



Summary report

Review period August-November 2018

Garden Scheme review

Welcome to our eighth review. The Scrutiny Panel's role is to explore, examine and test Phoenix services on behalf of residents. We make recommendations to improve services and satisfaction. We chose to investigate the garden scheme as an additional review to align with Phoenix's plans to review the scheme.



How we carried out the review

We examined the garden scheme through a document review of the scheme details, as well as financial information, performance data, and enquiries and complaints received for the service in 2017-18.

This desk-top study was followed by interviews with the Estates Services Manager, Senior Environment Services Operative and Environment Services Operative.

The scope for the review was:

To identify options for the scheme that provide value for money while contributing to well maintained and visually attractive gardens for the community.

To measure the success of the review we set out to understand:

- **Service** – what's offered, how it's resourced and how it's scheduled.
- **Cost** – to find a balance between sustainable costs for the business and acceptable costs for residents while meeting the value for money standard.
- **Resident satisfaction** – as a measure of the service's success.

Meet the panel

The panel was formed in 2014 and is made up of four members.

Join us!

There are still vacancies for Phoenix residents to join the panel. If you'd like to help put Phoenix under the microscope and improve services and satisfaction, please get in touch.





The garden scheme operates at a loss.



The cost to residents has never been increased and is based on the type of property (house vs flat) rather than actual size and condition.



Time allocated isn't based on the garden size and does not include travel time.



The current resources available limit the capacity of the scheme which has a waiting list.



Gardens are not inspected before joining the scheme each year.



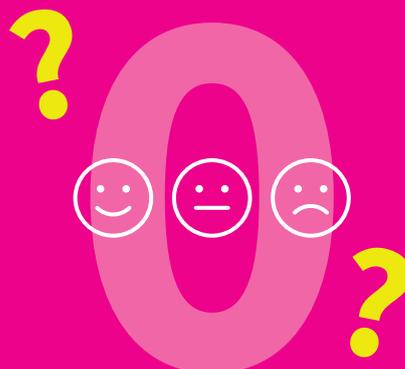
There are no set standards to measure resident satisfaction.



Research into more than a dozen garden schemes showed many housing providers restrict their garden programmes based on age and disability.

Resident satisfaction!

Between April 2017 and March 2018, Phoenix didn't receive any complaints about the garden scheme. Resident satisfaction is not being measured, but the Estates Services team will implement a satisfaction survey in 2019 in response to the panel's recommendation.



When interviewing ...we noted



Environment Services Operative
Micky May

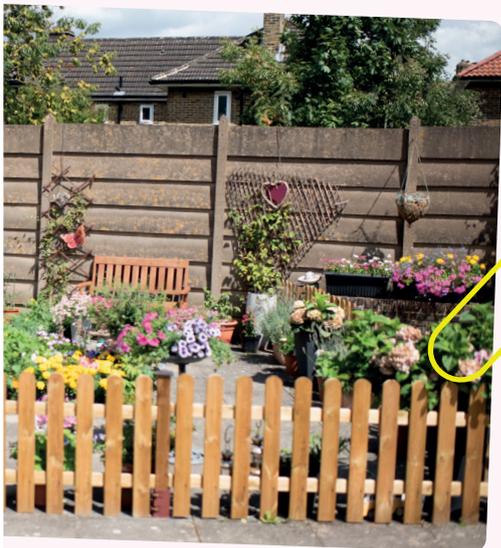
Phoenix charges fixed prices for houses and flats but is losing money as the gardens are all different sizes. Some flat gardens are bigger than house gardens.

Senior Environment Services Operative
Tom Percy

The scheme is a grass cutting service that includes hedge trimming (for hedges that can be reached without a ladder), but people expect weeding and pruning to be included.

Estates Services Manager
James Peters

Residents are responsible for the upkeep of their gardens. The scheme was originally implemented to help address the issue of overgrown gardens.



Our top five



At the end of our review, we made seven recommendations which can be viewed in our full report. These are the top five which focus on reducing the loss to the business:

- 1** Review and adjust the scheme to improve financial viability.
- 2** Ensure garden size, condition and time allocated are reflected in the cost to residents when joining the scheme.
- 3** Consider limiting eligibility to individuals over 60 or with a disability and no rent arrears.
- 4** Implement a one-off clearance charge for overgrown gardens before residents can join the scheme.
- 5** Set a payment deadline at the end of February to allow for efficient scheduling of the work.



Constraints

- Gardens are not inspected each year which limited the information available.
- There are no measurable standards to determine resident satisfaction.

What we've learnt

- The current scheme is not viable and requires review.

5

Traffic light monitoring

To make sure that services are improved for residents, we monitor recommendations from our previous reviews to track when actions have been completed.

30

31

We use a traffic light system to help us:

2 not started

- red (delayed)
- amber (in progress)
- green (completed)

Phoenix and regulatory standards

At the core of every scrutiny review, we look to improve services for all residents in line with the Phoenix Standards and regulatory code set out by the Regulator of Social Housing.

In this review, we found that Estates Services keeps the promises made under Phoenix standard 1 (How we support older and at risk residents) and standard 5 (Neighbourhood and Community). For standard 6 (Value for Money), the scheme provides value to residents but, at a loss to the business.

What's next

- Identify future review topics.
- Follow the progress of recommendations from past reviews.
- Continue communications and engagement with residents to increase Panel membership.



The Phoenix Standards are available on the Phoenix website. If you require a hard copy, please get in touch with Phoenix.



More info

This is a summary version of our report. If you'd like to read the full report, please call 0800 0285 700 or visit the Phoenix website.

Get in touch

W www.phoenixch.org.uk

T 0800 0285 700

E scrutiny@phoenixch.org.uk

🐦 @phoenixtogether

The Green Man, 355 Bromley Road, London SE6 2RP

