



TREE MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE POLICY

Freebridge
COMMUNITY HOUSING



Tree Management and Maintenance Policy			
Last Reviewed	Nov 2025	Next Review	Nov 2028
Responsible Officer	Director of Operations		

Policy Statement:

Freebridge Community Housing is committed to providing an effective, efficient and timely tree management and maintenance service so that our homes and communal areas remain safe, well maintained and the appearance of the local community is enhanced. Therefore, this policy:

- Outlines the responsibilities of both Freebridge and tenants regarding tree management and maintenance
- Ensures the management of our tree stock in accordance with legal and insurance obligations
- Contributes to the preservation of trees for their significant environmental benefits

Policy Detail:

Scope

This policy details our approach to the management and maintenance of trees, large shrubs that have similar characteristics to trees, and hedges on the land that we own and manage.

Application

This policy applies to properties owned (or partially owned), or managed by Freebridge, including associated communal areas.

Details of leaseholders and shared owner obligations are contained within their lease agreements.

Vulnerable Customers

We recognise that not all tenants will be able to reasonably maintain trees, large shrubs and hedges that they are responsible for. This may be due to a variety of reasons, such as cognitive, physical or mental health needs or illness.

Where these situations arise, we will provide an enhanced maintenance service where work will be undertaken which would normally be tenant responsibility. This

does not exempt vulnerable customers from recharges but serves as an additional step to ensure tenants are supported and recharges are either prevented or issued fairly and with consideration. See also *Rechargeable Works Policy*.

Freebridge also operates a discretionary 'Garden Assistance Scheme' supporting customers to maintain their gardens. Further information, including details of eligibility criteria are available on the website [here](#).

Management & Maintenance

We will manage and maintain our trees (inc. tree felling), large shrubs and hedges in accordance with the guidance and recommendations from The National Tree Safety Group.

We will undertake routine surveys and maintenance by competent persons. We will do so on a cyclical basis to ensure the safeguarding of people, property and our tree stock, including large shrubs and hedges is maintained.

Depending on the severity and/or urgency of works identified, these will be undertaken in accordance with target times contained within our *Repairs, Maintenance & Planned Improvement Policy*

Responsive Inspections

We will survey trees in individual gardens when a concern is raised by the tenant a resident a colleague or member of the public and information indicates that the tree meets the following response criteria:

- Diseased in serious decline or dead
- Dangerous (for example, storm or wind damaged)
- Causing damage or likely to cause damage e.g. branches touching a roof
- Causing an obstruction to public footpath or highway

A responsive tree survey will be completed within 14 working days following the request.

Trees that are at immediate risk of falling or dropping large sections of wood will be attended to within 1 working day.

Any work recommendations that are considered as routine maintenance will be referred to the tenant to arrange works.

Recommendations that concern damage to fencing, pathways or buildings will be assessed by a repairs officer, and any tree works necessary to enable responsive repairs will be completed by Freebridge.

Felling & Pruning

We will only fell trees where the tree is:

- Dead, dying, or diseased
- Proven to be causing structural damage and an engineering solution is not possible
- Considered by us to be an inappropriate species for the location
- To be removed as part of an agreed management programme or as an overall improvement project

Should a tree be felled, the resulting stump must be treated with an appropriate herbicide to minimise regrowth.

We will not carry out pruning or removal of trees in the following circumstances:

- Interference with a satellite dish, TV reception or other communication reception
- Loss of light unless there is a significant impact, and this has been identified through a tree assessment by a qualified inspector/arborist
- Obstruction of view
- Incidents or mess caused by insects, animals or birds, including nesting birds
- Problems associated with fruit, berries or nut bearing trees
- Problems associated with pollen, sap or honeydew
- Excessive leaf fall
- Causing disruption to pavements, kerbs, garden paths and walls. In these instances, engineering solutions, should be sought

We will undertake light pruning in the following circumstances:

- Obstruction of CCTV cameras
- Low branches are obstructing rights of way, creating obstructions or there are health and safety implications

Protection

Where appropriate, we may seek compensation from individuals or external organisations for significant damage or unauthorised removal of any tree(s) owned by Freebridge.

We will submit tree preservation requests (TPO) to the relevant authority where we and our customers believe that their retention benefits the amenity value of their locality.

For development sites owned by Freebridge, we will ensure that any site highlighted for development will have an arboriculture impact assessment report and existing tree stock survey undertaken as part of the planning phase.

For major work to existing properties, or regeneration of our existing estates, we will work to minimise the impact works have on existing tree stock, and that the necessary protection is in place prior to commencement of work.

Tenant Responsibilities

- Tenants are responsible for the management and maintenance of trees, large shrubs, and high hedges in their gardens. Responsibilities regarding gardens and external areas are detailed in the tenancy agreement
- Tenants should keep all trees below a height of 3 metres
- Tenants must notify us of any issues relating to trees in their gardens; where this includes trees or vegetation encroaching from a neighbouring property, Freebridge may first require customers to speak with their neighbours before becoming involved.
- Tenants are required to ask us for permission for tree planting within their garden. Failure to do so may result in re-charging the tenant for any subsequent works related to the tree
- In situations where tenants inherit problematic trees on moving into a property, Freebridge will assess each case individually to determine the most appropriate resolution.

Freebridge Responsibilities

FCH is responsible for the management of trees, large shrubs, and high hedges in communal areas and local spaces. We will undertake the following within those areas:

- Mapping, surveying and condition assessments
- Procuring, managing and monitoring maintenance contracts
- Complying with health and safety and legal requirements

Our employees and appointed contractors have a duty of care to report any tree issues that could pose a potential risk.

We will provide advice to tenants who have issues with trees, large shrubs and hedges that are deemed the tenant's responsibility.

Should we, a tenant, leaseholder or freeholder be concerned that a tree which is on our land poses a health and safety risk to people or property surrounding the tree, we will undertake an inspection to assess the risk and carry out any necessary 'make safe' work.

Monitoring

This Policy shall be subject to a periodic review to ensure that it continues to reflect best practice, as well as relevant legislation and regulatory requirements.