

# Tree Management Policy

In this policy, 'Flagship Group' (we) includes the housing associations trading as Newtide Homes, Samphire Homes, and Victory Homes

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| <b>Department</b>                        | <i>Neighbourhoods Team</i>  |
| <b>Policy Owner</b>                      | <i>Managing Directors (Housing)</i>   |
| <b>Approved Date</b>                     | <b>27<sup>th</sup> January 2025</b>   |
| <b>Date for Review</b>                   | <b>January 2028</b>   |
| <b>Approving Body</b>                    | <i>FLT</i>  |
| <b>Associated Legislation/Regulation</b> | Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Neighbourhood and Community Standard, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 |
| <b>Equality Impact Assessment Date</b>   | <i>16<sup>th</sup> December 2024</i>  |
| <b>Version Number</b>                    | <b>1</b>  |

## Purpose / Principles

This policy outlines how Flagship Group will manage the trees they own or those that may impact on the properties or neighbourhoods where Flagship tenants live.

## Tree Management

Just as our homes are important to us, we are extremely aware of the benefits that our trees provide to the environment, wildlife, our tenants, and the wider community. Our focus is to maintain and preserve our trees:

- We will inspect and maintain our trees regularly to ensure the safety of our tenants, the general public, and the surrounding area. To achieve this and fulfil our duty of care, we will:
  - Carry out informal, formal, and detailed inspections of our trees
  - Keep records of our findings
  - Action any remedial work required to maintain risk as low as reasonably practicable
- We will only remove trees when they come to the end of their safe and useful life.
- Where we are required to remove trees for development purposes, we will obtain planning permission from the local authority and arrange replacement trees in line with any planning conditions.
- Tree stumps in public areas will be left at least 1 metre high to prevent them being a trip hazard or up to 5 metres if the deadwood habitat will benefit the environment and increase biodiversity.

We will not:

- intervene in any disputes between neighbours regarding third party trees unless there is a risk to any Flagship property.
- prune or remove trees to prevent or reduce bird droppings as nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- prune or remove trees to stop or reduce concerns in relation to bees, wasps, or wild animals.
- prune or remove trees to prevent or reduce blossom, falling leaves, pollen, sticky residue, or falling seeds, berries, or fruits, as these are natural, seasonal occurrences.
- prune or remove a tree to improve natural light in or to a property or for the use of solar panels as the law states that there is no general right to light.
- automatically remove a tree bearing poisonous fruit or foliage, but these cases will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken if there is an ongoing risk associated with the tree.
- prune or remove trees to stop or reduce interference with telephone wires as they are designed to withstand abrasion. Any faults should be reported to the service provider.
- prune or remove a tree to prevent perceived interference with TV/satellite reception.
- prune or remove a tree to improve the view from someone's property.
- prune, remove, or cut the roots of a tree to prevent them entering a drain that is already broken or damaged as trees themselves very rarely break or damage a drain.

## Nuisance

Any concerns regarding Flagship owned trees or a third-party tree which is in contact with Flagship property can be reported online (including out of hours), by telephone or live chat, or directly to any member of staff. These will be directed to our specialist team for further investigation and a response.

## Planning and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

We will work with our Development and Regeneration Teams to ensure that any biodiversity net gain plans are suitable, realistic, cost effective, and attainable.

## Trees and the law

We will investigate any reports of vandalism to Flagship owned trees and try to correct any damage where possible, seeking legal advice where appropriate.

In some cases, if natural light is being blocked by the growth of a hedge, then action may be taken to reduce the problem under the High Hedges Act, Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act, 2003. We will investigate any issues brought to our attention and action any required work.

You have a Common Law right to remove a nuisance associated with trees – please get in touch if you are experiencing issues on [trees@flagship-services.co.uk](mailto:trees@flagship-services.co.uk).

## EIA statement

An EIA was conducted on this policy on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and all negative impacts have been mitigated.

## Training statement

This policy will be trained to all members of the Neighbourhoods Team, Customer Hub, and Housing.

## Measuring Effectiveness

The effectiveness of this policy will be measured through:

- compliance with relevant legislation and guidance ie. BS:3998, BS:5837, NTSG guidelines
- use plan, do, check, act (HSG65)
- sense checking with involved parties
- reviewing work requests and flows.

## Review Period

This policy is updated as required and formally reviewed every 3 years.