tree management, and play area inspection and repair. Together, these documents set out how Gentoo will deliver services in a structured, safe, and compliant manner, aligned with legislative requirements and customer expectations.
- The scope of the policy covers:

Gentoo Group	X
Gentoo Homes	
Gentoo Developments Ltd	
Gentoo Genie	

- The policy, depending on factors relating to the specific location, may apply to:

General Needs rented properties	X
Supported Housing	X
Sheltered Housing	X
Leasehold/Shared ownership	X
Rent to Buy properties	
Market rented properties (domestic)	
Temporary Accommodation	X
Stock owned but not managed by the Group	X
Communal areas, including those relating to Leasehold/Shared Ownership properties	X
Commercial Property (offices, depots etc.)	
Stock managed by Gentoo on behalf of a third party	X
Garages and outbuildings	X
Remote plant (district heating, electrical pumps etc.)	
Curtilage	X

2.6 This policy also supports Gentoo's commitment to delivering value for money, meeting customer expectations, and promoting a well-maintained, inclusive, and safe outdoor environment. It underpins how Gentoo fulfills its legal duties as a landlord, mitigates risk through clear standards and inspection regimes, and ensures that both in-house teams and external contractors operate consistently, professionally, and in line with agreed service levels.

3. Definitions

The following definitions are relevant to this policy:

- **Grounds Maintenance:** The routine care of communal green spaces, including grass cutting, hedge trimming, weeding, litter removal and upkeep of landscaped areas.
- **Tree Management:** The inspection, maintenance and removal of trees on land that Gentoo owns or manages, including risk assessments and remedial works.
- **Play Areas:** Outdoor spaces with fixed play equipment, maintained to meet safety standards such as BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177.
- **Maintained Areas:** Communal external spaces that Gentoo is responsible for, such as gardens, verges, footpaths and landscaped areas.
- **Zoning (Trees):** Grouping land by usage and risk to prioritise tree inspections, e.g. high-use areas near roads and playgrounds.
- **Cyclical Maintenance:** Planned work carried out on a regular schedule, e.g. seasonal grounds upkeep or periodic tree inspections.
- **Reactive Maintenance:** Unplanned work in response to reported issues, such as urgent tree risks or fly tipping.
- **Open Space:** Land such as communal greens or shared gardens used for amenity or environmental benefit.

4. Our Core Purpose, Vision and Themes

- 4.1 Our core purpose is to provide warm, safe and decent homes for our customers of today and tomorrow.
- 4.2 Our vision is to become the best provider of social homes in the country.
- 4.3 Our values are what we stand for and what we want to be known for. They are what makes us, us.
 - We care about people.
 - We take accountability.
 - We shape the future.
 - We bring leadership.
 - We deliver.
- 4.4 We live our values in everything we do from the boardroom to the front room, to deliver our priorities for our customers.

4.5 We have identified six themes which will guide the delivery of our services and support the Group's vision and ambitions for the next 10 years.

- The best provider of social homes in the country.
- A housing provider that listens and sorts things out.
- Helping our communities to thrive.
- Achieving growth through partnerships and innovation.
- A professional, caring, great place to work.
- Embracing modern technology and data.

5. Regulation and Legislation

- Gentoo will ensure this policy meets all legislation, regulations and best practice relating to grounds maintenance and tree management. The regulation and legislation applicable to this policy is attached as Appendix A.

6. Policy Statement

- Gentoo will aim to deliver high-quality grounds maintenance, tree management, and play area services that promote safe, attractive, and sustainable neighbourhoods. These services play an essential role in supporting resident wellbeing, improving the local environment, and ensuring the safety and usability of shared outdoor spaces.
- We will take a proactive and risk-based approach to service delivery, using a combination of planned and responsive maintenance activities. Services will be prioritised based on condition, usage, seasonal need, and safety considerations.
- Regular inspections and servicing schedules will be undertaken for high-risk assets such as trees and play equipment, and all inspections will be documented and used to inform work planning and performance monitoring.
- Services will be delivered in a way that makes best use of available resources, aligns with resident expectations, and reflects service standards and best practice. Ongoing monitoring, resident feedback, and service reviews will support continuous improvement and help ensure high levels of satisfaction across the neighbourhoods we manage.
- Gentoo is committed to investing in its people, contractors, infrastructure and equipment to deliver high quality services now, and into the future. This will ensure that grounds, trees and play areas are maintained to a standard residents can rely upon.
- To manage liability and mitigate risk, appropriate controls will be in place to ensure services are delivered safely, in line with legal responsibilities and insurance requirements, providing the highest levels of assurance.

- Gentoo will only carry out grounds maintenance, tree management, and playground services on land and assets it owns or is formally responsible for under a recognised agreement.

7. Communication and Engagement

- Gentoo provides customers with clear and simple information about its Grounds Maintenance and Tree Management Service. We do this through:
 - [Tenant Handbook](#)
 - [Tenancy and Neighbourhood standard](#)
 - [Repairs and Maintenance Policy](#)
 - [Repairs and Maintenance Standard](#)
 - Gentoo's Website.
 - Customer Committees.

7.2 Communication Methods

To keep residents informed about grounds maintenance, tree management, and play area services, Gentoo will use a range of communication channels, including:

- Regular newsletters and service bulletins
- Digital updates via Gentoo's website and customer portal
- Direct resident notifications for planned works or service changes

These methods will be used to share service standards, planned maintenance, and how residents can raise concerns or provide feedback.

Engagement Opportunities

Gentoo will provide genuine opportunities for residents to engage with the service and influence improvements. These include:

- Area walkabouts with operational staff and managers
- Focus groups and resident panels

Current engagement activities include attendance at Customer Committees, estate walkabouts, and Gentoo's mobile customer van days. These will continue to be supported and expanded where possible.

Customer Charter

To formalise expectations and promote transparency, Gentoo will develop a **Customer Charter** for Grounds Maintenance, Tree Management, and Play Area services. This Charter will outline:

- What residents can expect from the service

- How Gentoo will communicate and engage
- How feedback will be used to improve delivery

The Charter will be distributed to all residents and made available online, forming a key part of Gentoo's commitment to customer satisfaction and accountability.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

<u>Category</u>	<u>Organisation, Group or Individual</u>	<u>Key Responsibilities</u>
Strategic Leadership	Regulator of Social Housing	Sets Consumer Standards and inspects based on risk and Tenant Satisfaction Measures. Enforces compliance with the Home Standard.
	Group Board and Risk and Audit Committee	Seeks assurance on performance and compliance with health and safety legislation.
	Executive Director of Property	Ensures Board visibility and effective delivery of the policy.
	Director of Property Maintenance	Accountable for service performance, compliance, and policy fitness. Oversees resource management and addresses capacity issues.
	Director of Safety, Risk and Assurance	Provides guidance on risk assessments, control measures, and works management.
Operational Delivery	Assistant Director of Maintenance Operations, Assistant Director of Property	Manages daily operations and embeds policy. Optimises resources, develops business

	Safety, Head of Support Services (Property)	processes, and ensures staff are trained and qualified.
	Property Maintenance Senior Leadership Team	Ensures policy adherence and staff training. Manages play park facilities in line with RoSPA standards.
	Estate Services Operations Manager	Oversees service effectiveness and compliance with legal and regulatory standards. Supports operational teams and monitors performance.
Neighbourhood Delivery	Property Maintenance and Housing Management colleagues	Deliver services in line with the policy and procedures.
	Neighbourhood Estates Manager, Estates Supervisor, Tree Surveyor	Deliver front-line services, follow procedures, and report operational issues.
	Neighbourhood Management Teams	Report concerns, support customer engagement, and facilitate communication between residents and operational teams.

To support this policy, separate Group standards have been developed as part of Estate Services Management System. These standards set out the minimum requirements to enable the Group to manage specific risks and issues.

9. Policy Detail - Grounds Maintenance

- In relation to Grounds Maintenance Gentoo will:
 - Ensure that all maintained areas are managed effectively and kept free from obstructions or hazards to protect the health and safety of residents and other users of the areas. The areas falling within this policy are Gentoo owned communal green spaces.

- Maintain the appearance of its Neighbourhoods by effectively dealing with grass cutting, pruning, litter, fly-tipping and green space maintenance.
- The Grounds Maintenance team operating cycle is split into two main categories:
 1. Cutting season, which is eight months, starts in March and finishes in October with an aim of 14 visits to each site.
 2. Winter season runs between the cutting seasons. Hedge pruning and shrub bed maintenance will be addressed.
- Carry out regular estate inspections for Quality Control purposes and to assess the overall effectiveness of its grounds maintenance, implementing improvement works to increase quality scores where necessary.
- Work to preserve and where possible (accounting for other demands on the service) enhance areas, their amenity, and the wildlife value of maintained areas.
- Remove unauthorised items left on Gentoo's land (e.g. Customers possessions left in communal garden spaces) if they are deemed to be a hazard, an obstruction or causing detriment to the communal area. Housing staff may contact tenants about such matters and tenants may be charged for the disposal of the item(s).
- Gentoo will work with local authorities to address any incidences of Fly Tipping on its land.

Gentoo is committed to developing clear service standards in collaboration with customers, including frequency expectations for activities such as grass cutting and hedge maintenance. These standards will be communicated through a combination of digital updates, estate walkabouts, and resident-facing materials. As part of our ongoing improvement journey, we are investing in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to enhance asset mapping and service planning across grounds, trees, and play areas. This will support transparency, improve operational efficiency, and ensure that maintained areas are clearly defined and managed in line with biodiversity and sustainability goals.

10. Policy Detail - Tree Management

- Tree management shall be undertaken as a strategic component of our climate resilience and environmental sustainability objectives, recognising the role of healthy, well-managed trees in carbon sequestration, flood mitigation, biodiversity enhancement, and the reduction of urban heat island effects, in line with national guidance on woodland resilience and the UK Forestry Standard.

Gentoo Group's public liability claims process is clearly outlined in the [Claims Policy](#).

- Gentoo inspects every tree on its 'public' land. This is documented for compliance purposes.

- Gentoo's tree assessments consider all aspects of a tree's situation, including its necessity to wildlife and surrounding community value and not just the perspective of an individual household.
- The following are the main reasons Gentoo will carry out tree work, where the tree:
 - Has blown over.
 - Is rocking (roots are damaged).
 - Is uprooted but held up by another tree or building.
 - Has a large branch that has broken off or is hanging off the tree.
 - Is blocking the road, footpath or access to a property.
 - Has fallen on to a structure, such as a building or a car.
 - Has fungi growing on the tree.
 - Has old splits and cracks in the trunk or large branches.
 - Is dead, dying, diseased and dangerous.
- **In relation to Tree Management Gentoo will:**
 - Undertake a programme surveys and inspections to all tree stock a minimum of every 5 years, however where required frequencies will be determined on tree-by-tree basis, based on assessed risk.
 - Use a nationally recognised tree risk assessment model to categorise and prioritise any remedial work identified during surveys and inspections.
 - Ensure all detailed tree surveys to open spaces, condition reports and follow on tree work are undertaken by suitably trained and competent individuals.
 - Recycle as much tree waste as possible.
 - Maintain accurate maintenance records and dates on tree management.
- Gentoo will not arrange tree works for common nuisance from trees, including:
 - Effects on TV or mobile phone reception.
 - Obstruction of views.
 - Interference with private vegetation.
 - Honeydew (dripping sap).
 - Bird Droppings.
 - Squirrels gaining access to properties from trees.
 - Leaf, fruit, or flower fall.
 - Smells generated by trees Loss of light/reduced light to properties.
 - Loss of light/reduced light to properties.
 - Branches overhanging from neighbouring gardens or land.
- **Zoning**
- Gentoo will define areas of land according to their levels of use in terms of tree management.
- This practice prioritises the most used areas, and by doing so contributes to a cost-effective approach to tree inspection, focusing resources where most

needed and demonstrating Value for Money. Gentoo will identify two zones: Zone 1 and Zone 2.

- Zone 1 are areas used by many people every day or where there is frequent public access to trees (e.g. parks/ recreation grounds, in and around picnic areas, schools, children's playgrounds, popular foot paths, car parks, or at the side of busy roads)

- Zone two - where trees are not subject to frequent public access

- **Tree Inspection and Responding to Tree Reports**

- A dedicated Tree Surveyor manages the trees taking a pro-active approach. All trees in Zone 1 areas are inspected and documented. The detailed inspection will record the information identified in Appendix B.
- To ensure a consistent, evidence-based approach to tree risk management, we adopt the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment (QTRA) methodology. QTRA enables the quantification of risk by evaluating the likelihood of tree failure, the presence of potential targets, and the consequences of failure. This structured approach supports proportionate and defensible decision-making in line with our duty of care and environmental responsibilities.
- In addition, Gentoo will respond to urgent enquiries within 24 hours and non-urgent enquiries within 5 working days to schedule in reactive inspections on trees within Gentoo land ownership. Detailed inspections as per Appendix C, will be carried out. Future cyclical inspections shall be carried out as specified by the detailed inspection record (Appendix B), where required.

- **Managing Risk**

Code	Priority	Response
H	High	Work to be carried out within 0 - 3 months.
M	Medium	Work to be carried out within 4 - 18 months.
L	Low	Work to be carried out 19 - 60 months
Z	Non-priority	No Action proposed – review in 5 years

Table 1

- Reasonable tree management involves taking actions proportional to the risk. As previously stated, the overall real risk of serious harm from trees in the UK is “extremely low.”
- Reasonable tree management has both reactive and proactive elements. Tree Inspections will be carried out and follow the principles of risk assessment (Table 1) and will form the basis of pro-active planned tree maintenance and future tree inspection regimes for Gentoo.

- The inspection primarily looks for external features indicating mechanical (structural) defects that pose significant risk to public safety, concentrating on risks that are either immediate or reasonably foreseeable in the near future.
- High risk action could consist of immediate tree work being required i.e. felling or branch removal or site management e.g. stopping or diverting traffic. Non immediate risks identified will form future planned maintenance programmes of work.

11. Vulnerability

Gentoo recognises that customer vulnerability may be permanent, temporary, or situational, and is committed to delivering its Grounds Maintenance Service in a manner that is inclusive, respectful, and responsive to individual needs.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Gentoo has a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments and to avoid discrimination based on protected characteristics, including disability, age, and health status. This duty extends to the design, maintenance, and accessibility of outdoor spaces, ensuring that all customers can safely and comfortably access and enjoy communal environments.

Gentoo recognises the importance of inclusive design and safe access in the planning and maintenance of outdoor spaces. While the Development Team leads on initial design, Gentoo will ensure that maintained areas continue to meet accessibility needs. Consultation with residents, including those with lived experience of vulnerability, will be used to inform service improvements and ensure that communal environments remain safe, inclusive and responsive to customer needs.

- Gentoo will be conscious of the permanent and temporary customer vulnerabilities.
- Gentoo will ensure all relevant staff are trained to recognise signs and circumstances relating to customers that may indicate vulnerability and will adopt approaches that account for clear or potential vulnerabilities in the delivery of Gentoo's Grounds Maintenance Service.
- Gentoo will retain and access customer information to support service delivery, allowing for the individual needs of customers to be met and its [Vulnerability Policy](#) sets out Gentoo's approach to supporting vulnerable people.

12. Complaints

- Gentoo's Customer Voice Team co-ordinate responses to complaints about the Grounds maintenance and Tree Management Service and these will be handled in line with the [Complaints and Compliments Policy](#)

In addition to formal complaints, Gentoo encourages residents to raise concerns or provide feedback through informal channels such as estate walkabouts, direct contact with Neighbourhood Teams, or via the Gentoo Customer Van. These informal routes help identify issues early and allow for prompt resolution.

Gentoo also monitors complaint trends to identify recurring issues and areas for improvement. This includes reviewing changes in complaint frequency, analysing themes, and assessing whether service specifications or delivery methods need to be adjusted. These insights are used to inform service reviews and drive continuous improvement, in line with the principles set out by the Housing Ombudsman.

13. Qualifications and Training

- Gentoo staff working on grounds maintenance and/or tree management/playparks will receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities as stated in this policy and a record will be kept by the Learning and Development Team. In addition to training, staff are provided with sufficient capacity, appropriate tools, and adequate resources to ensure they can perform their duties safely, efficiently, and to a high standard. This includes the development of both technical competencies such as those aligned with LANTRA/NPTC-accredited training and soft skills, including effective resident engagement and communication. Staff will also be supported in maintaining a strong awareness of health and safety practices, with reference to relevant standards such as those set by ROSPA, to ensure safe working environments and positive community interactions
- Gentoo will ensure any sub-contractors/agency carrying out any works on the Gentoo's behalf are qualified to the appropriate standards. Their qualifications will be checked and recorded during the procurement process.

14. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or in line with service changes, legislative or regulatory requirements, whilst also ensuring alignment with the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards, Housing Ombudsman Service guidance and best practice.
- Customer feedback will be considered as part of any review process.
- This policy may be subject to an audit in line with the internal audit plan.
- This Policy is Grade 2 and changes will need the approval of the Executive Team.

15. Key Performance Indicators

Performance against this policy will be monitored using a set of agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), outlined in Appendix B. These KPIs may be

reviewed and updated periodically in line with service expectations, customer feedback or regulatory requirements.

To ensure the policy supports compliance, safety, customer experience, and environmental responsibility, the following KPIs will be included and developed where necessary:

- **Inspection Compliance Rates** – measuring the completion and timeliness of scheduled inspections across grounds, trees, and play areas.
- **Safety Defect Response Times** – tracking how quickly safety-related issues are addressed following identification.
- **Resident Satisfaction** – assessing customer experience and feedback on service delivery.
- **Biodiversity and Sustainability Targets** – monitoring progress against environmental objectives, including habitat enhancement and sustainable maintenance practices.

These indicators will form part of a core KPI set and will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant and effective in supporting service improvement and accountability.

When setting KPI targets and tolerances, Gentoo will take into account external factors that may impact service delivery, such as adverse weather conditions, access restrictions, and staff availability. Recognising these influences supports fair performance assessment and helps manage stakeholder expectations within a service area where such factors can shape perception

16. Policy Outcomes

The policy outcomes expected from this policy are:

- Ensure the safe, compliant, and risk-based management of external grounds, trees, and play areas for which the organisation is responsible.
- Maintain clean, accessible, and attractive outdoor environments that enhance neighbourhood wellbeing and reflect resident expectations.
- Deliver a responsive, value-for-money service that aspires to best-in-class industry and housing sector standards.
- Achieve high levels of resident satisfaction through reliable service delivery, clear communication, and accessible feedback and complaints processes.
- Foster collaborative working across internal teams, contractors, and residents to continuously improve performance and service quality.
- Work in partnership with other landowners, statutory bodies, and community stakeholders to manage shared spaces and align with local priorities.
- Support environmental and social value objectives, including biodiversity, inclusive design, and sustainable maintenance practices

17. Records

- Gentoo will maintain accurate and up-to-date records relating to the delivery of this policy and includes:
- Tree surveys, works undertaken and responses to reports of dangerous or high-risk trees
- Grounds maintenance schedules, completed tasks, and any hazards or items removed during service delivery
- Play area inspections, repairs and safety compliance checks
- Service audits, complaints, compliments and resident feedback related to external environments
- Training records, compliance evidence and equipment servicing logs

17.1 Records will be retained in line with Gentoo's data protection policies, GDPR requirements and used to monitor performance, demonstrate compliance and support audit, insurance or legal processes where required.

18. Version Control

Version	Reason	Issuer	Date
2.0	Amended Format.	Sarah Treadwell	12/03/2018
2.1	Policy Review – First Draft.	Albert Copus	25/01/2019
3.0	New approved version following review.	Kirsty Collins	01/04/2019
4.0	Policy Revision.	Susie Thompson	04/04/2022
4.1	Policy Review – Previous Tree Management Policy expanded to include Grounds Maintenance.	Terry Bonner	31/05/2025
4.2	Policy Review – Final	Nichola Stoddart	22/07/2025
5.0	Approved by the Executive Team.	Chloe Appleby	10/11/2025

Appendices

- Appendix A: Legislation, Regulation and Best Practice
- Appendix B: Key Performance Indicators
- Appendix C: Operational Standards and Maintenance Frequencies
- Appendix D: Tree Management Zoning and Risk Matrix:
- Appendix E: Incident Reporting, Liability and Insurance Protocol
- Appendix F: Tree Inspection Template and Data Recording
- Appendix G: Play Area Inspection, Repair and Audit Procedure

Appendix A

Legislation, Regulation and Best Practice

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 [Link](#)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 [Link](#)
- Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 [Link](#) & 1984 [Link](#)
- Housing Act 2024 (Housing Health and Rating System – HHSRS) [Link](#)
- The Environmental Act 2021 [Link](#)
- COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Regulations 2002 [Link](#)
- PUWER (Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations) 1998 [Link](#)
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 [Link](#)
- LOLER (Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations) 1998 [Link](#)
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 [Link](#)
- Local Government Act 1988 [Link](#)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 [Link](#)
- Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 [Link](#)
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards [Link](#)
 - Neighbourhood and Community Standard
 - Safety and Quality Standard
 - Consumer Standards Code of Practice
- Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code [Link](#)
- Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 [Link](#)

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- BS 7370 – Grounds Maintenance [Link](#)
- PAS 100 (composted materials) [Link](#)
- DEFRA Grassland Guidance (biodiversity management) [Link](#)

TREE MANAGEMENT ONLY

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) [Link](#)

- High Hedges Regulations 2005 [Link](#)
- Highways Act 1980 (tree related obligations on/near to roads) [Link](#)
- BS 3998:2010 – Tree Work [Link](#)
- LANTRA arboriculture qualifications [Link](#)
- Royal Forestry Society (RFS) and Tree Council guidance [Link](#)

PLAYGROUND SAFETY & MAINTENANCE ONLY

- BS EN 1176 – Playground equipment and surfacing [Link](#)
- ROSPA Play Safety Guidelines [Link](#)
- RPII (Register of Play Inspectors International) accreditation [Link](#)
- Play England – Design for Play [Link](#)
- Fields in Trust standards [Link](#)

Appendix B

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- Cyclical Grass Cuts**

% of scheduled cuts completed within 12 working days.

- Urgent Fly-Tipping Removal**

% of urgent fly-tipping cases cleared within 1 working day of being reported.

- Non-Urgent Fly-Tipping Removal**

% of non-urgent fly-tipping cases cleared within 5 working days of being reported.

- Winter Pruning Programme**

% of designated vegetation to have received one heavy prune between November and March.

- Quality Assurance / Quality Control (QA/QC) Checks**

Number of QA/QC inspections to be carried out weekly across the service area

- Play Park Inspections**

% of play parks to receive a weekly inspection by a supervisor.

- Tree Management**

% of scheduled tree inspections completed (annual and risk priority cycles)

- Gentoo Group will ensure that its Estate Services activities meet the Regulator of Social Housing's. [Tenant Satisfaction measures](#)

- TP04: Satisfaction that the home is well maintained.

Appendix C

Operational Standards and Maintenance Frequencies

Gentoo is committed to delivering high-quality grounds maintenance, tree management, and play area services. While full SMART service standards are in development, the following initial framework outlines key operational expectations and performance indicators.

These will be refined in collaboration with involved customers and colleagues, with the aim of publishing a finalised set of standards by Quarter 4 of 2025.

Service Standards Table (Initial Framework)

Service Area	Standard/Expectation	Frequency/Target	Performance Indicator
Grass Cutting	Maintain grassed areas to agreed height and appearance	Fortnightly during growing season (Apr–Oct)	% of scheduled cuts completed on time
Hedge Maintenance	Trim hedges to maintain shape, safety, and access	Twice annually (Spring and Winter)	% of hedges maintained to schedule
Tree Inspections	Inspect trees for health, safety, and structural integrity	Every 3-5 years or as per risk assessment (Zone 1 or 2)	% of inspections completed within cycle
Play Area Inspections	Ensure equipment safety and cleanliness	Weekly visual checks; Annual RoSPA inspection	% of inspections completed; number of defects actioned
Litter and Fly-tipping	Remove litter and fly-tipping from communal areas	Weekly hot spot visits; reactive within 5 working days	Average response time; number of incidents resolved

Service Area	Standard/Expectation	Frequency/Target	Performance Indicator
Biodiversity Actions	Promote biodiversity through planting and habitat management	Seasonal planting and habitat reviews	Number of biodiversity actions completed
Resident Satisfaction	Measure satisfaction with grounds, trees, and play area services	Annual TSM's; feedback via walkabouts, customer committee's and complaints and their resolutions	% satisfaction score; number of feedback items actioned

Supporting Principles

Gentoo recognises that clearly defined land ownership and boundaries are essential for effective service delivery and customer clarity. While GIS mapping is currently in development, it will support future improvements in identifying and managing land assets, including shared spaces and disputed boundaries.

In the interim, boundary queries are addressed using legal land ownership records and evidence-based processes, ensuring consistency and transparency.

Although costs for grounds maintenance, tree management, and play area services are not currently itemised within tenant or leaseholder service charges, Gentoo is committed to fair charging principles.

As part of future service development, we will explore how best to communicate the funding model and its impact on customers, ensuring transparency and value for money.