

Brent Housing Partnership Policy

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Has staff training been undertaken? If No, please attach a training plan:	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Have the Customer Response Team been briefed? If No, please advise scheduled date:	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment been completed? Is a full assessment required?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the Policy saved to Infostore?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Recommended by:	
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1.0 Introduction and scope

The purpose of this policy is to ensure efficient management of trees located on Brent Council estates that are managed by Brent Housing Partnership (BHP).

The policy also deals with how we will deal with the need for occasional tree maintenance in individual gardens.

The actions we take will underpin our Vision:

To build vibrant, diverse and resilient communities

and our Values:

- *We deliver on our commitments*
- *We are honest, open and transparent*
- *We are bold and resilient*
- *We do good business and work to high ethical standards*
- *We learn and we innovate*

This policy applies to trees on all properties managed by Brent Housing Partnership.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

The key aims and objectives of this policy are to ensure that trees located on properties managed by Brent Housing Partnership:

- Do not present a risk to health and safety;
- Do not cause damage to our or other properties;
- Contribute positively to the quality of the local environment;
- Are protected from unnecessary harm.

3.0 External Related Documents

HCA Regulatory Framework (Neighbourhood and Community Standard). [Click here for publication.](#)

Well Maintained Highways – Code of Practice. [Click here for publication.](#)

Forestry Commission Practice Guide Hazards from Trees: A General Guide by David Lonsdale (2000) – [click here for publication](#)

4.0 Internal Related Documents

Key Strategy	Asset Management
Other Strategies	n/a
Policies	Environmental Improvements Untidy Gardens Rechargeable Works Section 20 Consultation
Procedures	Tree Requests – Estates Tree Requests - Gardens Environmental Improvements Untidy Gardens Rechargeable Works Service Charges
Other documents	n/a

5.0 Legal Framework

Legislation	Main powers and relevance to Tree Management
Trees Act 1970	Deals with tree preservation orders
Corporate Manslaughter	Can be used for prosecutions if an employee is killed and there is evidence that serious management failures resulted in a 'gross breach of a relevant duty of care'

6.0 Definitions

Tree management – for the purposes of this policy, BHP defines tree management as the ways in which we will manage and maintain trees on properties managed by Brent Housing Partnership with a view to creating and maintaining safe and attractive neighbourhoods.

7.0 Abbreviations

BHP	Brent Housing Partnership
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8.0 POLICY STATEMENT

8.1 Introduction

BHP has a risk-based, proactive tree inspection and maintenance programme in place. The aim is to identify issues and deal with them before they escalate into complex problems that require greater attention and expense.

Tree maintenance involves effective management of the risks that trees may pose to properties, residents or the general public. It also involves ensuring estate trees are in good health and continue to thrive. Examples of tree maintenance techniques BHP uses include regular inspections, pruning and where necessary tree removal.

BHP aims to only remove trees that are diseased, dead, causing structural damage to property and any communal tree that poses a risk to health and safety. Trees will only be removed or pruned for reasons stated in 8.2 and 8.3 and will not be removed or pruned for other reasons, e.g.:

- To reduce leaf fall or sap production
- To reduce activities of birds, animals or insects
- To change natural light levels
- To improve TV or mobile phone signal reception

8.2 Tree maintenance - communal

We will:

- Carry out regular inspections to identify problems early and take preventative action;
- Keep trees unless there are good arboricultural, environmental, or risk-related reasons not to do so, including preventing structural property damage;
- Proactively manage our trees based on a two-year maintenance cycle depending on age, distance from property, species, health and other arboriculture factors;

8.3 Tree maintenance – individual gardens

Trees in an individual customer's, private garden are the responsibility of the customer to maintain. However, we recognise that there are occasions where we will need to intervene. These circumstances are as follows:

- Where there are vulnerability issues that mean the customer is unable to carry out the work themselves;
- Where there is a health and safety risk;
- Where not taking action may lead to structural property damage (BHP's or someone else's);
- Where not taking action may lead to reputational damage or an insurance claim.

In all the above, we will consider carrying out the work and recharging the customer.

8.4 Subsidence

Subsidence is an identified problem across London, due to the “London Clay” soil in which building foundations rest. This type of soil is prone to move when it dries and when it rains. Buildings across the capital can therefore suffer subsidence even with no trees.

Trees take water out of the soil and in some circumstances this can cause the soil to shrink further, causing more soil movement. This can add to subsidence risk.

If BHP does not recognise these risks in our maintenance works, this may leave us open to increased claims, charges of negligence and subsequent costs.

When required, BHP must ensure that the necessary steps are taken to address any subsidence issues. By being proactive, we will be eliminating the risk of claims due to negligence and also minimise cost.

We will:

- Determine the type and frequency of maintenance work based on the potential for subsidence;
- Identify estate trees for removal and/or replacement, where this is thought to be in the best interests of BHP or the Council. Appropriate replacement trees will be planted where necessary.

8.5 Environmental sustainability

To ensure our tree planting recognises the needs and capacities of the environment, our management of estate trees must take into account environmental impact.

When managing and planting estate trees, BHP has to consider amongst other things the space available both above and below ground, the nature of existing or proposed buildings, future management of different tree types and the current presumption of an increasingly warmer climate.

We will:

- Consider planting trees which are in keeping with the landscape character, and good arboricultural practice;
- Continue to encourage our arboricultural contractor to re-use, recycle and compost tree clippings waste, old trunks and felled trees;
- BHP will work with Brent Council and the developer to ensure they are replaced, as appropriate;

- Have regard to [Brent Council's Air Quality Action Plan](#), ensuring that tree species positively affect air quality when choosing tree species and planting regimes.

8.6 Resident engagement

We will ensure that all council tenants and leaseholders have a reasonable opportunity to have a say in how we manage our tree stock.

We will:

- Inform council tenants and leaseholders before trees are removed, including the reason for the removal, especially where trees may appear to be otherwise healthy;
- Publish our arboriculture maintenance programmes on our website each year.

8.7 Tree management system

We will ensure that our arboricultural maintenance follows good management practice, and meets Brent Council's certification to the 'ISO14001' environmental management system.

We will:

- Maintain records and will store and maintain an inventory of our estate tree stock, to enable accurate analysis of the tree population for future planning purposes.

9.0 Performance Indicators

We will measure our success at managing our tree stock by reporting at 6-monthly intervals on the outcomes of our tree inspections and any one-off interventions in individual gardens.