



Pest Policy

June 2026

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1. Introduction and scope

- 1.1 This policy sets out SW9 Community Housing's (SW9 CH) approach to controlling pest infestations within residents' homes and communal areas.
- 1.2 We have a legal responsibility to carry out any pest proofing measures to help prevent the recurrence of infestations.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all residents, regardless of tenure, who live in SW9 CH managed properties. The rights and responsibilities of our residents and SW9 CH are detailed in the tenancy, licence or lease agreement.

2. Aims and objectives

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to protect resident wellbeing, maintain property standards, and safeguard public health through proactive and coordinated pest management.
- 2.2 The objectives of this policy are to:
 - prevent and control pests to maintain a safe, healthy and compliant environment in residents' homes and communal areas, to mitigate risk of disease transmission and property damage.
 - clarify which responsibilities and accountabilities lie with SW9 CH, with residents, or with the Local Authority when dealing with pest infestations.
 - ensure that a consistent approach is taken, in line with the relevant tenancy, licence or lease agreement.
 - clearly set out the responsibilities of residents, signposting them to appropriate pest control advice or organisations that can assist.
 - comply with all relevant legislation, regulatory requirements, including the Regulator of Social Housing's Neighbourhood and Community Standard, and good practice. This includes the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, and Awaab's Law (under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023), which from 2026 will enforce strict timelines for addressing hazards associated with pests.

3. Policy statement

- 3.1 SW9 CH is committed to managing and preventing pests to ensure safety, hygiene, and compliance with regulations and legislations. We recognise the impact that pests can have on residents, their homes and communal areas. We take a proactive and collaborative approach to pest management, working in partnership with residents, contractors and Local Authorities to ensure our homes and communal areas are safe, healthy and pest-free.
- 3.2 Our approach is guided by our legal and regulatory obligations and aims to protect resident wellbeing, maintain property standards, and promote shared responsibility for pest

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infestation.

4. Definitions

4.1 The definitions mentioned in this policy are outlined below. This is not an exhaustive list.

Tenancy	Tenancy Agreement, Lease, Licence and any other form of occupancy agreement for the purposes of this document.
Pest	<p>The term 'pest' is used as a generic term for vermin, this is any organism, usually an animal, which is judged as potentially carrying disease that can harm humans in the homes they occupy. Pests are commonly considered to be a public nuisance, due to their effect on the home, health, or environment. Types of animals and insects considered to be pests include wasps, bees, fleas, bed bugs, mice, rats, silver fish, cockroaches, feral pigeons, and ants.</p> <p>Japanese Knotweed and other invasive species may also be classified as a pest as they can cause structural and environmental damage. Removal and destruction of these species need to be dealt with in accordance with relevant legislation.</p> <p>Japanese knotweed is particularly hard to eradicate compared with other plants, requiring multi-year treatment with herbicide or excavation and there is also an ongoing risk that the plant will regrow, either because it is only made dormant by herbicides or because fragments of the plant remain in the soil.</p>
What is not classified as a pest	<p>Animals such as foxes, bats, badgers, other wild birds, crickets, sand lizards, slow worms, snakes and common frogs or toads are not considered pests but may present some nuisance. Many of these are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which prohibits the killing or injuring of these animals. Investigation and action can be taken by police, Natural England, Environmental Agency and National Wildlife Crime Unit. Wild European species of animals (including birds) and their eggs are also protected under Offences under the Habitats Regulations 2017. Residents and staff should seek clarification before taking action.</p>
Statutory nuisance	<p>The Environmental Protection Act 1990 defines premises that are in such a state as to be 'prejudicial to health or a nuisance' as a statutory nuisance. Some infestations, such as those of rats, bed bugs, fleas, mice, pharaoh ants and cockroaches can count as a statutory nuisance.</p>

	Local authorities have a duty to investigate potential statutory nuisances, and the Act gives them the power to serve an enforcement notice on the person responsible for the nuisance.
Remedial works	Corrective actions, repairs or modifications to a building or system to fix defects or damage and prevent pests from entering the property.
Communal areas	The internal and external parts of the neighbourhood or building that are shared by residents such as entrances, hallways, stairwells, lifts, pathways, bin stores, drying areas, parking areas, gardens and play areas.

5. Resident responsibilities

5.1 Residents play a key role in preventing and managing pest infestations. It is each resident's responsibility to:

- review their tenancy or lease agreement to understand their responsibilities regarding removing and eradicating any pests or infestations. We will assist them if required.
- report any concerns to us immediately, particularly where the pests are in communal areas. Residents are also encouraged to report the behaviour of other households where they consider that this may be attracting or generating a pest problem. Details of the type of pest, the severity and any suspected entry points should be reported.
- ensure that homes, balconies, gardens and communal areas, particularly bin stores, are kept clean and clear of clutter.
- maintain good hygiene, properly disposing of waste, taking any steps to prevent attracting pests, including refraining from feeding wildlife.
- to seek advice and take appropriate action to deal with any pests or infestations where the responsibility lies with the resident (for example, using ant powder or setting mouse traps).
- cooperate with SW9 CH, our contractors and the Local Authority, where necessary, to resolve issues, this includes proactive communication about the infestation and allowing access for pest control inspections and works to be carried out. If access is refused or delayed, we may take reasonable and proportionate enforcement action.
- undertake any actions advised by SW9 CH or pest control experts. We will take proportionate actions in situations where this does not happen, and the infestation continues or deteriorates.

6. Resident expectations of SW9 CH

6.1 SW9 CH is responsible for managing pest control in accordance with legal, contractual, and health and safety requirements. SW9 CH will:

- maintain the structure of our buildings to prevent pest entry, and for treating infestations that arise due to these defects or were present at the start of their tenancy. Under our managing agent responsibilities, we are also responsible for pest control in communal

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areas.

- SW9 CH will hold a contract with suitably qualified and accredited pest control contractors. The contractors shall carry out the service in accordance with legislation, industry standards and best practice.
- pass on the details of approved contractors that may be able to assist, where the resident is responsible for the pest treatment.
- arrange inspection of the pest infestation as a priority under our repair response times and arrange any follow-up treatment or actions in accordance with the professional advice. Treatments may continue for several months in some cases. We will accommodate for access and treatment where this is required due to the resident's vulnerability or needs. We will give residents notice of visits and keep them updated during pest treatments with treatment plans and safety information.
- recognise that pest infestations can carry stigma, potentially leading to embarrassment, isolation or strained neighbourhood relationships. With this in mind, we will maintain confidentiality and our communication will be sensitive and appropriate. We will take the opportunity to promote awareness and education about preventing pests, working with partner agencies where possible.
- record information about the infestation on our housing management and associated systems, including photographic evidence, before and after reports and any follow-up inspections to confirm eradication.

6.2 SW9 CH will become involved where:

- the tenancy, licence or lease agreement states that SW9 CH is responsible.
- the infestation was proven to be present at the point of letting.
- the infestation is due to a defect in the property's structure, such as a hole that allows pests in. In such cases, SW9 CH would carry out the repair to stop access and the pest eradication.
- the infestation is because of SW9 CH's failure to carry out necessary repairs that led to a pest problem.
- the infestation is in a communal area. Treatment costs will be recovered through service charges.
- there is an infestation in several connected properties.
- there are flats within a block or shared accommodation where the infestation may affect the wellbeing of other residents in the property.
- where the infestation makes the home unsafe to live in and it is a hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).
- the Local Authority has deemed that there is a statutory nuisance which they consider we are responsible for dealing with.

6.3 Our staff will be trained to identify early signs of infestations and to recognise statutory nuisances. Where pest infestations relate to safeguarding or mental health issues, for example hoarding or self-neglect, we will make referrals to the appropriate Safeguarding or Tenancy Support teams to seek support for customers who may have underlying vulnerabilities.

6.4 We will carry out regular visual assessments of SW9 CH managed properties. Officers will report any concerns that make the stock unsafe or untidy. The assessment typically involves:

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- checking communal areas within blocks of flats to check that these are clean and tidy, that there are no personal items or rubbish in these areas that could present a health risk or fire hazard.
- checking bin stores and the communal areas for any fly tipping, rubbish and repairs.
- checking the communal grounds, including grassed areas, pathways, parking areas, garage blocks and drying areas, are in a clean and tidy condition.
- checking the condition of stock during home visits/inspections.

7. Exceptions

7.1 Where SW9 CH is not responsible for dealing with pests, there may be exceptional circumstances where we may consider offering financial or practical support to residents at our discretion. As follows:

- our involvement is in accordance with our Vulnerability and Reasonable Adjustments Policy where consideration will be given to the resident's disability, vulnerability or culture so they are not disadvantaged by SW9 CH's position.
- where there is clear evidence of financial hardship which makes the cost of treatment unaffordable to the resident. Assessment of this would be via the Better-Off Calculator or similar to ensure consistency of approach.
- where there is a risk to the resident's wellbeing or to other households through the pests spreading.
- where the cause of the infestation does not solely rest with the resident. In cases where an infestation is linked to both the resident's use of the property and to a structural defect/identified repair, and it is unclear who is responsible, SW9 CH will carry out the necessary repairs and support the resident to manage the infestation.
- Where responsibility cannot be clearly determined at the outset, SW9 CH will initially investigate and confirm responsibility in writing before any chargeable works commence.

7.2 In these cases, the resident must be willing to positively engage with SW9 CH in addressing the problem, allowing us to carry out remedial works with no inference or refusal of access.

7.3 We recognise that some residents may need extra support to deal with pest infestations. Where this is the case, we will help identify and signpost them to appropriate sources of advice or financial assistance, such as local welfare schemes, charitable organisations or other relevant support networks.

8. Pests in communal areas

8.1 When there is a pest infestation in a communal area, it is the responsibility of SW9 CH to ensure the infestation is managed. Failure to deal effectively with such infestations may present a health risk to resident leading to enforcement action by the Local Authority.

8.2 Keeping communal areas clear and disposing of waste responsibly will help to limit the chances of pest infestation in our residents' homes and in communal areas. We have a zero-tolerance approach on items left in communal areas and we may take enforcement action

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against residents who do not comply. The cost of removing items and the treatment of pests may be recovered through service charges.

8.3 If there is evidence to show that a resident is responsible for causing or encouraging infestations, this may be considered as a tenancy or lease breach. In these scenarios, we may take reasonable and proportionate action against the resident for breach of tenancy/lease, considering the support needs and circumstances of those involved.

9. Local Authority responsibilities

9.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty and legal powers to deal with concerns about pest and infestations. SW9 CH will have a formal information sharing protocol with Local Authorities' Environmental Health teams to ensure timely coordination on multi-property infestations.

9.2 Residents are advised to contact their Local Authority if they consider that SW9 CH has failed to act or there is a dispute over responsibility for the treatment. Should the Local Authority consider the infestation requires their professional intervention, this will generally be coordinated through their Environmental Health department.

9.3 Local Authority powers extend to:

- Taking action to remove the pest or infestation.
- Serving enforcement or abatement notices.
- The right to enter a property, carry out inspections, provide advice and, if necessary, complete works and recover costs from the occupier.
- Coordinating actions with water companies to manage rat infestations in defective drainage systems.

9.4 SW9 CH will comply with any enforcement notice served on them by the Local Authority. SW9 CH will attempt to carry out the require work within the statutory timescales in the notice and keep residents informed.

10. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
SW9 CH Board	Ultimate responsibility for determining and directing SW9 CH's response to pest management.
Head of Customer Services	Responsibility and ownership to develop, implement and maintain the Pest Policy and associated procedures. Responsible for strategic oversight and ensuring the effective delivery of pest management across the organisation.

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Neighbourhood/Repairs Team	The Neighbourhoods Team will be responsible for managing and raising pest control request. Where additional and follow-up works are required, this will be the responsibility of the Repairs Team. Both teams will work together for the delivery of pest management.
Contractors	To complete pest control proofing works and recommend necessary remedial works to prevent further infestations. Provide professional treatment, record visits, advise residents and SW9 CH on follow-ups.

11. Complaints

11.1 Any resident who is dissatisfied with how we have managed their pest control request is able to submit a complaint using our Complaints process. Once our Complaints Policy is complete and if they remain dissatisfied then they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service.

12. Compliance

12.1 We will record all resident contacts and progress updates on our housing management systems. This includes details of vulnerabilities and any reasonable adjustments that have been agreed under our Vulnerability and Reasonable Adjustments Policy. This will allow us to review the services we provide and help us identify whether there are any wider steps that we can take to improve our services.

12.2 SW9 CH will hold contracts with approved pest control contractors, who will ensure the health and safety of our buildings and residents with regards to pest control processes. We will review the performance of our pest control contractors and seek assurance that they are accredited and comply with legislation and guidance.

12.3 Information on pest investigations and treatment will be collected by the approved pest control contractor and monitored by the Head of Customer Services. This will include the following:

- Visit dates
- Pests found
- Treatments/baits used and their location
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health data
- Follow up/minor proofing works
- Recommendations to maintain the site as a pest free environment
- Regular meetings to review performance of the contract, including the cost of works.
- complaints

12.4 Data relating to pest infestations including reports, contractor records, or communications will be handled in accordance with SW9 CH's Data Protection and Privacy Policy.

12.5 Where an Environmental Health Department has served notice on SW9 CH to carry out pest

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control treatments, this work will be monitored and reported under the same process as other statutory notices.

13. Sustainability

- 13.1 At SW9 CH, we recognise the critical importance of sustainability in our operations and services. We are committed to embracing sustainable practices that contribute to environmental protection, social equality, and economic viability.
- 13.2 We will also engage with residents and communities to promote awareness and education about preventing pests/ by integrating these practices into our operations, we aim to create lasting value for our business, our residents, and the broader community, aligning with our long-term commitment to sustainable development.

14. Related documents

- SW9 CH Tenancy Agreement documents
- SW9 CH Lease Agreements
- Lettings Policy and associated procedures
- Tenancy Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure
- Estate Inspection Policy
- Pets Policy
- Fly-Tipping Policy
- Hoarding Policy
- Repairs Policy
- Disrepair Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Pre and Post Treatment Advice information
- Vulnerabilities and Reasonable Adjustments Policy

15. Legislation and regulation

- Public Health Act 1936 & 1961
- Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949
- Landlord and Resident Act 1985
- Section 82, Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Common Law Nuisance and Private Nuisance
- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Regulator of social Housing – Regulatory Framework
- The Complaint Handling Code
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018

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- Wild Mammal Protection Act 1996
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- The Habitats Regulations 2017
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986
- Regulatory of Social Housing Framework for both the Homes and Neighbourhood and Community Standards
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System under Housing Act 2004
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

16. Equality and diversity

16.1 We will apply this policy consistently and fairly and will not discriminate against anyone based on any relevant characteristics, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010.

17. Review

17.1 All policies should be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum, or sooner if there is a specific legislative, regulatory or service requirement or change in guidance, law or practice.

Policy author:	Vanessa Cole, Policy and Performance Officer
Policy owner:	Kellie Carson, Head of Customer Services
Adopted from Sovereign Network Group: y/n	Yes
Review schedule (1, 2 or 3 years):	3 years

Change Record

Date	Reviewed by (name and	Version	Summary of changes
April, 2026	Kellie Carson, Head of Customer Services and SLT.	V1	Review of policy to align with SNG.

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