

# Caretaking

&

# Cleaning

## Service Standards

Reviewed by Tenant Review Group 2025



## **Caretaking services manual:**

This manual has been produced to help Estate Services - Sandwell MBC to provide a quality caretaking and cleaning service for residents that live in blocks with communal areas.

It aims to make cleaning standards on council managed estates become more objective and transparent. This manual confirms the cleaning standards which can then be fairly assessed. It is primarily aimed at tenants and residents so that they can assess standards.

It aims to create a more objective basis for caretaking evaluation, but it is important to remember that there will always be an element of subjectivity within any judgement of caretaking standards.

It is also for use as a guide and reference point. Because there are differences across all council managed properties in terms of the fabric of the buildings, number of residents and visitors, etc the photographic examples given are not absolute and should only be used as an example of what our score grading may look like.



## **OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU...**

Sandwell Council believes the quality of the area in which you live is very important.

We're committed to maintaining the standards of all communal areas and buildings in the neighbourhoods we manage.

If you live in a high or low-rise block of flats you may receive a caretaking or cleaning service, provided either Sandwell Council Estate Services Team. This service is there to help ensure that the communal areas in and around your block are kept clean and tidy.

This document tells you what you can expect from us specifically relating to High and Low-Rise Caretaking & Cleaning service.

These service standards have been developed in consultation with tenants. We will monitor our performance against these service standards and share the results.

### **We are committed to:**

Keeping blocks clean and in good condition

Keeping blocks free of health and safety issues

Continually assessing the standard of service that we provide

### **Caretaking and Cleaning**

Our caretaking and cleaning service is provided 5 days a week (some high-rise blocks do receive limited weekend caretaking cover).

A schedule of caretaking and cleaning service services are displayed in the entrances to our blocks.

Estate Services provides a range of services to the communal areas of our high – rise blocks daily and low-rise blocks once per week.

## **Estate Caretakers**

### **Daily:**

- Fire safety/block inspections (once per week on low rise)
- Check for bulky items (remove when required)
- External litter picking
- Minor communal repairs
- Bin rotations

### **Weekly:**

- Internal chute hopper cleansing

### **Monthly:**

- Estate inspections to high rise
- External cleansing to gutters, parking areas, drying areas, etc.
- Weed control (weather permitting) - normally 2 to 3 sessions per season

## **Estate Cleaners**

### **Daily:**

- Entrances/Exits and lifts (once per week on low rise)

### **Weekly:**

- Sweeping to all communal landings/stairwells and chute rooms
- Mopping to all landings/stairwells and chute rooms
- Internal communal windows, high level cleansing (cobwebs/dust etc)

Your co-operation is appreciated, and please do not leave waste or bulky items in the communal areas at any time.

### **Out of Hours:**

As an extension to the scheduled caretaking and cleaning services provided, there is an Out of Hours Caretaking Team who will provide 'emergency' cleaning and caretaking services from 6pm to 6am (Monday to Friday), 2pm to 6am (Saturday & Sunday).

The Out of Hours Caretaking Team will deal with items directly related to areas within and around high and low - rise blocks that may be a threat to public health and safety including:

- Emergency cleaning e.g. bodily fluids, dog faeces, etc
- Bulky items such as furniture, carpet, electrical items etc, that are Considered to be combustible
- Communal glazing – e.g. broken partition glass
- In the event of an emergency or to address issues of an immediate nature.



## To measure and improve our service we will:

The Sandwell MBC service standards for caretaking and cleaning services on high- and low-rise flats were set up to ensure a consistent level of service whilst constantly seeking areas for improvement.

To do this the manual describes caretaking and cleaning standards using a combination of text and photographs, clearly explaining employees' responsibilities and information on how they will be scored.

These descriptions form a quality assurance framework, against which caretaking and cleaning standards can be fairly assessed.

To make sure that properties and estates are kept clean and in good condition inspections will take into account all areas covered by Caretaking and Cleaning Services, these have been broken down into 6 categories for each service. The grading system comprises of four grades, 3, 2, 1 and 0 for each category and at the end of the inspection the service on the block will be rated either **Gold**, **Silver** or **Bronze** using the following points system.

The manual provides a photograph to represent each grade for each area of work. There is also a text description of each grade for each task alongside this. The text is a description of the grading in the context of both the task and the photograph but is not a description of the photograph. Because no one photograph can fully represent all the ways an area may achieve a certain rating the decision will be made based on both the photograph and the text.

## Making an accurate assessment of caretaking & cleaning standards

When making an assessment of standards there are a number of factors that will be taken into consideration in order for the assessment to be fair and accurate.

### The Condition of the Building

It is important to bear in mind the condition of the building when making an assessment of standards.

#### Factors to consider include:

- ingrained dirt, stains or burn marks
- the general wear and tear of the building and furnishings
- areas that require major repairs work
- irreparable damage
- the extent of any vandalism or abuse of the building which may make it difficult to maintain to the desired standard

These may be beyond the control of the Caretaker/Cleaner and the remit of their work. These factors should therefore be taken into account when making assessment of cleanliness.

### **Unforeseen circumstances**

There are sometimes unforeseen circumstances that the caretaking/cleaning frequency plan cannot legislate for, such as:

- extreme weather conditions
- acts of antisocial behaviour, including graffiti
- the adverse effects of decent homes programmes or other building work

These instances may have an impact on the cleanliness and/or quality of a block and we should always act to rectify such a situation, but the occurrence may be something that we cannot prevent.

### **We ask you to:**

- Treat staff and other service users with respect.
- Let us know if you are unhappy with a service by making a complaint.
- Let us know if you are happy with a service you have received by making a compliment.
- Allow us to respond to your enquiry within service specific time frames.
- Let us know of any changes to your circumstances that may affect how we provide services to you.
- Ask for your feedback on specific services you receive.
- Use your feedback to help improve our services.
- Invite you to participate in the development and improvement of housing services.
- Use your feedback to help improve our services.
- Review complaints to identify learning opportunities and put solutions in place.

## Stairs and Stairwells

All floor areas should be swept and be free of litter, refuse and spillages.  
 Stairs, surrounding walls and banisters should be wiped.  
 Rails, banisters and ledges should be wiped/brushed and cleaned.

Frequency –  
Once Per Week

<b>3</b>		<p>Stairs clean and free of litter.        Floors, walls and skirting boards free of removable marks and stains.        Banisters and rails clean with no dust.</p>
<b>2</b>		<p>Minimal litter or dirt build up on stairs.        Floors, walls and skirtings generally clean, few marks or stains present.        Minimal dirt or dust on rails and banisters</p>
<b>1</b>		<p>Evidence of minor dirt, litter and or staining on floors and walls.        Floors and walls not clean.        Rails and banisters dusty.</p>
<b>0</b>		<p>Excessive build-up of litter, dirt, stains and or marks on walls and floor.        Rails and banisters very dusty.        Bodily fluids present.</p>

## Landings, Halls, Lobbies & Walls

**Area should be swept, all litter and refuse should be removed. The floor should be mopped to remove dirt, marks and stains, area should be left looking clean and tidy. No health and safety hazards present e.g. needles, glass or spillages.**

**Frequency –**  
**Once Per Week**

3		<p>Area is free of dirt, litter, debris and cobwebs. Floors, walls and skirtings are clean and there are no visible removable marks or stains. Area looks well maintained and clean.</p>
2		<p>Area may not be completely free of litter, dirt or cobwebs but is generally clean. Very few removable marks and visible stains. Area requires little attention to return to a 3 star standard</p>
1		<p>Many visible removable marks and stains. Not clear that cleaning is taking place as scheduled.</p>
0		<p>Excessive build up of litter, dirt or cobwebs. Removable marks and stains highly visible. Bodily fluids present</p>

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## Lifts

**Floors should be swept and mopped to remove all litter, refuse, marks and stains, including corners of lifts. Walls, internal and external doors, door frames and panels should be cleaned to remove marks, stains, bodily fluids and graffiti.**

Frequency –

High rise daily

Low rise weekly

3		<p>Floor is clear of litter, marks &amp; stains. There is no build up of dirt or residue in the corners. Walls and doors clean and free from removable marks and stains. Glass is clean &amp; clear with no removable marks or smears.</p>
2		<p>Floor is clean but has minor staining, corners are clear from dirt and residue build up. Walls and door predominantly clear and clean. Glass is generally clean &amp; clear with only minor marks or stains</p>
1		<p>Noticeable dirt or dust on floor or lower walls. Build up of dirt in corners Removable stains visible on walls and/or floors. Glass has noticeable marks and/or smears</p>
0		<p>Excessive build up of dirt and grime on floor. Many removable marks and stains visible on walls and doors. Excessive marks and smears on glass, visibility reduced. Bodily fluids present.</p>

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# Windows, Ledges & Internal Glazing

All internal glazing, ledges, window sills and external main doors are cleaned once a week. All marks, dirt, cobwebs, stains and smears should be removed from the windows surface and from the window and door frames.

Frequency –

High rise weekly

Low rise weekly

3		<p>Window is clean and clear with no marks or smears. Window frame and ledges are clear of dirt, dust, debris and cobwebs. Clear view through the window where possible.</p>
2		<p>Window is generally clean and clear, any marks or smears are minor. No cobwebs. Minimal evidence of dirt, dust or debris on window frame or ledges.</p>
1		<p>Window has noticeable marks and smears; and/or Cobwebs; and/or Build up of dirt, dust or debris on window frames or ledges.</p>
0		<p>Window has excessive marks and smears to the extent that it reduces visibility; and/or Excessive amount of cobwebs; and/or Excessive build up of dust, dirt or debris on window frames or ledges.</p>

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## Lighting Cleanliness

All lights should be kept free of dirt, dust and cobwebs, all shades should be clean, free of dust, marks, stains and cobwebs.

Frequency –  
Once Per Week

<b>3</b>		Light and surrounding area free of dirt, marks, stains dust and cobwebs. Light shade is clean and translucent.
<b>2</b>		Light and surrounding area generally free of dirt, dust, cobwebs and stains, light shade generally clean.
<b>1</b>		Noticeable levels of dirt, dust, cobwebs on and around lights, light shade is not clean.
<b>0</b>		There is excessive build up of dirt, dust and cobwebs on; and/or around light. Lightshade is noticeably dirty.

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## Chute Rooms & Hoppers External

The hopper cover and surrounding area should be wiped to remove any debris, marks and staining. The door should be wiped and walls and floor should be swept and mopped or wiped to ensure they are free from dirt, dust, debris and removable marks and stains.

Frequency –  
Once Per Week

3		<p>Area is swept and free of litter. Hopper cover &amp; surrounding area are clean and free from removable marks, stains and debris. Walls, floor and door are free from removable marks and stains with no build up of dirt and grime in the corners.</p>
2		<p>There are a few removable marks and stains and some debris on hopper cover. Walls, floor and door have a few removable marks and stains, corners are clear.</p>
1		<p>Noticeable quantities of debris on hopper; and/or floor. Stains visible on hopper, walls, floor or door. Build up of dirt in corners.</p>
0	 <p>ALL RUBBISH MUST BE PUT DOWN THE CHUTE</p>	<p>Excessive quantities of debris on hopper; and/or floor. Many removable marks and stains on walls, floor or door. Build up of dirt and grime in corners. Bodily fluids present.</p>

## Chutes & Hoppers Caretaking

Hoppers should be scraped and cleaned and free from debris, chute room should be free from bulk rubbish. Chutes should be checked for blockages and cleared or reported where necessary. Chute room should be free from offensive odours.

Frequency –

High rise daily

Low rise weekly

3		<p>Hopper has recently been scraped and disinfected. Hopper is free from debris, dirt and staining. No hazardous items present.</p>
2		<p>There is slight debris, dirt or staining on the hopper but no significant build up. No hazardous items present.</p>
1		<p>There are noticeable amounts/slight build up of debris; and/or dirt in hopper. Hopper requires cleaning. No hazardous items present.</p>
0		<p>Excessive quantities of debris; and/or dirt in hopper. Hopper needs attention Hazardous items present.</p>

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# Lighting, Signage & Handyman Duties

All lights should be operational or have been reported to the admin team, All signage should be present and readable. All handyman duties should be carried out - landing doors closing fully, glazing present or made safe, stop tap covers, meter and landing cupboards secured or reported. All notice boards should be up to date and tick sheets completed.

Frequency –

High rise daily

Low rise weekly

3	 <p>A photograph of a fire notice sign. The sign is white with red and blue text. It includes a logo of a stylized 'J' and the numbers '999 or 112'. The text on the sign reads: 'In case of fire dial 999 or 112', 'If a fire occurs in a nearby flat stay indoors', 'If a fire occurs in your flat close all doors and windows and evacuate occupants at once using the stairs', 'Do not use lifts', 'Use stairs', and 'For further information please contact your neighbourhood officer'.</p>	<p>All lights working or reported to admin team. All signage present and in good condition. Handyman duties completed</p>
2	 <p>A photograph of a fire door. The door is brown and has a blue oval sticker that says 'Fire door Keep shut'. Above the door, there is a yellow and black sign that says 'Keep doors closed in case of fire'.</p>	<p>All lights working or reported. Some minor handyman duties outstanding. Signage present, worn but still readable.</p>
1	 <p>A photograph of a smoking ban sign. The sign is white with black text and a black and white graphic of a person smoking. The text reads: 'Smoking is against the law to take in any communal area of these premises'.</p>	<p>Lights defective and not reported. Multiple handyman duties not carried out. Signage present but only partially readable</p>
0	 <p>A photograph of a ceiling fixture, possibly a light or a smoke detector, mounted on a white ceiling. The fixture is black and has a curved arm.</p>	<p>Lights defective and not reported. Signage missing. Handyman duties not carried out.</p>

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## Graffiti

**Racist/Offensive graffiti should be removed within 24 hours of being found,  
Non racist/Offensive should be removed as soon as possible but within 10  
days. Graffiti that is unable to be removed should be reported to admin team  
for graffiti removal team.**

Frequency –

As Required

3		<p>There is no graffiti visible in the area.</p> <p>There may be evidence of graffiti that has been painted over or removed but the graffiti itself is not visible.</p>
2		<p>There may be some graffiti present, but it is minimal and is not offensive.</p> <p>Very few instances of inoffensive graffiti in the inspected area.</p>
1		<p>There may be many instances of graffiti in the inspected area.</p> <p>However the graffiti that is present is not offensive.</p>
0		<p>There may be an excessive quantity of inoffensive graffiti.</p> <p>Offensive graffiti of any quantity is a 0 star.</p>

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## Litter Picking & Bulk Rubbish

Areas should be litter picked daily/weekly, any bulk rubbish should be removed or made safe and arrangements made for collection. There should be no hazardous items present e.g. broken glass or needles.

Frequency –

High rise daily

Low rise weekly

<b>3</b>		<p>Area is completely free of litter and refuse. No bulk rubbish present or has been made safe and collection arranged. No hazardous items.</p>
<b>2</b>		<p>Area is predominantly clear. There is some litter present but not to any great extent. No bulk rubbish present or has been made safe and collection arranged. No hazardous items</p>
<b>1</b>		<p>Noticeable amounts of litter. Bulk rubbish present that has not been made safe or collection arranged. No hazardous items.</p>
<b>0</b>		<p>Excessive build up of litter. Bulk rubbish present that has not been made safe or collection arranged. Hazardous items present.</p>

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## Bin Rooms

**Bin rooms should be swept and washed out daily/weekly. Bins should be rotated daily. Doors, walls and floors should be cleaned to remove any staining, dirt, debris and cobwebs. External surfaces of bins should be free from removable debris, dirt and staining. There should be no significant build up of refuse in bottom of bins.**

**Frequency –**  
**High rise daily**  
**Low rise weekly**

<b>3</b>		<p>Floors are free of litter, dirt and debris. Walls and floors are clean. No cobwebs present. None or very little build up of waste in bottom of bins.</p>
<b>2</b>		<p>There may be litter, dirt or debris present, but in minimal quantities. Corners are clear and floor appears clean. Walls are predominantly clean with few cobwebs. Minimal build up of waste in bottom of bins.</p>
<b>1</b>		<p>There are noticeable amounts of litter, dirt; and/or debris. Dirt and debris in corners or on lower walls; and/or Rubbish left on floor. Cobwebs present. Noticeable build up of waste in bottom of bins.</p>
<b>0</b>		<p>Excessive build up of litter, dirt or debris on floor. Noticeable dirt or debris on outside of bins. Build up of waste in bins. Cobwebs present. Hazardous items present. Bin room and bins need cleaned.</p>

## Hard Standing Areas

**Hard standing areas should be swept and litter picked, bulk items should be removed or made safe with collection arranged. Weeds and moss should be treated and removed, along with leaves and any hazardous items leaving the area clean and tidy.**

Frequency –

High rise Daily

Low Rise

Weekly

<b>3</b>		<p>Area is clear of litter, debris, moss and leaves. Any weed growth is minimal. No bulk items present or has been made safe and collection arranged. No hazardous items present.</p>
<b>2</b>		<p>Minimal amounts of litter, debris, weeds, moss or leaves present. Any weeds present have been treated as part of a seasonal maintenance programme. No bulk items present or made safe and collection arranged. No hazardous items present.</p>
<b>1</b>		<p>Area has a noticeable build up of litter, debris, weeds, moss or leaves Weeds or moss present have not been treated. Bulk items present with no collection arranged. No hazardous items present.</p>
<b>0</b>		<p>Area has excessive build up of litter, debris, weeds, moss or leaves Weeds or moss have not been treated. Bulk items present, no collection arranged. Hazardous items present</p>