



Boundary Structures Policy			
Last Reviewed	May 2025	Next Review	May 2027
Responsible Officer	Director of Operations		

Policy Statement: We aim to ensure that our estates and neighbourhoods are well maintained. We understand the importance of safety and security for residents and recognise the contribution that boundary structures such as fences or hedges make to this.

This Policy is intended to set clear expectations for customers as to the circumstances when Freebridge will provide, replace or repair boundary structures to our homes. The Policy aims to be fair and consistent whilst also allowing for vulnerability and customer need to be considered.

Policy Detail:

Scope

This policy applies to all properties owned by Freebridge Community Housing, including general needs and sheltered accommodation. It does not apply to shared ownership / leasehold properties where the individual terms of a lease will specify any responsibility for fencing.

Definition

Throughout this Policy the term “boundary structure” is used to describe manmade and living structures along a property boundary line, including brick walls, chain-link, post & wire and timber fences, and hedges.

Our Responsibilities

Where we determine we are responsible for a boundary, Freebridge will mark and maintain this in the manner deemed most suitable for the setting; this will predominately be chain-link fence. This is important so that customers and residents can be clear as to the extent and ownership of gardens and shared spaces.

Boundaries will only be secured with wooden fencing as stated in this policy. When a fence is to be provided, generally we will only do so to the boundaries of a rear garden, unless the only available garden area is at the front of the property.

We will always:

- provide guidance to tenants and residents where it is their responsibility to carry out works.
- provide guidance to private occupiers who share a boundary with a property owned by Freebridge and co-operate in reaching agreements about liability and cost.
- where we have a responsibility to do so, ensure that all boundaries are safe and maintained where this borders a highway, public footpath, or communal land owned by Freebridge including gates.
- ensure that tenants and leaseholders comply with their contractual obligations, in line with their tenancy agreement or lease.
- consult with leaseholders where the cost of works to shared areas require a section 20 consultation.
- reserve the right to undertake our obligations as set out on a planned repair or replacement programme where appropriate except where it is needed to provide:
 - Protection and/or privacy from people or vehicles entering a garden where it borders a busy thoroughfare or public space.
 - Separation of a garden from hazards such as streams or severe changes in ground level at the edge of a property.
 - In these circumstances the work will be undertaken as a routine repair in accordance with our timescale for such.

Vulnerable Customers

Whilst we understand the importance of fencing and hedging to customers, there is no legal requirement for Freebridge to securely fence gardens to ensure child or pet safety.

We do also understand however that there will be circumstances in which we do need to respond to the needs of a customer, their children or wider household in a different way.

When protecting the safety and wellbeing of customers, related to anti-social behaviour, hate crimes, domestic abuse or disability, we will consider departing from the criteria in this policy where a recommendation has been received from:

- an Occupational Therapist
- a Police or Fire Safety Officer
- Freebridge's Tenancy Team

All such cases will be considered on their own merits.

Where we determine that we are unable to assist with fencing, we will always provide advice and support to tenants that are unable to erect or maintain their fencing, including details of any funding or grants available.

Garden Boundary Treatment

Freebridge will mark the boundaries they are responsible for in the manner dictated in the design and planning requirements relating to the site (where appropriate).

Generally, where not subject to planning requirements, in front gardens this will be with 1 meter (approximately 3.3 feet) picket fencing, or where this is not possible, post and wire fencing of the same height.

In rear gardens this will be with two privacy panels of closed board fence or panel at a height of 1.8 meters (approximately 6 feet) on each boundary shared with a neighbouring property.

The remaining boundary(ies) of rear gardens will be demarcated with 1.2 metre (approximately 4 feet) chain-link fencing. Customers will be offered a choice of black or green.

Existing hedging in rear gardens must be maintained by customers to a maximum height of 2 metres (approximately 6.6 feet).

Where Freebridge have provided a boundary structure this will be repaired, maintained and replaced by Freebridge on a like for like basis.

Boundaries between tenanted property and public highway / right of way / footpath / garage site / public land

Freebridge will mark the boundaries they are responsible for in the manner dictated in the design and planning requirements relating to the site (where appropriate).

Generally, where not subject to planning requirements, Freebridge will secure the boundary using 1.8m high (1m when adjacent a public highway) close board wooden fencing with concrete posts (unless restrictions apply and in which case it will be chain-link fencing of the same height).

Freebridge will continue to maintain this boundary, repair and replacement will be on a like for like basis.

Boundaries between tenanted property and a significant hazard such as a stream, pond or other water body, or a severe drop in ground level at the edge of the property

Freebridge will mark the boundaries they are responsible for in the manner dictated in the design and planning requirements relating to the site (where appropriate).

Generally, where not subject to planning requirements, Freebridge will secure the boundary using 1.8m high (1m when adjacent a public highway) close board wooden fencing with concrete posts (unless restrictions apply and in which case it will be chain-link fencing of the same height).

Freebridge will continue to maintain this boundary, repair and replacement will be on a like for like basis.

Between tenanted property and a privately owned property – deeds indicate boundary liability is private owner.

In all circumstances, responsibility for fencing will be with the private owner.

Tenant Alterations

We will always provide Landlord Permission where it is legal and reasonable to do so in allowing tenants to erect or alter their own boundary structure, subject to appropriate planning / building regulation requirements.

It is the tenant's responsibility to ensure all other necessary approvals are in place before starting work. The specification and standard for the works must be agreed with Freebridge prior to the work starting.

Any new boundary structure to be erected must give due consideration to the setting, appearance, and style of the surrounding environment.

Any boundary structure erected by a tenant becomes their responsibility to maintain. If any boundary structure is deemed unsafe, or that it does not fit its surrounding Freebridge reserves the right to remove it and recharge the tenant for the costs of this work.

At a change in tenancy Freebridge will review the condition of the structure. If it is in good condition, it will be left in place until such time as it requires replacement or repair, at which time the scenarios above will apply.

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.