

Standard Operational Procedure for Grounds and Gardens	Type: Policy Register No: 12043 Status: Public
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose to this procedure is to ensure that there is a formalised process to maintain the landscaped environment to a good quality by pre-planned maintenance (PPM) and ad hoc work, both during and out of normal working hours. The normal working hours are between 6am and 2pm Mondays to Fridays.
- 1.2 In addition, the purpose is to make every effort to ensure the grounds and gardens are made safe during periods of bad weather, such as snow and ice.
- 1.3 The grounds and gardens services are managed by the Estates and Facilities Directorate in order to ensure all works are carried out in accordance with Health & Safety requirements, as set out in the risk assessments. Grounds maintenance works are performed as set out in the Landscape Management Plan, Woodland Management Plan and adhering to all the relevant British Standards.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Trust recognises the important part played by the grounds and gardens at hospital sites to provide a good quality and safe environment for service users, staff and visitors. The grounds and gardens can have major beneficial effect on staff and patient well-being, and provide a recognised therapeutic value.

3. Aims

- 3.1 The aim of this procedure is to:
 - Maintain an aesthetically pleasing landscape that is both functional in keeping with the Hospital site and local environment
 - Maintain the grounds and gardens to facilitate the smooth and safe running of core Trust operations including ensuring access to hospital sites at all times
 - Maintain the grounds and gardens in such a way as to promote a positive image of the Trust to patients, visitors and staff, promoting the ideals of environmental sustainability
 - Provide and maintain the site free of obstruction, snow, ice and any other hazards or restriction at all appropriate times
 - Maintain the grounds and gardens in a safe manner to ensure accessibility to staff, service users, visitors and members of the public
 - Assist in the preservation and management of the semi-natural ancient woodland, adopting sustainable methods of work to promote a healthy natural environment and increase biodiversity across the sites
 - Ensure compliance with the requirement to commission annual tree inspections and subsequent tree surgery

4. Scope

- 4.1 This procedure applies to all Trust staff, patients, visitors and volunteers working within and using the premises for recreational purposes within the Broomfield Hospital grounds and gardens.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 Whilst all members of staff have a responsibility for ensuring that the Trust at all times provides a clean and safe environment, the following individuals have specific responsibility in relation to grounds and gardens.

5.2 Estates and Facilities Site Manager

- 5.2.1 The Estates & Facilities Site Manager is responsible for the successful delivery of operations set out in this procedure, ensuring there is sufficient resources to deliver the required grounds and gardens service.

5.3 Senior Estates Manager (including PFI)

- 5.3.1 The Senior Estates Manager is responsible for ensuring there is a maintenance reactive and planned service in place to ensure hospital grounds, footpaths and roadways are kept to a safe and useable standard at all times, which includes putting into action Operation Snowflake protocols during periods of cold weather.

5.4 The Grounds and Gardens Manager

- 5.4.1 The Grounds and Gardens Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Trust has an effective procedure for maintaining grounds and gardens through pre-planned maintenance (PPM) and providing professional leadership for the grounds and gardens services. The Grounds and Gardens Manager is also responsible for:

- Managing the day to day delivery of the Grounds & Gardens service within the Trust and working closely with the Estates team and external contractors to identify and resolve maintenance issues within Trust grounds
- Working with the Estates and Facilities Managers on satellite sites to ensure successful implementation of this policy
- Communicating this procedure with the Estates & Facilities Management Team.
- Ensuring salt / grit supplies are in place in preparation for winter months
- Ensuring adequate and appropriate equipment and consumables are provided to deliver the grounds and gardens service, which includes regular maintenance of equipment, personal protective equipment and purchasing of consumables
- Ensuring relevant training in the safe use of equipment and correct horticultural techniques is given to the grounds and gardens staff
- Ensuring risk assessments are reviewed and kept up to date
- Supervise volunteers working within the Hospital grounds in terms of good horticultural practice and safe ways of working, ensuring each volunteer is

registered, inducted and appropriately trained before any work is undertaken.
Liaising with the volunteer supervisor at St Peter's Hospital.

- Liaising with the Sustainability team to ensure that the scheduled voluntary tasks have the required volunteers to be successful, alongside individual appropriate ability, tailoring as required. Contact with the Travel Team is also required to ensure volunteers have accessible car parking facilities as appropriate on days of activity.
- Help compile tenders and specifications and supervise contractors contracted to carry out landscape works within the Trust grounds.
- Design and implement new landscape areas and ensure that clinical specifications are considered and suitable (and safe) plants are chosen.
- Working with clinical colleagues to ensure that specialist gardens are developed/maintained in line with clinical and safety specifications.
- Manage any associated grant and charitable funding associated with landscape and grounds and gardens projects.
- Manage the Grounds and Gardens budget, obtaining quotes, writing requisitions and liaising with suppliers.
- Planning and organising tasks for the Grounds and Gardens Team on a daily, weekly and seasonal basis.
- Recruiting, organising training, carrying out appraisals and monitoring sick leave of the Grounds and Gardens Team.
- Arranging the annual tree inspection and appointing a suitable arboricultural firm to undertake the tree surgery.
- Liaising with the tree Officer at Chelmsford City Council when any tree works are planned.
- Writing and implementing the Woodland Management Plan and Landscape Management Plan with support from the Sustainability lead.
- Act as the Landscape Clerk of Works for capital and works projects that have an impact on the affected grounds and gardens.
- Ensure that all risks/issues identified as part of the monthly environmental inspections are addressed to promote site safety at all times.
- Investigate any complaints/incidents and ensure that remedial action is taken in line with recommendations.
- To be aware of how any digging/excavations or planting operations may affect the comprehensive network of buried MEHT and Statutory Provider utility services throughout the sites. This would involve working closely with the Capital Projects Team.

- To be aware of the effects of planting trees in relation to buried services and neighbouring buildings. This would involve liaising with the Capital Projects Team.

5.4.2 The Grounds and Gardens Manager is responsible for monitoring weather forecasts to alert on-call management and Grounds and Gardens staff of any predicated bad weather that may require Operation Snowflake to be implemented (see section 9).

5.5 Grounds and Gardens Team

5.5.1 The Grounds and Gardens Team are responsible for working within the Trust grounds and undertaking maintenance duties in accordance with grounds and garden service specifications such as:

- Cutting the grass areas to achieve an even stand of vegetation of uniform height and colour, comprising predominantly of grass species using both pedestrian and ride on mowers and trimmers.
- Pruning shrubs as much as is necessary to achieve their desirable ornamental features (flowering, autumn colouring or winter stems), and to prevent them overgrowing footpaths or blocking light to windows. Also, to remove any damaged, dead or diseased parts of the shrub.
- Clearance of leaves in the autumn to keep hard and soft areas free of leaves.
- Emptying litter bins on a daily basis to ensure the site is kept tidy and litter free.
- Litter picking and clearance of cigarette ends to be carried out on a daily basis between Monday to Friday to keep the site tidy.
- Clear snow in timely manner by means of snow ploughs and shovels. Gritting, as per Operation Snowflake, to keep the site safe for users.
- Woodland management according to the Woodland Management Plan (coppicing, weed control, bulb and tree planting).
- Weed control by means of both chemical and physical means for both hard and soft landscaped areas.
- Control of plant pests and diseases using the appropriate pesticide as instructed by the Grounds and Gardens Manager. Operatives to have received PA1 and PA6 training before using pesticides on the Hospital Grounds.
- Planting trees, shrubs, roses, hedges, herbaceous perennials, groundcover, bulbs, bedding plants following correct horticultural practices as instructed by the Grounds and Gardens Manager.
- Regularly clip hedges to maintain a uniform and tidy appearance (according to the type of hedge and situation) and a well-developed cover of vegetation over the whole of the hedge surface. Regularly mow or otherwise control any weed or grass growth at the base of the hedge so it does not detract from the overall appearance.
- Herbaceous planting. Maintain herbaceous plants in an attractive and free-flowering state, with plants supported as necessary to achieve their full flowering

form and kept substantially free of weeds, unattractive dead flowers, or diseased and damaged shoots.

- Groundcover planting to be maintained to keep a dense, weed-free cover of healthy growth, clipped or pruned as necessary to give a neat and tidy finish and contained within the planted area.
- Annual bedding to provide attractive flowering displays in at least two seasons of the year by planting out and cultivating annuals, biennials, bulbs and other flowering plants as instructed by the Grounds and Gardens Manager.
- Planted containers to be maintained by means of regular watering, weeding, feeding, dead-heading, pruning and planting.
- Hard landscaped areas to be regularly swept to keep them clear of litter or other debris that will detract from the appearance of the site. Surfaces to be kept substantially free from weed growth and all drainage gulleys in working order.
- External signs around the hospital grounds to be cleaned on an annual basis and kept clear of obstructions.
- External lighting columns to be kept clear of over-hanging vegetation.

5.5.2 Grounds and Gardens Team will follow health and safety guidance at all times.

5.5.3 The Grounds and Gardens Team will undertake a daily safety check of all vehicles and equipment and will report any health and safety risks to the Grounds and Gardens Manager.

5.6 **Hotel Services On-Call Manager**

5.6.1 The Hotel Services On-Call Manager is responsible for activating Operation Snowflake during out of hours should weather alerts be received on the on-call phone or weather become particularly serious rapidly without warning.

5.7 **Estates, Portering, Car Parking Staff and Sustainability Team**

5.7.1 Estates, Portering staff and Car Parking staff are responsible for assisting in snow and ice clearance as set out in Operation Snowflake. The Sustainability team to help with the engagement of volunteers to help with snow clearance.

5.8 **All staff**

5.8.1 All staff have a duty to maintain a clean and safe environment and are responsible for:

- reporting immediately any identified hazards within the grounds
- respect the environment by disposing of their waste in accordance with the Trust waste policy (no litter dropping and not damaging plants and trees on site).

5.8.2 Staff are not allowed to smoke on site and should adhere to the Smoke Free Policy to ensure a smoke-free environment

6. Poisonous Plants

- 6.1 Of the tens of thousands of plants available to gardeners, just over 100 have been identified as causing harm, and of these, less than half are seriously toxic or irritant. As part of the grounds and gardens management, care is taken when purchasing new plants and in the maintenance of existing plants, thus minimizing any potential risk to humans or animals.
- 6.2 Accidental plant poisoning is very unusual and only very rarely do people suffer serious harm. Death from accidental ingestion of a poisonous plant, in its natural state, is exceptionally unusual. Without putting themselves at risk it is the responsibility of the Grounds and Gardens team, to ensure, as far as possible, that the grounds are free from poisonous plants.
- 6.3 A list of poisonous plants with pictures is recorded in the Hotel Service office for reference. PPE must be worn and safe working procedures followed when removing poisonous or suspected poisonous plants and they must be disposed of safely.
- 6.4 To manage and minimize risk consideration is given to the planning of garden areas and the siting of plants, such as avoiding the placing of irritant plants next to pathways.

7 Service Standards

- 7.1 Work practices vary according to the season (i.e. winter / summer periods) with a schedule of work listing services, frequencies and seasonal requirements for all areas within the Broomfield Hospital site.
- 7.2 The following planned duties are as follows:
 - 7.2.1 Grassed areas shall be uniform in appearance with no patches, edges trimmed, free from mole and/or rabbit infestation and free from fallen leaves, weeds (up to 5%) and litter. Grassed areas will be maintained within the specified frequency, depending on the season, to a uniform length of between 25mm and 50mm.
 - 7.2.2 Trees, Shrubs and Hedges to be trimmed, pruned and/or cut to maintain healthy growth so as to minimise the risk of crime and/or vandalism; the opportunity for storm wind damage; risk of fire or the obstruction of roadways, pathways, car parks, lighting etc. Also, to ensure they are secure and safe; free from dead or dying branches; free from litter; free from disease and/or insect infestation and replaced as and when necessary to maintain appearance.
 - 7.2.3 Flower beds are to be fully stocked with an appropriate mix of annual, perennial and display plants to provide aesthetically pleasing beds throughout the year, free from fallen leaves, weeds and litter and free from disease and/or insect infestation. All beds will be cultivated to the specified frequency for each site within the growing season and any ad-hoc work will be carried out as and when necessary.
 - 7.2.4 Site circulation, including paths, roads, car parks and entrances are to be kept free (whenever possible) of ice or snow; free from fallen leaves, moss or weeds; free from graffiti and chewing gum and free from cigarettes ends and litter. External waste bins are to be emptied on a regular basis and external signage and signposts kept clean and tidy.

8. Staff Safety

- 8.1 Weed killers and pesticides are harmful to humans and animals therefore great care must be taken in their use and storage.
- 8.2 All hazardous substances are risk assessed in accordance with the Trust's COSHH Policy and monitored via the Estates & Facilities COSHH register. The assessment process takes into account the manufacturer's instructions and the following considerations for using and handling weed killers and pesticides:
- Appropriate training of staff (PA 1 and 6)
 - First aid procedure for chemical use
 - Suitable protective clothing, compliant with manufacturer's instructions
 - Records of chemicals used
 - Pesticides must be handled and stored in accordance with COSHH regulations in order to protect the safety of staff, service users and visitors.
- 8.3 Grounds and Gardens staff are provided with appropriate PPE which must be worn when using equipment, chemicals and poisonous plants.
- 8.4 Competent personnel: only persons who have been appropriately trained shall work in potentially hazardous situations such as working with lawn mowers, hedge trimmers, strimmers, chippers, working in excavations or working at height. Contractors may need a permit to work.
- 8.5 Specifications and Risk Assessment: the competent person carrying out the work must be familiar and fully understand the specifications and risk assessment for the task or works to be undertaken.
- 8.6 Hazardous activities: before commencing any potentially hazardous activities, a risk assessment and specifications shall be used in order to minimise the risks to staff, service users and visitors. Appropriate barriers and signage will be used in relevant situations.
- 8.7 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): appropriate personal protective equipment shall be available for use, including chemical resistant suits, gloves and boots; toe-tector boots, gloves, high viz jackets, water-proof clothing, goggles and visers.
- 8.8 Use of equipment: the competent person will carry out checks to ensure the equipment is safe to use and in good condition. Lawn mowers and trimmers should not be used on steep inclines or during inclement weather. Equipment should be stored securely when not in use and not left unattended.
- 8.9 Inventory of Equipment and Plant: this will be kept up to date and used as part of the renewal programme.
- 8.10 Lone working: Staff working alone should follow the Trust's Lone Working Policy.
- 8.11 Storage of petrol: petrol should be stored safely and securely and not left unattended when not secured.

9 Safety of Volunteers

- 9.1 The Grounds and Gardens Manager is responsible for producing separate Risk Assessments for all volunteer activities and for implementing Health and Safety during

each session. The Risk Assessments will be tailor made for the different groups, which will include students with special needs, young children, school children, the elderly or disabled people. The Grounds and Gardens Manager must liaise with the group organisers to ascertain the special requirements and profiles of the volunteers, especially regarding any medical conditions.

- 9.2 Volunteer tasks must be within the capability of each group. The correct use of tools will be demonstrated before each task is carried out by the volunteers, and suitable PPE provided either by the organisers or the Trust (this will be agreed before the date of the activity).
- 9.3 Volunteers will have easy access to toilets and hand washing facilities whilst on site.
- 9.4 The Grounds and Gardens Manager or Volunteer Supervisor must ensure there will be adequate numbers of support staff (e.g. teachers, carers, parents) when under taking activities with children or people with special needs.
- 9.5 The Grounds and Gardens Manager or Volunteer Supervisor must be first aid trained and must have a first aid box available for the duration of any volunteer session.

10. Maintenance of Equipment

- 10.1 The Trust has an obligation to reduce the risk of injury to employees to the lowest reasonable practicable level. There is a risk of injury if any equipment supplied for the purpose of grounds and gardens maintenance is inadequately maintained and carries a defect.
- 10.2 All Grounds and Gardens equipment must be maintained in an efficient state, in working order and without defect.
- 10.3 The Grounds and Gardens staff must undertake visual checks of all equipment prior to use and refrain from using faulty equipment and report all faults to the Grounds and Gardens Manager immediately. A check list is ticked and signed when carry out checks on equipment.
- 10.4 All mechanical equipment will be maintained annually with any wear and tear issues being reported and dealt with as necessary.

11. Operation Snowflake

- 11.1 The Trust procedure for snow/ice clearing during winter months is referred to as Operation Snowflake in accordance with the Trust's Cold Weather Planning and Awareness Policy.
- 11.2 Gritting on the Broomfield Hospital premises is undertaken by the Estates and Facilities Management Directorate using the following staff groups:
 - Grounds and Gardens for the retained estate.
 - Bouygues for the PFI
- 11.3 Snow clearance is undertaken by:
 - Grounds and Gardens
 - A local farmer (at present, Bolton Farm Group from Boreham) who is contracted in to help with snow clearance of roads and car parks

When additional help is required then for snow clearance then the following are provide assistance:

- Estates team (include PFI)
- Portering
- Car Parking
- Domestics (made aware for provision of additional cleaning at entrances and main corridors due to bad weather)

11.4 During working hours, the Grounds and Gardens Manager will be the site co-ordinator lead for implementing Operation Snowflake.
During working hours on the PFI site, the Fabric Supervisor (PFI) will be the site co-ordinator lead for implementing Operation Snowflake.

11.5 During out of hours, the Grounds and Gardens Manager will be the site co-ordinator lead for implementing Operation Snowflake and kept up to date by the acting on-call manager or portering supervisor, especially regarding snowfall.

11.6 Operation Snowflake is activated when weather is predicated to be 2⁰C and below together with spreads of ice and/snow. This will involve assessments of premises in accordance with Operation Snowflake protocol.

11.7 Areas for gritting are prioritised as shown in the Operation Snowflake protocol. Daily gritting must be recorded when Operation Snowflake is activated and records held by the Grounds and Gardens Manager.

12. Training

12.1 All staff with responsibility for Grounds and Gardens must be adequately trained including horticultural qualifications as determined by the services training needs analysis. This is essential for both service excellence and staff safety.

12.2 All Grounds and Gardens staff shall receive appropriate training to the requirements of their respective role in terms of:

- Safety matters and precautions
- Good working practices
- Use of equipment
- Use of chemicals
- An overview of this policy

12.3 All Grounds and Gardens staff are required to complete the Trust mandatory training for non-clinical staff group in accordance with the Trust's Mandatory Training Policy.

12.4 The Grounds and Gardens staff should receive basic first aid training, which should be kept up to date as required by the training body.

13. Reporting and Controls

13.1 Incidents

13.1.1 Any grounds and garden incidents should be reported to the Hotel Services Manager in person, via radio or by telephone on 4017.

13.1.2 Incidents should be recorded, by the reporting department, on the Trust's Incident Report form (Datix) online. The action and investigations sent to the area Manager and Hotel Services Manager.

13.1.3 Incidents involving theft of or damage to Trust property should, in addition, be reported by telephone to the Hotel Services Manager and Security Manager.

13.1.4 A log is kept of reported grounds and gardens incidents. This is maintained by the Hotel Services Department.

13.2 Grounds and Gardens Incident Data Analysis

13.2.1 Individual incidents will be reviewed by the Hotel Services Manager upon receipt to ensure that they have been completed in accordance with this policy.

13.2.2 Incident figures will be collated through the Trust's incident reporting procedures and will be held in the Risk and Litigation databases (Datix).

13.2.3 The Hotel Services Manager will also review summaries of incidents, looking at trends with the view to analyse on a quarterly basis. Where this review identifies areas at a high risk of incidents, further support, including advice and additional training will be provided.

13.3 Requirement to Undertake Risk Assessments

13.3.1 Annual risk assessments will be undertaken for the grounds and gardens services and procedures which will include the working environment, use of equipment, security and lone working and manual handling. Any significant risks will be recorded and placed on the directorate Risk Assurance Framework in accordance with the Trust Risk Strategy and subsequent actions monitored by the Hotel Services Manager.

14. Monitoring and Management Control

14.1 Daily random job inspections to be undertaken by the manager to ensure compliance with this procedure.

14.2 To ensure satisfactory implementation of the requirements of this procedure, the Grounds and Gardens Manager will undertake a random audit of its application and operation including:

- Ensuring the suitable use of suitable PPE
- Use of good working practice
- The correct use of equipment
- Checking daily vehicle/equipment check lists
- The correct use of chemicals
- Ensure grounds and gardens staff are aware of all safety matters and precautions, including risk assessments for all activities
- Monthly environmental inspections of the external grounds and gardens will identify any potential risks/issues to be addressed

15. Equality and Diversity

15.1 The Trust is committed to the provision of a service that is fair, accessible and meets

the needs of all individuals.

16. Communication and Implementation

- 16.1 The procedure will be made available on the Trust's intranet & website.
- 16.2 The Grounds and Gardens Manager will be responsible for communicating the procedure to the Grounds and Gardens team and the wider Estates & Facilities Management Team and satellite site teams.

17. References Documents

- The Occupiers Liability Act 1957 (amended 1984)
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of health and safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002
- Personnel Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999 approved code of practice
- Workplace, Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992 approved code of practice and guidance
- Work Equipment Provision and use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- First Aid at Work, Health and Safety Regulations 1981
- Hand-Arm Vibration
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- RIDDOR 2013
- Working at Height Regulations 2005
- **British Standards**
 - Topsoil handling, stripping and storage**
 - BS ISO 15799:2003 Soil quality - guidance on ecotoxicological characterization of soils and soil materials
 - BS 3882:1994 Specification for topsoil
 - BS 6031:1981 Code of practice for earthworks
 - BS 7562-4:1992 Planning, design and installation of irrigation schemes guide to water resources
 - BS 4428:1989 guide of practice for general landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces) AMD 6784
 - BS 3882:1994 specification for topsoil and AMD 9938
 - Quality of Trees and Shrubs**
 - BS 3936-1:1992 Nursery stock specification for trees and shrubs
 - BS 3936-5:1985 nursery stock specification for poplars and willows
 - BS 3936-10:1990 nursery stock specification for ground cover plants
 - Maintenance of Gardens/ Landscapes**
 - BS 7370-3:1991 grounds maintenance recommendations for maintenance of amenity and functional turf (other than sports turf)
 - BS 3998:1989 recommendations for tree work and AMD 6549
 - Horticulture**
 - BS EN 12579:2000 Soil improvers and growing media - sampling
 - BS EN 13037:2000 Soil improvers and growing media - determination of pH
 - Turf**
 - BS 3969:1998 Recommendations for turf for general purposes
 - BS 4428:1989 Code of practice for general landscape operations

(excluding hard surfaces).

Horticultural Trades Association guidelines on plant handling and establishment

Ladders

- BS 1129 Specification for portable timber ladders, steps, trestles and lightweight stagings British Standards Institution
- BS 2037 Specification for portable aluminium ladders, steps, trestles and lightweight stagings British Standards Institution
- BS EN 131 Ladders (Specification for terms, types, functional sizes; Specification for requirements, testing, marking; User instructions; Single or multiple hinge-joint ladders) British Standards Institute