

Tree Management Policy

This policy sets out Bromford Flagship LiveWest's approach to managing trees, in support of delivering safe, fair, and responsive services to our customers. It is underpinned by legal duties, regulatory expectations, and a commitment to fairness, accountability, sustainability, and transparency.

Department	Customer Experience
Policy owner	Regional Director - Customer
Approved date	December 2025
Date for review	October 2028
Approving body	Customer SLT
Associated legislation/regulation	Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 & 1984 High Hedges Act (Part 8, Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Town & Country Planning Act 1990 BS:3998 (Tree Work – Recommendations) BS:5837 (Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction) National Tree Safety Group Guidance
Legal advice from	Internal Legal Team
Equality impact assessment date	October 2025
Version number	1.1
Publication status	Internal Intranet & Public Website

Purpose/principles

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Bromford Flagship manages its trees responsibly, balancing safety, environmental sustainability, and community benefit while meeting our duty of care and legal obligations.

Our principles are:

- **Safety first** – protecting customers, colleagues, contractors, and the public from tree-related risks.
- **Environmental value** – recognising the biodiversity, climate resilience, and amenity benefits of trees.
- **Fairness & transparency** – setting out clearly what we will and will not do in relation to tree management.
- **Sustainability** – removing trees only where necessary and replacing them in line with biodiversity net gain principles.
- **Partnership** – working with local authorities, communities, and regulators to ensure joined-up tree management.

This policy supports the **Safety & Quality Standard** (safe, well-maintained homes and environments) and the **Neighbourhood & Community Standard** (safe, clean, and well-managed communal spaces).

Scope

This policy applies to:

- all trees owned or managed by Bromford and Flagship
- colleagues, contractors, and partners involved in tree inspection, maintenance, and management¹
- customers and communities affected by tree-related issues on Bromford or Flagship land
- situations where third-party trees directly impact Bromford or Flagship property or neighbourhoods

Roles/responsibilities

Board/Committees provide oversight and assurance that the policy aligns with strategic priorities, customer outcomes, and regulatory requirements.

¹ Colleagues and contractors of Bromford, Flagship and their subsidiaries, plus any former Bromford or Flagship colleagues now operating under Bromford Flagship LiveWest. At the time of writing LiveWest operate under a separate policy.

Executive Leadership Team/Directors are accountable for ensuring the policy is implemented consistently across their areas of responsibility and that compliance is maintained.

Heads of Service/Service Leads are responsible for embedding the policy within their service areas, ensuring colleagues are aware of and follow the requirements, and providing assurance on compliance.

Customer-facing colleagues are responsible for applying the policy in day-to-day service delivery, supporting customers, and taking action or escalating issues in line with procedures.

All colleagues are expected to understand the policy as it relates to their role, complete any required training, and seek support where clarification is needed.

Policy content

Trees are a vital part of the environments where our customers live. They provide shade, absorb carbon, support biodiversity, and improve wellbeing. However, they can also present risks if they become unstable, diseased, or interfere with property and infrastructure.

This policy sets out how Bromford Flagship will meet its duty of care for trees, ensuring safety while recognising environmental and community value.

How we will manage our trees

We will:

- **inspect and maintain trees** through a programme of informal, formal, and detailed inspections
- **keep records** of inspections, risks, and works undertaken to ensure transparency and accountability
- **undertake remedial works** to reduce risks to as low as reasonably practicable.
- **remove trees only when necessary**, including where they have reached the end of their safe and useful life
- **replace trees** in line with biodiversity net gain principles and planning conditions.
- **manage stumps responsibly**, leaving them at a safe height in public areas to prevent trip hazards, or retaining them for habitat where this benefits biodiversity
- **respond to third-party risks**, contacting other landowners where their trees pose risks to our properties. In emergencies, we may act to mitigate the hazard and recover costs later

Inherited garden conditions, historic damage, and pre-existing tree risks

Bromford Flagship recognises that some customers may inherit garden conditions, including ivy growth, unmanaged vegetation, or historic tree-related damage predating their tenancy. To ensure fairness and consistency:

- we will assess inherited risks and historic damage on a case-by-case basis, considering safety, structural impact, environmental value, and our legal responsibilities as a landlord
- where there is a clear risk to safety, property condition, or statutory compliance, Bromford Flagship will determine and undertake the appropriate action
- where issues relate to routine garden maintenance or minor nuisance, we will provide guidance on responsibilities but will not normally intervene unless a risk assessment indicates otherwise

Reporting concerns, nuisance and how we assess issues

Customers can report concerns about trees:

- online via the customer portal or website (24/7).
- by telephone or live chat
- directly to any colleague, who will refer to the specialist team

Reports about third-party trees that directly affect Bromford or Flagship property will also be investigated.

Third-party trees impacting Bromford or Flagship property

Where trees owned by neighbouring landowners pose a risk to Bromford Flagship homes, communal areas, or land:

- we will assess the reported concern and take reasonable steps to contact and work with the landowner
- customers will not be expected to pursue or resolve issues directly with neighbouring landowners
- we will raise concerns formally, request remedial action, and follow up as appropriate
- in cases of immediate danger, we may act to make the situation safe and seek to recover costs where legally appropriate

Clear reporting instructions will be provided within the Tree Management Service Standard and customer-facing guidance.

What we will not do

To ensure fairness and consistency, we will not normally:

- intervene in disputes between neighbours about trees, unless there is a direct risk to our property
- prune or remove trees for reasons such as:

- bird droppings, pollen, blossom, sticky residue, or falling seeds/fruits.
- wildlife activity (bees, wasps, birds, or animals).
- natural seasonal effects such as falling leaves.
- improving views, increasing light, or reducing shading of solar panels.
- perceived TV or satellite reception interference.
- automatically remove trees with toxic fruit or foliage, unless a verified ongoing risk exists.
- prune or remove roots entering already damaged drains (as trees rarely cause initial damage)
- prune, remove or alter trees because their movement, foliage or shadow activates Ring doorbells, CCTV cameras, or other motion-sensitive security or recording equipment

Planning, biodiversity, and development

We will:

- work with Development and Regeneration Teams to ensure biodiversity net gain commitments are realistic, cost effective, and measurable
- seek planning permission where required and comply with local authority conditions.

Legal compliance and enforcement

We will

- investigate vandalism to trees and seek legal recourse where appropriate
- act on high hedge complaints under the High Hedges Act (2003)
- inform customers of their Common Law rights to address nuisances caused by neighbouring trees.

Service standards

We will prioritise tree issues as follows:

- **emergency (immediate danger)** – action within 24 hours
- **urgent (high risk but not life-threatening)** – inspection within 5 working days
- **routine** – action within planned maintenance cycles.

Appeals and complaints

Customers may request a review of decisions relating to tree management (e.g. where works are refused). Reviews will be considered by a senior leader not involved in the original decision. Customers may also raise a formal complaint under the Bromford Flagship Complaints Policy.

Our commitments to customers

We will:

- keep you safe by managing risks from trees responsibly

- act on reports of dangerous trees in a timely and proportionate way
- preserve and protect trees wherever possible, removing them only where unavoidable
- replace trees to support biodiversity and sustainability
- be transparent about what we will and will not do
- provide clear communication on the outcome of any tree-related enquiry
- use customer feedback and complaints to improve the tree management service

EIA statement

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for this policy. It considered potential impacts on customers with protected characteristics, including age, disability, and pregnancy/maternity. Mitigating actions include accessible communication, reasonable adjustments, and proactive support for vulnerable customers.

This policy works alongside the Vulnerability, Inclusive Services & Reasonable Adjustments Policy to ensure inclusive practice.

We recognise that we may not have identified all adverse impacts on one or more protected characteristics. We welcome feedback and examples of issues we may have overlooked so that we can continuously improve our policy.

Training statement

This policy will be trained out to:

- Neighbourhoods and Customer Spaces Teams and Customer Services and Housing colleagues through induction and refresher training
- contractors and tree specialists through compliance briefings and contractual obligations.

Measuring effectiveness

The effectiveness of this policy will be measured through:

- compliance with relevant legislation, standards, and guidance
- audits of inspection programmes and remedial works
- monitoring of nuisance reports and response times
- customer feedback and complaints analysis
- reporting to senior leadership team and relevant committees

Review period

This policy will be formally reviewed every three years, or sooner in response to changes in legislation, regulation, organisational priorities, or following feedback from colleagues, customers, or stakeholders. Updates will be approved through the appropriate governance route.

Approval

This policy was approved by Customer SLT and is applicable to:

- Bromford Housing Association Ltd (operating as Bromford)
- Bromford Home Ownership Ltd (operating as Bromford)
- Merlin Housing Society Ltd (operating as Bromford)
- Flagship Housing Limited (operating as Flagship)

Any references to Bromford Flagship LiveWest should be interpreted as equally applicable to all the above.

Supporting documents

This policy is supported by:

- Tree inspection procedures
- Health and safety guidance notes
- Biodiversity Net Gain guidance
- Customer communication templates
- Vulnerability, Inclusive Services & Reasonable Adjustments Policy

Version control

Note: minor updates approved by delegated authority increase version number by 0.1; major updates and formally approved versions increase version number by 1.0.

Version	Detail	Approved by	Date
1.0	First issue]	Customer SLT	16 December 2025
1.1	Updated template (including the logos on titlepage footer and wording in approval section)	n/a	6 August 2026