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PEST MANAGEMENT POLICY

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Protected

Pest Management Policy

Responsible Officer	Group Assistant Director – Operations & Support Services
This policy is applicable to	Karbon Group
Policy version	2.0
Date this version implemented	October 2026
Date of next review	October 2031

Policy Statement

This Pest Management Policy explains how Karbon Homes Group (the Group) manages pest issues and how responsibility is determined. We will investigate reports of pest infestations and take appropriate action where they are linked to defects in the property, communal areas, or other matters for which we are responsible. This may include arranging treatment, carrying out repairs, or taking steps to prevent recurrence. We may also take action where multiple homes are affected, where there are significant health and safety risks, or where customers require additional support.

Customers also play an important role in preventing and managing pest issues. This includes keeping homes and gardens reasonably clean, storing food and waste appropriately, and taking reasonable steps to avoid conditions that may attract pests. Where infestations are caused by customer actions or omissions, costs may be recharged and further action taken where necessary. We are committed to treating all customers fairly, complying with our obligations under Awaab's Law, and providing additional support where needed. Overall, this policy aims to maintain safe, healthy and pest-free homes through a shared responsibility between the Group and its customers.

Risk the policy is designed to control

Health and Safety; Governance and Compliance; Customer Service and Satisfaction.

Key performance measures

Number of live pest cases by severity category.
Pest management budget expenditure against approved budget.
Compliance with Awaab's Law Phase 2 timescales

Definitions

1. Awaab's Law - The statutory requirements introduced through the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and associated regulations, which require social landlords to investigate and address prescribed hazards within defined timescales.
2. Emergency Hazard- A hazard that presents an imminent and serious risk to the health or safety of occupiers and requires investigation and action within 24 hours.
3.Significant Hazard - A hazard that presents a significant risk to the health or safety of occupiers and falls within the scope of the Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations.
4. Proofing Works - Works undertaken to prevent pests accessing or inhabiting a property, including sealing entry points, repairing defects and improving building fabric.

Policy Detail

1.0 Purpose of policy

1.1 This policy sets out the Group's approach to dealing with reports of pests in our properties.

2.0 Objectives

1. To define the responsibilities of the Group and its customers in relation to pest management.
2. To ensure a consistent and proportionate approach to managing pest issues.
3. To maintain safe and healthy homes and communities in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

3.0 Policy detail

3.1 The Group adopts a proactive and risk-based approach to pest management. We aim to prevent infestations where possible and take timely action where pest issues are reported.

3.2 Reports of pests will be assessed and responded to according to the nature of the infestation, the potential risk to health and safety, and the circumstances of those affected. Priority will be given to cases involving significant risks to health, vulnerable customers, widespread infestations or where there is potential non-compliance with legal or regulatory requirements.

3.3 Responsibility for managing pest issues will be determined by the underlying cause of the infestation, including whether it arises from property defects, environmental conditions, customer actions, or a combination of factors.

3.4 We will communicate clearly with customers throughout the process, ensuring they understand the outcome of inspections, any actions required, and the responsibilities of both the Group and the customer. We recognise that pest infestations can cause distress and will seek to respond in a fair, proportionate and empathetic manner. Where appropriate, we will take action to address not only the infestation itself but also the underlying causes, helping to reduce the risk of recurrence and support safe, healthy and sustainable homes and communities.

3.5 The Group will meet its responsibilities under relevant legislation, regulation and recognised good practice, including:

- Housing Act 2004 and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards

Pest infestations may constitute a health and safety hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System where they present a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of customers.

3.6 Awaab's Law and Hazards in Social Housing

The Group recognises the strengthened regulatory expectations introduced through Awaab's Law and the Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations. Pest infestations may constitute a prescribed hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and therefore require investigation and appropriate action.

In line with these expectations, the Group will:

- Investigate reported pest infestations in accordance with the requirements of Awaab's Law and the Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations, including any applicable statutory timescales for investigation, communication of findings and completion of works.
- Assess the potential risk to health and safety.
- Take action to remove or mitigate identified hazards where we are responsible.
- Address underlying property-related causes where required.
- Maintain appropriate records of reports, inspections, decisions and actions taken.

Timescales are:

1. Emergency hazards will be investigated and any immediate safety action taken within 24 hours of the Group becoming aware of the issue.
2. Significant hazards will be investigated within 10 working days of the Group becoming aware of the issue.
3. Written findings from the investigation will be provided to the customer within 3 working days of the investigation being completed.
4. Remedial works required to address a significant hazard, where the Group is responsible, will be commenced within 5 working days of the investigation being completed.
5. Preventative works required to reduce the risk of recurrence will be commenced within 5 working days of the investigation being completed, where applicable.

3.7 The Group’s Responsibilities

The Group is responsible for maintaining the structure and exterior of our properties and managing communal areas. Where a pest infestation is caused by property defects, disrepair, drainage issues, structural defects, communal areas, or other matters for which the Group is responsible, we will investigate and take appropriate action. This may include treatment, repairs, proofing works or environmental improvements. Where infestations affect multiple properties, communal areas or wider estates, the Group may coordinate a wider response where appropriate. Please see appendix 1 for more information.

3.8 Customer Responsibilities

Customers, as a minimum, are responsible for keeping their homes, gardens and external areas reasonably clean and free from conditions that may encourage pest activity. Customers are expected to:

- Comply with the terms of their tenancy agreement, including obligations relating to cleanliness, waste management, access and property condition.
- Dispose of household waste appropriately.
- Report pest infestations promptly.
- Allow reasonable access for inspections and works.
- Take reasonable steps to prevent infestations within their home.
- Arrange and pay for pest treatment where an infestation has been found, following investigation, to arise primarily from customer actions, omissions or circumstances for which the customer is responsible.

Examples of circumstances where responsibility may rest with the customer include, but are not limited to, excessive waste accumulation, hoarding behaviours, failure to maintain reasonable standards of cleanliness, failure to dispose of refuse appropriately, feeding wildlife, failure to report infestations promptly, or other actions or omissions that contribute to pest activity. Each case will be assessed on its individual merits.

3.9 Shared Responsibilities

In some circumstances, responsibility may be shared between the Group and the customer. In such cases, we will take a coordinated and proportionate approach and explain the responsibilities of each party.

3.10 In exceptional circumstances, where responsibility would normally rest with the customer, the Group may exercise discretion to provide support where severe financial hardship, customer vulnerability, safeguarding concerns, disability, health needs or tenancy sustainment risks are identified. This may include arranging treatment, coordinating support from partner agencies or undertaking works where necessary to mitigate an identified hazard.

3.11 Certain pest infestations may present an increased risk to health, safety or tenancy sustainment and will require urgent assessment. This may include infestations involving rats within living accommodation, significant mouse or cockroach infestations, infestations linked to damp, mould, leaks or drainage defects, cases affecting vulnerable customers or young children, infestations spreading between properties, food contamination risks, repeated reports of the same infestation, or infestations within supported housing or extra care schemes. Such cases will be prioritised for assessment and appropriate action.

3.12 The Group will assess all reports of pests on their individual merits, taking account of the risk to health and safety, customer vulnerability, the underlying cause of the infestation, and our legal and regulatory responsibilities. The specific response required will depend on the type of pest, the circumstances of the case and whether responsibility rests with the Group, the customer or another agency. Further guidance on the Group's typical approach to common pest infestations, nuisance species and protected species is set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

3.13 In determining responsibility, the Group will undertake a proportionate investigation which may include property inspections, review of repair history, assessment of building defects, consideration of environmental factors, discussions with customers, review of photographs and pest control reports, and consultation with specialist contractors where appropriate.

3.14 Where an infestation presents a significant health and safety risk, the Group reserves the right to arrange treatment or undertake works immediately, regardless of responsibility, in order to discharge its legal and regulatory obligations. Where investigation subsequently determines responsibility rests with the customer, reasonable costs may be recovered in accordance with the Rechargeable Repairs Policy and tenancy agreement.

3.15 Where responsibility for an infestation is disputed, the Group may seek advice from a suitably qualified pest control contractor, environmental health professional or other specialist. The Group's decision will be based on the available evidence, professional advice and relevant legal obligations. Any recharge decisions will be made in accordance with the Rechargeable Repairs Policy and tenancy agreement.

3.16 Where a pest infestation presents a significant risk to health and safety, including circumstances falling within the scope of Awaab's Law, the Group will consider whether temporary rehousing is required while investigations, treatment or remedial works are completed. Any such arrangements will be managed in accordance with the Group's Decant Policy and associated procedures.

3.17 Where a customer fails to address behaviour or conditions that cause or contribute to a pest infestation, the Group may take appropriate enforcement action, including legal action and, in exceptional cases, possession proceedings. Where the Group incurs costs in addressing issues that are the customer’s responsibility, these may be recharged in accordance with the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

4.0 Customer Vulnerabilities

4.1 This policy is applied in line with our Customers in Vulnerable Circumstances Policy. We want people to be treated fairly, have equality of opportunities, freedom, respect, and access to our services.

4.2 We will support people in vulnerable circumstances to help us deliver this service. We will work alongside external agencies such as social services, the police and fire services and other appropriate agencies to help and support people in vulnerable circumstances and to ensure we meet our statutory and regulatory requirements as a social landlord.

4.3 Policies and key information are made available on our website.

5.0 Monitoring and Review

5.1 The Group Assistant Director – Operations & Support Services is responsible for ensuring this policy is communicated and made available to relevant colleagues. Managers are responsible for ensuring that colleagues understand their responsibilities under the policy and receive any training, guidance or instruction necessary to carry out their duties.

5.2 The Group Assistant Director – Operations & Support Services is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and ensuring compliance with relevant legislative, regulatory and organisational requirements.

5.3 Performance information relating to pest management will be monitored through routine operational and management reporting arrangements. This policy will be reviewed at least every five years, with the next scheduled review due in October 2031. A review may be undertaken sooner where there are significant changes to legislation, regulation, regulatory expectations, case law, organisational structure, operational practice or recognised good practice, or where monitoring identifies that changes to the policy are required. The review process will involve relevant operational teams and other stakeholders as appropriate to ensure the policy remains effective, proportionate and up to date.

6.0 Equality and Diversity

6.1 This policy is applied in line with our Inclusion and Belonging Policy. This includes the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, Workers Protection Act 2023 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

6.2 At the Karbon Group we aim to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations and define the nine protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

6.3 If you would like this or any other policies in a different language or format please contact inclusion@karbonhomes.co.uk.

7.0 Data Protection and Privacy

7.1 We have a clear policy on data protection and sharing data with other partners/third parties under the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and other associated legislation. This is clearly set out in the Data Protection Policy for the Karbon Group which, along with its associated procedures, must be followed throughout the operation of this policy.

Appendix 1

The table below provides guidance on how the Group will typically respond to different types of pest infestations and nuisance species. It is intended to support consistent decision-making and should be read alongside the principles set out in this policy. Individual cases will be assessed on their own merits and may require a different approach depending on the circumstances.

The Group adopts a risk-based approach, taking account of health and safety risks, vulnerability, potential property damage, legal obligations and the underlying cause of the infestation.

Responsibility will be determined by whether the infestation arises from property defects, communal areas, estate conditions, landlord-controlled spaces or customer actions.

The Group will generally be responsible where an infestation is found to arise from:

- Structural defects, disrepair, or other defects for which the Group is responsible.
- Defective drainage systems, drains, pipework, or other landlord-maintained infrastructure.
- Communal areas, shared facilities, or landlord-controlled spaces.
- Landlord-controlled land, buildings, or estate features.
- Pathways, service voids, communal risers, roof spaces, or other building elements under the Group's control that contribute to an infestation affecting multiple homes.

The Group will not generally be responsible where an infestation is found to arise solely from:

- Circumstances within an individual customer's home where no property defect or landlord responsibility exists.
- Household conditions, including waste management, food storage, housekeeping, or other matters for which the customer is responsible.
- Actions or omissions of the customer, members of their household, visitors, or pets.
- Neighbouring land, properties, or environmental factors beyond the Group's ownership or control.

Pest / Species	Typical Treatment Approach
Rats	Investigation, treatment and proofing based on the source and level of risk.
Mice	Investigation of access points, treatment and proofing works where required.
Cockroaches	Risk-based treatment and investigation of the extent and underlying cause of the infestation.
Bed bugs	Advice and treatment based on the circumstances, level of risk and responsibility.
Fleas	Investigation and proportionate treatment where appropriate.
Ants	Proportionate response based on the scale, cause and impact of the infestation.
Wasps and hornets	Risk-based assessment and treatment where the nest presents a health and safety risk.
Honey bees	Specialist assessment, with relocation preferred wherever reasonably practicable.

Bumble bees	Generally left undisturbed unless they present a significant health and safety risk.
Bird mites	Investigation and treatment, including consideration of any building-related causes.
Pigeons and gulls	Proportionate and lawful measures where they present a significant health and safety risk or cause damage to Group-owned property.
Squirrels	Investigation, building protection and proofing where they enter properties or cause damage.
Foxes	Preventative estate management measures, particularly where activity is linked to waste or harbourage.
Moles	Risk-based intervention where activity presents a health and safety risk on managed land.
Silverfish	Investigation of potential links to damp, leaks, mould or disrepair, with treatment where appropriate.
Stored product insects	Advice and proportionate treatment based on the source and circumstances.
Daddy long legs	Advice and guidance will normally be provided, with intervention considered only in exceptional circumstances.
Protected species	Specialist advice will be obtained before any action is taken, in accordance with relevant wildlife legislation. See Appendix 2

Appendix 2: Protected Species and Pollinators

Where a protected species is identified or suspected, Karbon Homes will comply with all relevant wildlife legislation and seek advice from an appropriately qualified specialist, licensed contractor or statutory body before any work is undertaken. Pollinators and other beneficial species will be protected wherever reasonably practicable, with relocation preferred to eradication.

Species / Situation	**Karbon Group Typical Approach**
Honey bee swarm on Karbon-owned land	Monitor and arrange relocation by a qualified beekeeper where necessary.
Honey bees within a building structure	Specialist assessment and relocation where reasonably practicable.
Bumble bee nests in planting beds or open spaces	Usually left undisturbed.
Bees posing an immediate risk at schools, sheltered schemes or main entrances	Urgent assessment and risk-based intervention.
Bats (all UK species)	Protected by law. Karbon Homes will seek specialist advice and will not disturb, remove or treat bats without appropriate licences and permissions.
Badgers	Protected by law. Specialist advice must be obtained before any action is taken.
Otters	Protected by law. Specialist advice must be obtained before any action is taken.
Dormice	Protected by law. Specialist advice must be obtained before any action is taken.

Red Squirrels	Protected by law. Specialist advice must be obtained before any action is taken.
Wild Birds, Nests and Eggs	Protected by law. Active nests must not be damaged, destroyed or disturbed.
Great Crested Newts	Protected by law. Specialist advice must be obtained before any action is taken.
Common Lizards, Slow Worms, Grass Snakes and Adders	Protected by law. Specialist advice must be obtained before any action is taken.