

Housing Services

**Looking after
your garden**

At the start of your tenancy



If the property that you rent from us comes with a garden, we will tell you this at the time you sign your tenancy agreement.

Prior to you moving into your new home, we will normally have made sure that the garden is in an acceptable condition but, in some cases, we will carry out these works after you have moved in. After this, you are responsible for maintaining any garden area that goes with your property.

However, if you have the use of a shared garden, the grass will normally be cut by the Council's grounds maintenance contractors.

Your tenancy agreement

Your tenancy agreement states that you are responsible for keeping any garden included in your tenancy in a neat and tidy condition. This means, for example, that you should cut the grass and hedges regularly and generally keep the garden to a standard that is acceptable to us. You will find photographs illustrating what is and what is not an acceptable standard on the last page of this leaflet.

What we expect from you



We accept that not all of our tenants will have the same interest in gardening and so the standards that gardens will be maintained to will be different throughout the area.

However, an untidy garden has an adverse affect on a street or road and may cause other environmental problems that can impact on your neighbours.

Regular mowing is a basic requirement for any grassed areas and this will ensure that they do not look untidy.

Grass needs to be cut regularly during the growing season and kept to a manageable length. Domestic lawnmowers will not cope with long grass and so it is important that you begin cutting the grass before it gets too long.

We would recommend that you cut your grass at least once every fortnight between March and the end of October.

Any hedges, trees or shrubs that you plant should be suitable for your type and size of garden and kept to a manageable height and width. If you need further guidance, please speak to our Estates Management section on 01255 686488.

You must make sure that any hedge, shrub or tree in your garden, including roots, does not become a nuisance or hazard to others.



The timing and frequency of hedge cutting will vary according to the type of hedge and the growing conditions in any year but this should not be carried out when birds may be nesting.

If you have a hedge that adjoins a public footpath or right of way, you may need to cut this more often.

The base of any hedge should be kept clean of litter and weeds especially on a footpath where they could get in the way of people using the path.

You must not remove or destroy any bushes, hedges or trees without getting our written permission first.

We will only remove any trees if we have a good reason for doing so, for example if it is unsafe or causing structural damage.

If you collect grass cuttings, hedge cuttings or any other garden waste, you need to dispose of this responsibly. You can do this by taking it to one of the Civic Amenity sites in the district. If you cannot get to one of these sites, Veolia operate a chargeable collection service and will deliver garden waste bags, in packs of 10, which you can fill with your garden waste and put out for collection at the same time as your household refuse each week. To find out more about this, contact Veolia direct on **01255 431620**. Alternatively, you can compost your garden waste in your garden.

Shared gardens

If you have the use of a shared garden, the grass will normally be cut by the Council's grounds maintenance contractors.

If you share a garden, you must make sure that it is kept free from rubbish, household items, rubble, excessive weed growth, rodent infestation and pet droppings so that the area does not become a nuisance or health risk to others.

Using your garden

You must not use your garden in any way that becomes a nuisance or disturbance to your neighbours or anyone else.

Garden sheds and structures



You must not put up any greenhouse, garage, shed or other structure in your garden without getting our written permission first. We will not normally refuse permission if you have your own garden but there will be some conditions that you have to keep to. In addition to getting our permission as your landlord, it may also be necessary for you to obtain planning permission for certain structures.

If you have the use of a shared garden, whether or not we give you permission to erect a garden shed or other structure will depend upon the size of the garden and the proposed structure as well as the views of your neighbours.

If we let a shed or other outbuilding to you as part of your tenancy, you must keep this in good condition and tell us if any repairs are needed to this.

Fencing



You must not remove, alter or replace any fencing or boundary without getting our written permission first.

If you wish to put up your own fencing you must get our written permission first. We will not normally refuse permission if you have your own garden but we will tell you what type and what height of fencing is acceptable.

If you have the use of a shared garden or have an open plan front garden, we are not normally able to give you permission to erect fencing in these areas.

Disposal of household rubbish, furniture and appliances

Household waste and recycling may be stored temporarily in an appropriate area in your garden before you put it out for collection but this must not become a nuisance to anyone.

Your household rubbish and recycling should not be put out earlier than the night before it is due for collection.

You must not use your garden to store or dispose of any furniture, unwanted household appliances, harmful or dangerous items or other inappropriate items.

Pets



If you live in a house, bungalow or ground-floor flat that has access to your own garden you can keep one dog or cat or one of each without asking our permission, subject to the conditions in your tenancy agreement.

If you live in any other type of property, you must get our written permission to keep any pet.

If you ask our permission to keep more than one dog or cat (or one of each), we will judge your request on its individual merits. This means that we will consider such things as the type of home you live in, the size of your garden as well as the breed, size and number of pets you are asking permission to keep.

You are not allowed to keep – in your home, garden or in any communal areas that you share with others – any animals (including cats, dogs, livestock, reptiles, insects or birds) that, in our opinion, are a source of nuisance or disturbance to anyone in the local area, including our employees and contractors.

You must not keep livestock, such as horses, donkeys, goats, pigs, ducks, geese, chickens or any reptiles in your home or garden unless you have our written permission.

You must not allow any animals that you keep to foul in any shared areas of your property or on roads, footpaths or play areas in the local areas. You must remove and dispose of any pet droppings hygienically.

You must not keep any animal that is prohibited by law.

Regardless of whether our specific permission has been granted, you must make sure that any animal you keep does not cause a nuisance or annoyance to others or damage to any of our property.

A separate leaflet is available about keeping pets in council property. Please contact your Estates Officer if you would like a copy or visit our website **www.tendringdc.gov.uk**

Parking and vehicle storage

You must not park a vehicle in your garden or a shared garden unless you have a proper hardstanding and dropped kerb. If your property does not have one of these and you want to put one in at your own expense, you must get our written permission first.

You must not keep or allow other members of your family or your visitors to keep any vehicles that are unroadworthy, unsightly, untaxed or uninsured without getting our written permission first (this includes vehicles that are covered by a Statutory Off Road Notification – SORN). We will only give permission for this in special cases and for a temporary period.

You must not park any caravan, boat, trailer, heavy goods vehicle or other commercial vehicle in your garden without getting our written permission first.

You must not construct a garage, drive or parking space without getting our written permission first.

You must not pour oil, petrol or other chemical substances down any drains or gullies in your garden.

You must not use your garden to store or dispose of any vehicle parts.

What will happen if I don't look after my garden?

If you do not maintain your garden to an acceptable standard we will tell you what we expect you to do to put it right and give you a timescale for doing this.

If you do not do this, you will be breaking your tenancy agreement and this could result in us taking legal action against you.

Can I get any help with looking after my garden?

If you are unable to look after your garden, the following advice may be of help to you.

Ask your local Citizens Advice Bureau whether there are any voluntary groups operating in your area. If you are a senior citizen you could, for instance, contact the Clacton and District Volunteer Bureau on telephone **(01255) 427888**. Tendring Home Improvements Agency also undertakes gardening works and you can contact them on **(01255) 814410** (there is a moderate charge for this service).

Alternatively, perhaps a member of your family or a friend may be able to help you clear and tidy your garden. You may also have to consider paying a gardener to help you.

If you have any queries about any of the information included in this leaflet, please telephone **01255 686488** or email **housing.services@tendringdc.gov.uk**

Examples of what is and what is not an acceptable standard for your garden



Need to contact Housing Services?

You can do this by:

Telephoning:

- 01255 686464 for rent account enquiries
- 01255 686468 for rent arrears enquiries
- 01255 686455 for right to buy enquiries
- 01255 686488 to report anti social behaviour or other complaints
- 01255 686477 to report a repair
- 01255 686466 for Housing Register or allocation enquiries
- 01255 686436 for enquiries about special needs housing or adaptations
- 01255 686490 for enquiries about tenant involvement

E-mailing

- housing.services@tendringdc.gov.uk for general enquiries.
- HousingRepairs@tendringdc.gov.uk to report any repairs that are needed to your home
- HousingASB@tendringdc.gov.uk to report any incidents of anti social behaviour
- tenant.involvement@tendringdc.gov.uk to find out more about how you can get involved in our services.

Writing to

- Housing Services, Tendring District Council, Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton on Sea CO15 1SE

Visiting

- Housing Reception at the Town Hall in Clacton between 9am and 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4.45pm on Friday
- Our website www.tendringdc.gov.uk