

# Curo Estates Standards

2024

Setting the standards for  
our communal spaces



If you'd like to meet an Estates Team colleague on site to discuss anything in person please get in touch. See back page for contact details.

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# Welcome

We work hard to make your estate a happy, safe and popular one. We make sure that the shared areas we are responsible for are safe and provide a good quality environment for the people who live on the estate.

These standards are designed to give a clear and straightforward guide as to how your communal areas should look and the service you can expect from our team. They are designed to be easy to interpret and achievable so that everyone has the same understanding.

Naturally every estate is different so these standards provide a general outline that should be applicable to where you live.

If you have questions or comments about the communal spaces on your estate, we'd love to hear from you.

Please contact us on:  
01225 366000 or email  
[hello@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:hello@curo-group.co.uk)

## We cannot do this on our own - we need your help.

There are lots of ways you can help us to keep your estate a great place to live - look out for our 'Help us to help you' suggestions in each section.

You can also be our eyes and ears in your neighbourhood by helping to monitor how a service is delivered.

Or you might also like to set up a Customer Led Scheme to take a more active role in your local services. Visit the following webpage for more details: [curo-group.co.uk/get-involved](http://curo-group.co.uk/get-involved)

If you'd like us to provide a new service, we'll consult with your neighbours and may be able to deliver what you'd like if there's agreement.

If you'd to get involved and have your say join VoiceBox by emailing the team

[VoiceBox@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:VoiceBox@curo-group.co.uk)

or visit our webpage:  
[voicebox.curo-group.co.uk/users/](http://voicebox.curo-group.co.uk/users/)



# How to use this guidebook

This guidebook outlines each service we provide, for example window cleaning, grassed areas and trees.

## Grading standards explained

At Curo we use a grading system that's been developed through consultation with tenants across the UK to provide a clear way for customers, landlords and contractors to understand and agree on standards.

Every aspect of our cleaning and grounds maintenance can be graded **A+**, **A**, **B** or **C**.

- A+** The standard expected if you've paid for an enhanced service (*please note this option is not available for trees*).
- A** The standard every customers can expect their communal areas to meet. We agreed this level in consultation with customers to offer good value for money.
- B** The standard that we would expect to see inbetween visits from our caretakers or contractors.
- C** Below the expected standard. We should take remedial action to fix this.

Your service charges contribute towards our caretakers and contractors meeting this specification, rather than a certain number of visits or time spent working around your block.

## Each section in this guidebook shows:

- Photos and brief descriptions of what **A+**, **A**, **B** and **C** might look like.
- Relevant tips and information that you might find useful.

## Changing your service level

Customers can choose to pay to upgrade their service to the highest grade **A+**. If the service affects other customers in the area, these customers would need to be consulted. That's because there would be an increase to the service charge if you took out the highest level of service.

Alternatively, customers can take control of the running of selected services, by setting up a Customer Led Scheme. This could help to reduce the cost of your service charge if you maintain the service to the standard we set.

If you'd like more information, please email our VoiceBox team at:

**VoiceBox@curo-group.co.uk**

Did you know you can now report issues and repairs in communal spaces through MyCuro?

See back page for details

MyCuro

# Meet your teams

Curo colleagues and contractors provide these estates services to you.



## Curo caretakers

The team works in our estates, keeping shared areas clean and tidy, while carrying out minor repairs in communal areas straight away without the need to wait for a job to be booked. The team are easy to spot with their “Looking after your estate” shirts.

To find out more visit: [curo-group.co.uk/estates](https://curo-group.co.uk/estates)



## Tree Maintenance

In 2023 Curo undertook a procurement exercise and have appointed three Arb-approved contractors to help manage our 8000 communal trees.



## Glendale - communal grounds maintenance services

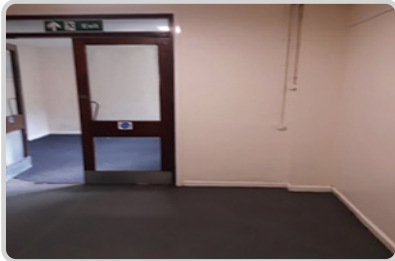
Glendale believes that a professionally-managed green space is neat, tidy, safe and ready to fulfil its intended purpose. To achieve this goal, our teams oversee and deliver every aspect of green space management



# Internal communal cleaning areas

These are your indoor communal spaces if you live in a block or share an entrance. It's really important that you report any communal issues directly to us in the same way as you report a repair about your home.

# Internal communal cleaning areas: with hard floors



A+

Area cleaned and clear. Floor has no build-up or marks including at edges. Glass clean, no cobwebs, ledges wiped free of dust. Walls have been cleaned and no marks remain.



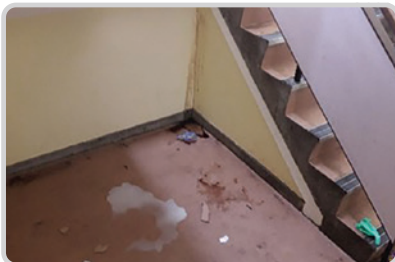
A

Floors have been cleaned, although some marks remain due to being ground in. Glass and ledges have been wiped. Cobwebs have been removed. Walls have been spot-cleaned and minimal cleaning marks remain.



B

Floor is dirty and stained. Ledges and cobwebs have started to build up and walls have heavy marks that can be removed. Cleaning standard is below expectation.



C

Floors are heavy in dirt and litter. No obvious dusting has taken place and cobwebs are frequent. Walls are heavily marked and could be easily removed. General cleaning is poor.

## FAQs...

Q. When were the cleaners last here? When are they coming next?

A. In most cases cleaners visit once a week.

## Top Tip...

Many Curo estates are in hard water areas, meaning lime-scale builds fast. Using a recommended product regularly will help keep lime-scale to a minimum. You can check your water hardness here:

[www.wessexwater.co.uk/waterquality](http://www.wessexwater.co.uk/waterquality)



# Internal communal cleaning areas: with carpets



A+

Floors have been cleaned and vacuumed, including all corners. All ledges are clear from dust and cobwebs have been removed. No marks on walls.



A

All floors and stairs have been vacuumed but corners may look dirtier due to ground-in dirt. Ledges have no dust, although hard-to-reach ledges may have minimal build up. Cobwebs are removed, walls are clear of cleaning related marks.



B

Litter and debris on the floor. Ledges are light in dust and harder-to-reach areas are noticeably heavy in dust. Edges of floor are clearly gathering dust. Walls have marks that can be easily cleaned and cobwebs are frequent throughout the building.



C

Litter and debris are throughout the building and the flooring hasn't been cleaned. All ledges are heavily covered in dust and cobwebs have not been removed. Walls are heavily covered in cleaning-related marks.

## Help us to help you...

Please do not leave **anything** in the communal areas. This includes items such as mats, rugs, bikes, bags rubbish, furniture, prams and pushchairs. **They are all a fire hazard and prevent us cleaning the area.**

## FAQs...

**Q. Why has a removal notice been placed on my items in the communal area?**

A. To keep your communal areas as safe as possible, we carry out frequent inspections. If we find anything that's a potential hazard we will place a sticker or a notice on it asking you to remove it as soon as possible.

# Internal communal cleaning areas: windows



A+

Windows are clean and clear with no visible marks or smears. No marks on the inside of the window.



A

Windows are clean and clear with very minimal marks or smears. Inside, the window may have slight build up around the edges but window is mark-free.



B

Windows are dirty, smeary or have hand prints on them and generally don't look clean. Internal area of the window has multiple marks such as hand prints and dirt marks.



C

Windows are dirty and the window is no longer clear, restricting vision significantly with a film of dirt on the inside as well as outside.

## Good to know...

- Our cleaning contractor uses eco-products that are both safer and better for the environment.
- Communal windows are cleaned quarterly.
- Window cleaning uses a 'pure water cleaning system'. Water is filtered to make it pH neutral and windows cleaned using an extendable pole. This increases the safety of our contractors and gives better access to hard-to-reach windows.
- Pure water requires no additives to clean. Being pH neutral it will remove all dirt and marks from the windows and leave a streak-free finish.
- We currently clean windows in communal areas. If you'd like your private windows cleaned at the same time, we'll first need to agree this with your neighbours as this will affect service charges.



# External communal cleaning areas: pathways

These are any of the external hard surfaces (like pavements and roads) around your estate that are on Curo's land. Please report any concerns over safety in these areas to us immediately. If your road and pavements are adopted by the Council, the Council is likely to be providing the maintenance service.

To see which areas we're responsible for where you live visit:

**[curo-group.co.uk/map](https://curo-group.co.uk/map)**

# External cleaning areas: pathways



A+

No litter or rubbish present. No detritus\* in channels.

\***Detritus:** Is the technical term for gravel, sand, silt, or other material produced by erosion.



A

Small amounts of detritus\* will be present.



B

Widespread litter and detritus present.



C

Heavy littering, widespread detritus.  
Heavy significant accumulations of litter.

## Good to know...

- We clear leaves on pathways and access areas to our sheltered schemes as part of the winter schedule. Leaves that fall onto grassed areas will be left to encourage biodiversity and nature.
- We won't be able to clear parts of roads where there are parked vehicles.

## Help us to help you...

Please report fly-tipping through **MyCuro** or email [estates@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:estates@curo-group.co.uk) and we'll clear it up as soon as possible. If you know who is responsible please let us know when you report it.

For top tips on getting rid of bulky waste and reducing littering visit:

[www.curo-group.co.uk/flytipping](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/flytipping)



# External communal cleaning areas: weed control

We maintain many paths and parking areas around our estates. We're committed to keeping these safe through a programme of maintenance. If you'd like know which areas that Curo maintain please visit:

[curo-group.co.uk/map](https://curo-group.co.uk/map)

# External communal cleaning areas: weed control



A+

Channels and open areas weed-free.



A

Weed growth at a level you would expect between visits.



B

Weed growth exceeding what would be expected between visits.



C

Excessive weed growth suggests visits being missed.

## Good to know...

Weeds are treated as part of our regular grounds maintenance work. This cannot happen in very wet weather as the weed-killer gets washed away.

## Help us to help you...

Vinegar and salt are a natural, effective plant killer you could try using yourself. It works well on moss by killing the plant and making it easier to remove.



# External communal cleaning areas: play and seating

Curo maintains many play areas around our estates and we're committed to keeping these safe through a programme of maintenance.



# External communal cleaning areas: play and seating



A+

Equipment in good order, surface clean, no litter or graffiti.



A

Minor littering. No major damage to equipment or surfacing. Minor areas of moss present. Predominantly clean with some graffiti present.



B

Heavy moss on surface. Equipment dirty and with minor damage.



C

Equipment unsafe. Surface damaged with littering and moss present. General damage in play area.

## Help us to help you...

Our play areas and equipment are inspected by a contractor once a month.

Please report any concerns you have with our play areas so we can inspect and sort out any problems as soon as possible.





# Maintaining communal green areas

At Curo we maintain extensive grassed areas and shrub beds. The main maintenance period is during March to October with minor works being completed during the winter. Our contractors are responding flexibly to the changing climate and we're constantly looking at ways to maintain these areas effectively while giving you value for money.

## Interested in using an open space near you differently?

If you'd like some funds to add a touch of sparkle to an outdoor space, try our Communities Grant. You can apply for funds up to a maximum of £500.

Details are on our website.  
[curo-group.co.uk/grants](https://curo-group.co.uk/grants)

Or email:  
[VoiceBox@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:VoiceBox@curo-group.co.uk)

# Maintaining communal green areas: grass



A+

Grass short, minimal grass cuttings left on surface of grass. No litter present, area looks high standard.



A

Grass within 25 – 100mm range, grass cuttings visible, minimal litter present.



B

Grass longer than 100mm. Litter present.



C

Grass longer than 150mm. A large amount of litter present.

## FAQs...

**Q. Why don't you collect my grass trimmings?**

**A.** We don't collect grass cuttings from the majority of our estates to keep the costs down for our customers. Collecting grass adds 60% to the cost per square metre. If however you'd like more information about us providing a cut and collect service, please get in touch.

## Good to know...

Caring for your lawn - if you have a private garden and you'd like additional information, including tips on creating the perfect lawn visit:  
[www.curo-group.co.uk/gardens](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/gardens)

Some areas are left longer like banks and meadows to attract wildlife and wildflowers. If there is an area of grass that you'd like to be left alone to grow longer, please get in touch.

# Maintaining communal green areas: rough ground



A+

Grass cut short after approximately 9.5 weeks. Lots of grass-cuttings on surface. Litter present but collected after cut.



A

Grass cut after around 9-10 weeks. Litter collected and heavy grass-cutting left.



B

Grass left beyond 10 weeks - uneven cut and litter left on site.



C

Grass cut reveals large amounts of litter present. Litter not collected after cut.

## Good to know...

Sometimes our contractors won't have been able to mow – here are the main reasons:

- Dog mess or broken glass on the grass – this is a health and safety risk.
- Heavy rainfall can affect schedules. We may choose not to cut during or after a large downfall – heavy machines can leave tyre tracks damaging the grass.
- Very dry weather can cause grass to slow its growth.

- If vehicles or items are left on the grass we won't be able to cut that area, so please be considerate when parking.

# Maintaining communal green areas: hedges



A+

Hedge sides and top cut. Manicured appearance due to more cuts.



A

Hedge shows up to 6 months' growth.



B

Hedge requiring work as it's overgrowing access or a pavement.



C

Hedge overgrowing footpath and more than a year's growth.

## FAQs...

**Q. Why don't you cut hedges in summer?**

A. The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 recommends hedges aren't cut between March and August as this is breeding season for nesting birds. This also helps to protect fledgling birds. We will sometimes cut hedges in summer to keep footpaths clear - we always check for nests before any work is done.

Some hedges are left to grow longer due to their location, for example in a field.

## Help us to help you...

If you see hedges or shrubs growing across paths we manage, report it so we can take action. If it's growing across a public footpath, get in touch with your local authority. Visit [www.curo-group.co.uk/map](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/map) to see which hedges and shrubs we're responsible for.



# Maintaining communal green areas: shrubs



A+

Weed free, no litter and shrubs pruned. Area tidy.



A

Weed and litter minimal, not obstructing footpath.



B

Weed growth, litter present. Shrubs obstructing footpath.



C

Area totally overgrown with weeds or litter present.

## FAQs...

Q. What maintenance happens in winter?

A. We will carry out hard pruning of hedges and shrubs and remove weeds from shrub beds.

## Help us to help you...

We work in partnership with contractors and communities to consider any possible projects over the winter.

If you've got any ideas - let us know.  
[www.curo-group.co.uk/gardens](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/gardens)



# Communal trees

Trees are a valuable part of our neighbourhood ecosystems. We have a rolling programme of maintenance and management for every tree we know to be ours. We have a reactive out of hours service to complete any urgent works caused by stormy weather.

# Communal trees: around roads and footpaths



A+

Roads and footpaths are clear of any low branches. No growth at the base of the tree.



A

Low branches present but not obstructing use of the road or the footpath. Growth at the base of the tree present but not impacting on the footpath or passing vehicles.



B

Low branches resulting in minor restriction of the footpath. Growth at base of tree is restricting use of the footpath and brushing passing vehicles.



C

Low branches causing significant obstruction of roads and footpath, with the potential to cause harm to people. Growth at base of tree blocking the use of a footpath or restricting road use.

## FAQs...

Q. The tree outside my house looks dangerous and moves in the wind. Is it safe?

A. The movement of trees in the wind doesn't mean that a tree is dangerous. Let us know if you're concerned and our qualified tree expert will come and inspect the tree. We also inspect trees as part of our routine checks. Our inspection will determine a tree's condition and safety.

# Communal trees: around properties and structures



A+

Tree crown spread is not within 3m of property or structure. (The crown of a tree is the main area of leaves and branches - sometimes called the canopy.)



A

Tree crown spread may be within 3m of the a property or structure but not within 0.5m.



B

Crown spread of the tree is within 0.5m of a property of structure. Small branches may be touching building or structure. Pruning to resolve encroachment would normally be done as planned tree maintenance.



C

Tree crown is conflicting with building or structure with numerous branches touching and resting on building or structure. Work to resolve issue would normally be carried out within 30 days.

## FAQs...

**Q. Why is my tree creaking - is it safe?**

**A.** Trees naturally sway in the wind. The sound of creaking is most likely to be branches sawing as they buffer in the wind.

## Help us to help you...

Please ask us for permission before planting a tree - we'll need to check that it's suitable, agree who will maintain it and ensure that it won't cause issues in future years.



# Communal trees: around information signs



A+

Street signs are completely clear of growth of trees and shrubs.



A

Tree growth is present around the sign but the sign is not obstructed by the presence of trees and shrubs. There is also clear visibility.



B

Sign is visible but information is marginally obstructed. Work to be done as planned tree maintenance.



C

Sign is either completely or mostly obstructed. Information on sign is not distinguishable. Work to resolve issue would normally be carried out within 30 days.

## FAQs...

**Q. The tree is making a sticky mess on my car or garden. What can I do?**

**A.** The problem is caused by aphid infestation and is known as honeydew. Honeydew is a mild sugar solution and should not affect paintwork on cars, if they're washed regularly. This cannot be solved by pruning or spraying with insecticides. Curo will prune trees where the work complies with best practice but will not fell or disfigure trees to deal with this issue.

## Good to know...

If you are concerned about the safety of a tree, call Curo on **01225 366000** - if we're closed you'll have an option to reach our emergency service.

# Communal trees: around street lights



A+

Street light completely clear of growth from trees and shrubs.



A

Tree growth is present around the street light but it is not obstructed by the presence of trees or shrubs. There is also clear light visibility from street lights when two or more are in a row.



B

Street light is marginally obstructed. Pruning to resolve encroachment would normally be done as planned tree maintenance.



C

Street light is either completely or mostly obstructed. Work to resolve issue would normally be carried out within 30 days.



# Bins, and recycling facilities

These communal areas need us all to work together to keep them to a good standard. Please make sure that you always use the bins provided and correctly sort your recycling as identified. If you see fly-tipping happening, contact your local authority with details as they may be able to take enforcement action.

You can check your waste and recycling days here:  
**[gov.uk/rubbish-collection-day](https://gov.uk/rubbish-collection-day)**

In most areas, recycling is still collected weekly - that accounts for 50% of rubbish that used to be put in normal waste bins.

We currently operate across eight local authority areas. Here are links to your local authority refuse information:

- **Bath & North East Somerset**  
[beta.bathnes.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling](https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling)
- **Bristol**  
[bristol.gov.uk/bins-recycling](https://bristol.gov.uk/bins-recycling)
- **North Somerset**  
[n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/bins-recycling](https://n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/bins-recycling)
- **South Gloucestershire**  
[beta.southglos.gov.uk/environment-and-waste/waste-and-recycling](https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/environment-and-waste/waste-and-recycling)
- **Mendip**  
[mendip.gov.uk/waste](https://mendip.gov.uk/waste)
- **West Wiltshire**  
[wiltshire.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling](https://wiltshire.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling)
- **Cotswold District**  
[cotswold.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling](https://cotswold.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling)

# Bins and recycling facilities:

## litter bins



A+

Bin in good condition with no apparent damage; clean with liner intact.



A

Bin has 25% capacity or more. Area around with minimal litter.



B

Bin overflowing but area around clear. Bin dirty or damaged. Graffiti on bin.



C

Bin overflowing on floor. Bin very dirty or damaged and covered in graffiti.

## Help us to help you...

If you spot a Curo bin that's full or overflowing, please let us know.

You can always tweet us  
[@curo\\_group](https://twitter.com/curo_group) using [#CuroBins](https://twitter.com/hashtag/CuroBins).

Not all bins are maintained by Curo.



# Bins and recycling facilities: bin stores



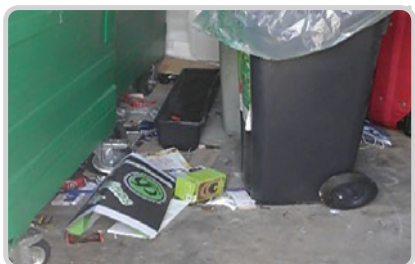
A+

Bin room has been emptied and cleared. Floors have been swept clear and low-level walls and floors have been disinfected thoroughly. No dirt or new staining remain on either. Cobwebs have been removed.



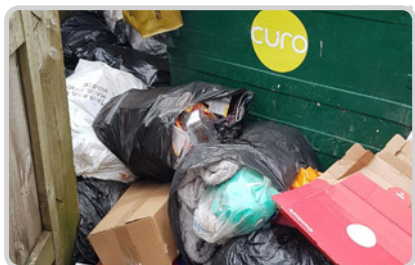
A

Floors and walls have been cleaned thoroughly where possible. Litter has been picked up, although bulk waste not removed. Bin room left tidy where possible.



B

Bin room is heavily stained either on the walls or the floor and can be easily accessed. Bulk rubbish is building up but has not been reported. Floors are swept and washed but walls haven't been cleaned, including cobwebs.



C

Rooms cannot be accessed for cleaning due to amount of rubbish.

## Extra services...

Here at Curo we charge extra for additional services, including communal carpet cleaning, graffiti removal, excess rubbish removal and bulk items clearances.

## Help us to help you...

Clearing up fly-tipping costs us around £100,000 a year, with 1,248 incidents last year alone. If we can't identify the culprit, the cost is added to the service charges for the estate or block. Find out what you can do to help at: [www.curo-group.co.uk/flytipping](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/flytipping)

Always put your rubbish and recycling inside a bin. If it's left on the floor the local authority might not take any of it.

## Your notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Curo

Book it, pay it, check it - get things done  
quicker at MyCuro

[curo-group.co.uk/mycuro](https://curo-group.co.uk/mycuro)

Live chat, Facebook, Twitter, email & more

[curo-group.co.uk/contact](https://curo-group.co.uk/contact)

T: 01225 366000

If you would like this information in an  
alternative format please get in touch.