



## Paragon Housing Association – Guide to Tree Management

We get a lot of enquiries from tenants and owners about trees so we thought it might be useful to tell you about how we manage the many trees that are located throughout our estates.

We want trees in our estates as they provide a number of benefits – they are helping us and the planet by absorbing carbon dioxide and they reduce airborne pollutants. They can make areas look nice. They help to channel storm water and provide valuable habitat for wildlife such as birds, bats and insects.

However we appreciate that sometimes trees can be a nuisance and if they become diseased or decayed they can sometimes pose a risk to safety. So here is how we will manage them.

### What we won't do

- We will avoid pruning or felling trees unless unavoidable
- Trees will **NOT** normally be pruned or felled due to problems with:
  - Shade
  - Falling leaves, fruit or flowers
  - Pollen
  - Interference with TV, mobile phone or Wi-Fi signal (residents should contact their service provider for a solution)
  - Bird droppings
  - Obstruction of Views
- Because they are too big or too tall – unless dangerous
- Obstruction of utility cables (these are the responsibility of the utility company or owner)

### What we may consider

- Where it is considered the High Hedges legislation may apply
- Branches touching a building or structure
- Trees in a clearly unsuitable locations (as determined and recommended by a qualified tree surgeon)
- Roots or aerial parts causing significant structural damage
- Clear evidence of subsidence damage caused by a tree
- Tree branches obscuring streetlights, road signs or CCTV cameras – in this instance we would be looking to the local authority for guidance

### **What happens if you report an issue with a tree ?**

- We will record the report on our tree register so we have a record - all estate trees are numbered
- A member of our estates will undertake a visual inspection within 2 weeks of your reporting your concerns. In some instances we may undertake further monitoring over a period of time.
- If the officer believes work might be required then a further inspection by a qualified arborist will be undertaken to make recommendations and we will seek the advice of the Local Authority Tree Preservation Officer
- If you are aware of a tree that you think needs inspected, then please email us at [estates@paragonha.org.uk](mailto:estates@paragonha.org.uk) or call on 01324 664966 If you can send us a picture that would be of assistance to us.

We have a number of estate plans on our web site and they give an indication of the landscaped areas in estates and where trees may be located. These plans may change as trees are removed but they may help you locate the trees that form part of the estate. We are currently updating our estate plans.

### **Trees in private gardens are treated differently**

If a tree is within the boundaries of a private garden, even if this is of a Paragon tenancy then the actions we can take are limited. In general terms responsibility for the tree lies with the owner of the property or the tenant if it is a Paragon tenancy. However in the case of a Paragon tenancy if the tree is believed to be unsafe we will work with the tenant to come up with a plan of action.

### **Who pays for it?**

The arrangements for landscape maintenance vary across the 3 local authority areas we work in but in most areas works to mature trees in landscaped areas are carried out at a charge to the Association. If you are a tenant, then you pay for this through your rent. If you are an owner in the estate, then you may be liable for a share of the cost of undertaking any tree works.

It is important that we only undertake such work when it is absolutely necessary and only where required and we will consult with owners on costs.

**However if there is an urgent Health & Safety issue then we will go ahead and do it without consultation.**

### **Ash Dieback – What is it and what does it mean for trees on our estates?**

This disease was first recorded in the UK in 2012 and is now widespread throughout Scotland. Affecting ash trees, the fungus attacks the leaves and stem, eventually infiltrating the tree and blocking the movement of water through the trunk. This causes the tree to produce less foliage and 'die back'. Trees affected by ash dieback can become brittle and eventually die.

Ash trees with this disease can sometimes die within only a few years, although others can survive for much longer. If trees become brittle, this can create a health and safety risk due to the possibility of branches or trees falling. In these cases, they need to be managed carefully and sometimes removed, especially from near paths, roads or buildings.

If an Ash Tree is found inspection to be displaying signs of Stage 1 or 2 Dieback we are unlikely to take immediate action but will continue to monitor and manage the tree as advised by a qualified tree surgeon or Arborist.



Published by

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Paragon Housing Association Ltd is a charitable organisation registered under Scottish Charity No: SC 036262  
Property Factor PF000282