

Policy outlining the approach Amplius will take to manage trees and high hedges in both communal areas and residential gardens on land owned by Amplius.

Tree and High Hedges Policy

Document management

Directorate	Operations
Policy sponsor	Chief Operations Officer
Policy owner	Director of Property Operations
Policy author	Estates Maintenance Manager

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Part 2

Policy introduction

Scope

This policy sets out how Amplus manages trees and high hedges on land it owns or manages. It explains responsibilities, inspection processes, and how decisions are made regarding maintenance and safety.

Trees provide significant environmental and health benefits, including improving air quality, supporting wildlife, and enhancing local amenities. However, our primary responsibility is to ensure public safety and protect property.

Amplus will only carry out tree works where a tree presents a demonstrable risk to people or property or where required by law.

The term Amplus incorporates all member companies and subsidiaries, which includes Teetotal Homes.

This policy applies to all Amplus owned land. Where a management agreement is in place and the land is not owned by Amplus the terms of the management agreement will determine if Amplus are responsible for the tree or high hedge work.

The policy does not form part of any colleague's contract of employment and the policy may be amended at any time.

Part 3

Policy details

Trees on Communal Land - Inspections

Amplius is responsible for the maintenance of trees on communal land. We will undertake a risk-based inspection regime that includes:

- Formal, planned inspections by qualified arboriculture consultants. The frequency of the inspection regime will be determined by the assessment undertaken by the arboriculturist but typically this is every 5 years.
- Arboriculturists are qualified to inspect and assess trees and make sure they are healthy and safe and will complete remedial works as required to both trees and hedges
- Informal inspections by Estate Management staff and Grounds Maintenance contractors. This will focus on identifying visual issues e.g. leaning tree or deadwood. Formal inspections by trained arborists will be needed to assess tree safety and structure.
- Responsive inspections following reports of potential issues from customers or members of the public. The inspections will be prioritised based on the risk reported and potential to cause harm considering the issue reported and the age, size and location of the tree.

Trees on Communal Land – Permitted Works

Works will be completed on trees where identified during inspections that the tree is:

- Dead, dying, or diseased.
- Structurally unsafe.
- Causing or likely to cause property damage (this is often supported by structural or drainage surveys).
- Obstructing highways, footpaths, or signage.
- Overhanging roads below statutory clearance heights.
- Affecting access or essential services.
- Outgrowing its location and creating safety risks.

All works completed will be subject to the correct consent being obtained for trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders or trees within Conservation Areas. Works will be completed outside of bird nesting season, unless an immediate risk is identified.

Trees on Communal Land – Non-Permitted Works

Works will not be completed on trees where items deemed as nuisance are identified. This includes but is not limited to:

- Loss of light, shade, or views.
- Leaf fall, blossom, fruit, or bird droppings.
- Honeydew or sap.
- The presence of wildlife or insects.

- Interference with television or satellite reception.
- Shading of solar panels where this does not present a safety issue.

Trees in Resident Gardens of Amplus Owned Property

Residents are responsible for maintaining trees in their gardens (unless their tenancy agreement or lease explicitly states otherwise).

During void periods, when the property is empty a survey may be undertaken and remedial works completed on any trees in gardens.

Amplus will only consider undertaking permitted tree works in customers gardens when the customer:

- Is physically unable to do so.
- Has no support network available locally.
- Lacks the ability to arrange works privately.
- The tenancy agreement or lease explicitly states that Amplus is responsible for the trees in their garden.

Where a tree or tree limb has fallen or has been reported to Amplus as potentially dangerous then an inspection will be carried out by an arborist and works completed in line with the inspection.

For permitted works not deemed as dangerous, our Housing and Home Ownership Team will determine if the tree work should be undertaken by Amplus and check the tenancy or lease agreement for responsibility.

Amplus will recharge the customer for any works completed to trees in their garden which they undertake. The only exception to this being where the tenancy agreement or lease states Amplus is responsible for the maintenance of trees.

Privately Owned Trees Adjacent to Amplus Land

Where trees on neighboring private land present a risk to Amplus property or residents, the owner will be contacted and asked to take appropriate action. If they fail to do so, the matter may be referred to the local authority.

Amplus customers may exercise common law rights to cut back to their boundary, subject to statutory protections.

Root Damage, Drainage, and Subsidence

Claims of damage must be supported by professional evidence e.g., a structural surveyor report. Tree removal will only be considered where the tree is proven to be the primary cause, and no alternative engineering solution is viable.

High Hedges (over 2 Meters)

Hedges in communal areas will be maintained to a maximum height of 2 meters unless there are specific conditions that would determine the height needing to be left higher e.g., gradient of land, security issues or conservation requirements.

Hedges that are to remain over 2 meters in height in communal areas will have their action hedge height calculated using the Government Hedge Height and Light Loss Calculation tool. This will determine the height the hedge will be maintained to. This will be maintained by specialist arborist teams and not be able to be completed by routine grounds maintenance operatives.

High hedges in property gardens will be referred to the Amplus Housing Team or Homeownership Team for investigation. Rectification costs to bring hedges down to the action hedge height will be recharged where the issue results from resident neglect or actions.

Hedges in property gardens will be checked and reduced to the correct height (where required) as part of any void period (and previous occupier recharged). New customers will become responsible for ongoing maintenance of the hedges throughout the term of their tenancy.

Reports regarding high hedges in non-Amplus owned properties that are adjacent to Amplus land will be managed in line with Part 8 of the Anti-Social Behavior Act 2003. The local authority is responsible for resolving formal disputes.

Works will be undertaken outside of bird nesting season wherever possible, unless an immediate risk is identified.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Amplus policies are developed in line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion approach. We are committed to ensuring that no individual or group is discriminated against or treated unfairly as a direct or indirect result of this policy.

Additional needs (addressing vulnerabilities)

Amplus understands that some of our customers and service users may be vulnerable for various reasons. Our policies will consider the recommendations made by the Housing Ombudsman and other regulatory bodies regarding vulnerabilities. Amplus will take a proactive approach when making decisions about customers or service users and, where possible, will tailor our services to meet their needs and support vulnerable individuals.

Part 4

Compliance and administration

Legal and regulatory compliance

This policy fully complies with Amplus' legal and regulatory obligations.

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Forestry Act 1967
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (Part 8)
- Highways Act 1980
- Environmental Protection Act 1990

This list is not exhaustive, and policy authors will undertake thorough research and/or seek professional advice to ensure that Amplus meets its obligations and complies with the current and relevant legislation and regulations.

Evaluation, review and performance monitoring

This policy will be reviewed on a Triennial basis to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. A policy review may also be required earlier, in response to internal or external changes for example changes in legislation. Prompt and effective action will be taken where improvements are identified.

All inspection findings, recommendations and completed works will be recorded and stored for audit and compliance purposes.

Related policies

- Estate Management Policy

Part 5

Appendices

A. Associated documents – Internal procedural document, colleague use only

- Estates Process Map.
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B. Frequently asked questions

What we'll do	What this means for you
Survey trees on communal land periodically	Trees in communal areas will have a survey
Complete works required on trees	Following the survey required works will be completed on trees

Part 6

Changelog

Amended date	Summary of changes	Version №