We have agreed policy and practice covering a wide range of issues below. If your question is not covered please contact us on the details below.

**Why are trees so important?**

Trees improve the environment and contribute to improving people's health. They have the following benefits:

- dust and pollution are filtered from the air
- carbon dioxide is converted to oxygen to increase local air quality
- the nature conservation value of an area is increased
- displays of colour are produced throughout the year.

**How regularly are trees inspected, and why is this?**

We inspect all of our 33,000 street trees through a ward-by-ward inspection programme. Wards in the north of the borough are inspected every three years and those in the south every five years. This difference is due to soil types, subsidence risks and average sizes of front gardens. A copy of the ward schedule can be downloaded below. All tree work is carried out according to BS3998:1989, the British standard recommendation.
I live in the south of the borough and there are trees quite close to the houses - is five years too long between inspections?

There will be local variations to this programme where exceptional circumstances warrant it. However, these local variations will be dependent on resources being available.

**In what circumstances will trees be removed?**

A tree will only be removed if it is dead or dying, dangerous, diseased or part of a planning requirement for a major street improvement. Consideration will also be given to remove a tree if it is proven to be the cause of structural subsidence to buildings.

**There are trees in my road that have shoots growing from their bases - what will you do about this?**

We have an annual programme to remove basal growth. This programme commences in July of each year and runs through until September.

**Why has a tree that is not causing a problem been pruned back so hard?**

Tree pruning is done to prevent problems rather than solve ones that have already arisen. The aim is to prune trees back so that no further work will be necessary until the next cycle. In addition, the type of pruning that is carried out is often dictated by the pruning history to the tree. For example, if a tree has been previously always been pollarded (pollarding is a very heavy pruning) then the resulting regrowth means that often the only pruning that can take place again is further pollarding.

**What will the council do about a tree that is causing me a problem?**

We will not carry out tree maintenance outside of the regular three and five-year preventative maintenance programme unless it poses a genuine threat to property or people. A copy of the ward schedule can be downloaded below. However we may carry out responsive work to
trees that bears large fruit such as plums and apple pears. For problems with leaves, small fruit or excessive bird droppings then please contact the council's street cleansing service on the details below.

What should I do if I think a street tree is damaging the structure of my property?

Contact your home insurance company, they will undertake an inspection and contact us on your behalf.

What if someone has deliberately damaged or destroyed a street tree?

We will investigate and take legal action against anyone who is found to have damaged or destroyed a street tree.

Will you replace a tree that has been removed?

A tree removed due to subsidence will normally not be replaced at the same location. However if it was removed due to it being diseased then we would look into planting a replacement.

I live in a council house with a tree outside - who is responsible for it?

If the tree is located in your garden then it will be your responsibility to maintain it. Contact your tenancy officer for further advice in the first instance. However, if the tree is on communal land then it will be dealt with by us please contact us on the number below.

Who is responsible for trees on school property?

Each school is responsible for the trees on its own land; problems with these trees should be directed to the school. Advice and assistance is available upon request.

How are trees in parks managed and maintained?

Trees in parks are often the larger varieties and wherever possible will be allowed to grow to their full size at maturity. We inspect our parks
trees once every five years, but typically these trees require less maintenance than street trees.

**Can I arrange for a memorial tree to be planted to remember a friend or member of my family who has passed away?**

There are some opportunities to pay for a memorial tree to be planted as long as this is in line with overall tree management plans. However, we do not encourage memorial plaques on trees as they are vulnerable to being damaged. Please contact the Trees and Woodlands Section for more information about this service.

**How are woodland trees managed and maintained?**

We have active management plans in place for most of our woodlands. Croydon is proud to have achieved the high standards of woodland management required to receive Forestry Stewardship Council accreditation and to meet the UKWAS (UK Woodland Assurance Standard) standard. Our proactive work involves seeking to ensure that there is a large degree of natural diversity, and this is achieved by selectively removing certain trees and introducing new species as necessary.

Woodlands without a proactive management plan are maintained by carrying out a five-year inspection and deal reactively to any problems or health and safety concerns that are raised with us.

**How do friends groups help manage Croydon's woodland?**

Friends groups have made significant steps in restoring the borough's woods with financial support from the English Woodland Grant system. Groups participate in active forestry work, and volunteers will help with coppicing, path laying, charcoal making, etc. We are very keen for new friends groups to be established.

**What can I do about a problem I have with a tree in my garden or on neighbouring private land?**

Trees on private land are the responsibility of the owner however we can offer general advice. Before you start any work contact us to check whether there is a tree protection order in place. This may restrict what action can be taken.
Under common law if part of a neighbouring tree is overhanging your property then assuming it is not protected you can cut it back to the boundary, but you must offer to return anything you have removed to the owner.

**Can dogs damage trees?**

Letting dogs bite or scratch the bark from trees often leads to severe tree damage or death. If you see this type of activity please report it immediately to the Trees and Woodlands Section on the details below.