

**Introduction:**

One of Northwards Housing's objectives is to provide an attractive environment within north Manchester, contributing to the pride and well being of local communities. One way of achieving this is to provide a free gardening service to some tenants, who are unable to carry out work for themselves.

**Purpose:**

To provide a free gardening service to tenants unable to carry out the work for themselves either through disability or old age. The service is limited by budget constraints. Any eligible tenant who cannot be provided with a service immediately will be put on a waiting list.

**Scope of the policy:**

- To provide clear guidance to Environment Officers on offering the service
- To provide guidance to tenants on eligibility and availability

**Responsibility:**

Local Services Managers  
Environment Officers

**Performance Standards:**

The EO to keep a record of all gardens on the scheme, ensuring the budget is not overspent.

The EO to be responsible for entering tenants to and removing tenants from the scheme.

The EO to keep a waiting list of eligible applicants

**Equality /Diversity considerations & Equality Impact**

**Assessment:** Completed November 2009

**Generic Impact and risk assessments:  
Completed November 2009**

**Information sources and reference documents:  
N/A**

**Policy information:**

Criteria

- Everyone living in the home must be over 75 and incapable of keeping their garden in a reasonable condition **OR**
- Everyone in the home must be 65 or over and in receipt of Attendance Allowance and incapable of keeping their garden in a reasonable condition **OR**
- Everyone in the home must be in receipt of the higher rate of DLA with a physical disability and incapable of keeping their garden in a reasonable condition
- There must be spaces available on the scheme
- The tenant must meet the Northwards Xtra criteria

The household must also be in receipt of Housing Benefit or an occupational pension which pushes them just over the Housing Benefit threshold.

Request

All applicants must be visited at home to determine if they fit into one of the above criteria. If they meet the criteria, and the scheme has vacancies, they will receive the service.

Applicants will be informed within 10 working days of applying if they are eligible to join the list. If they do not meet the criteria because they would not qualify for the Northwards Xtra draw, they will need to reapply when their circumstances change.

It is the tenant's responsibility to make sure they continue to be eligible by keeping to the conditions of their tenancy. If a tenant ceases to meet the Northwards Xtra criteria (for example because of rent arrears or other breach of tenancy) then they may be removed from the scheme.

Service

Each garden will be visited 8 times per year. Once a month, March – October.

Removal

Each month Environment Officers must check the void list. If a property on the scheme becomes void, the property must be removed as soon as the property is re-let. The property can remain on the scheme to maintain the garden whilst void. Every winter applicants will be asked to inform Northwards if there has been a change in their circumstances which means they are no longer eligible for the scheme.

<b>This policy is linked to:</b>	Estate Services Policy
<b>This version:</b>	November 2009
<b>Approved by:</b>	Mike Stevens
<b>Next review:</b>	November 2010
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Claire Tyrrell
<b>Covalent reference number:</b> (to be completed by Business Improvement Team)	