

<b>Policy name:</b>	
<b>Tree Management Policy</b>	
<b>Section:</b>	Property Service
<b>Exec responsible:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Review by:</b>	Director of Property Services, Compliance Manager
<b>Tenant review:</b>	No
<b>Authority to amend:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Frequency of review:</b>	Every 3 years
<b>Last review:</b>	June 2026
<b>Next review:</b>	June 2029
<b>Responsibility for delivery:</b>	Compliance Manager
<b>Strategy:</b>	Property and Building Safety Strategy
<b>Associated risk ID:</b>	
<b>Health &amp; safety:</b>	Risk of injury or accident if procedures are not followed correctly.
<b>Equality &amp; diversity:</b>	
<b>Associated costs and value for money:</b>	
<b>Associated documents:</b>	

<b>VERSION CONTROL</b>			
<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Sections amended</b>	<b>Date of update</b>	<b>Approved by</b>
1.0	First Issue		
2.0	Updated and Merged with Tree Management Procedure	June 2026	HB

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## Introduction

This policy outlines how Cornerstone Housing will manage the trees they own or those that may impact on the properties or neighbourhoods where our customers live.

## Policy

Just as our homes are important to us, we recognise the significant benefits that trees provide to the environment, wildlife, our customers, and the wider community. Our aim is to maintain, protect, and preserve trees under our management.

We will achieve this by inspecting and maintaining our trees to ensure the safety of our customers, the general public, and surrounding properties, while meeting our duty of care.

## Relevant legislation

Health And Safety at Work Act 1974  
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999  
Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984  
Common Law Duty of Care (Negligence)  
Town and Country Planning Act 1990  
Tree Preservation Regulations England 2012  
National Planning Policy Framework  
Local Development Plan and Planning Conditions  
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981  
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017  
Environment Act 2021  
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

## Our Commitment

To fulfil our responsibilities, we will:

- Carry out informal, formal, and detailed inspections of trees, as appropriate.
- Maintain accurate records of inspections and ensure that any required remedial works are completed to keep risk as low as reasonably practicable.
- Only remove trees when they have reached the end of their safe and useful life.
- Where trees must be removed for development purposes, obtain the appropriate planning permission from the local authority and, wherever possible, provide replacement trees in line with planning conditions.
- Retain tree stumps in public areas at a minimum height of one metre to prevent trip hazards, or up to five metres where retaining deadwood habitat will benefit biodiversity and the environment.

We will not:

- Intervene in disputes between neighbours regarding third-party trees unless there is a demonstrable risk to a Cornerstone property.

- Prune or remove trees to
  - prevent or reduce bird droppings, as nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
  - address concerns relating to bees, wasps, or wild animals.
  - prevent or reduce falling blossom, leaves, pollen, sticky residue, seeds, berries, or fruit, as these are natural and seasonal occurrences.
  - improve natural light to a property or to accommodate solar panels, as there is no general legal right to light.
  - prevent interference with telephone wires, which are designed to withstand abrasion. Any faults should be reported to the relevant service provider.
  - address perceived interference with television or satellite reception.
  - improve views from a property.
- Prune, remove, or cut tree roots to prevent them from entering drains.
- Automatically remove trees that bear poisonous fruit or foliage; each case will be assessed individually, and appropriate action will be taken where an ongoing risk is identified.

## **Nuisance and Enquiries**

Concerns regarding Cornerstone-owned trees, or third-party trees that are in contact with a Cornerstone property, can be reported online, by telephone, or directly to a member of staff. All concerns will be referred to a specialist team for investigation and an appropriate response will be actioned.

## **Biodiversity Net Gain**

We work closely with our development team to ensure that biodiversity net gain plans are suitable, realistic, cost-effective, and achievable.

## **Trees and the Law**

We will investigate any reports of vandalism to Cornerstone trees and, where possible, seek to rectify any damage. Legal advice will be sought where appropriate.

In cases where natural light is affected by the growth of a hedge, action may be considered under Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (High Hedges). All reported issues will be investigated and any necessary works undertaken.

## **Monitoring and Review**

A programme of periodic inspections will be implemented, with inspection frequency determined by the level of risk identified.

This policy will be updated as required and formally reviewed every three years.

## APPENDIX 1 Inspections and Surveys

Appendix	Task	Done By	Processed by
A*	Risk Assessment of trees in common spaces at frequencies suggested by the base one-off tree survey	Cornerstone Contractor	Property Services Supervisor or Compliance Manager
B*	One-off survey of trees in tenanted properties.	Cornerstone Contractor	Property Services Supervisor/ Manager
C*	One off inspections of any tree in any location as they arise in response to enquiries raised by resident, leaseholders, members of the public or other Cornerstone employees	Experienced staff/ Cornerstone Contractor	Enquiries and complaints may initially come to the customer services team for referral to Property Services Manager/ Supervisor
D*	Void property inspections – if trees of significance are present, the tree database should be checked for any required/ outstanding or re-survey works required	Void inspector/ Surveyor/ Property Services Supervisor	Property Services Manager/ Supervisor
E*	Urgent tree works arising from the need to carry out repairs to a property i.e. in order to erect scaffolding, repair drain damage etc.	Property Services Manager/ Supervisor	Property Services Manager/ Supervisor