

# Improvements and Alterations

You have the right to make improvements to your home, but any work other than normal internal decoration must have our written permission before you start. We are likely to grant permission unless there is a very good reason for us not to, such as, the improvement would be unsafe, it would reduce the value of the property, or it would cost the council more to maintain. Any ongoing repairs and maintenance of the alteration or improvement will become your responsibility, once approved.

Please note that if the work is not done by a qualified tradesperson the work may cause damage to the property, where you could be recharged to make good.

Home improvements include minor works such as fitting laminate floors and replacing internal doors.

If you make an alteration or improvement without our permission or it does not comply with building and/or planning regulations, we may ask you to restore the property back to its original condition either during your tenancy or at the end of the tenancy, at your own cost. If we have to undertake any work as a result of your alteration or improvement we will recharge you for the costs involved. We can also take legal action against you for the breach of your Tenancy Agreement.

**You MUST wait until you receive the conditions of the consent before you start the work.**

## IMPROVING OR ALTERING YOUR PROPERTY - GETTING PERMISSION

You may carry out your own improvements but you must obtain our permission first. To obtain our permission you should contact your local Housing Office, giving full details of what you plan to do.

This is called 'Landlord's Consent' and the rules guiding how we deal with such requests are set out in law. This is to make sure that the work you carry out is completed to the highest standard, is safe and where necessary, complies with Building and Planning Regulations.

## WHAT TYPE OF WORK DO YOU NEED CONSENT FOR?

This list is an example of the type of work you need consent for, but it is not exhaustive, for further information please contact your Local Housing Office.

- Fitting laminate flooring or any form of fixed flooring such as ceramic tiles. Please be aware that if the flooring needs to be lifted so that we can make repairs, unless there are exceptional circumstances you will be expected to do this. However, where we are able to assist we will not be held liable for any damage that may occur to the floor during the repair.
- Installing a shower.
- Replacing any fixtures and fittings.
- Fitting a new kitchen or bathroom.
- Replacing internal doors, external doors and windows.
- Replacing light fittings or fitting external lights.
- Fitting a fire surround.
- Any addition or alteration connected with the provision of services including heating, lighting and water services.

- Decorative finishes such as artex or polystyrene products.
- Alterations to internal/external walls.
- Fitting satellite dishes and TV aerials.
- Outdoor work - such as building garden sheds, greenhouses, garages, decking, patios, paths, gates, fencing, steps hardstanding, driveways, porches, outside taps or external decoration.

## **COMMUNAL AREAS**

Improvements and alterations to communal areas are considered on a case-by-case basis. Please seek further advice from your local Housing Office before undertaking any work or placing any items within these areas.

## **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

Once we've received your request a visit may be required to discuss the proposal with you. If the work affects your neighbours you will have to contact them to make sure they have no objections. You will also be requested to follow any required guidance or conditions indicated as part of the landlord's consent.

If your improvements need Planning or Building Regulation approval you will have to apply for these yourself before you can proceed. There may be a cost to this which is payable by you. When you've done this you will have to provide the Housing Office with copies before we can give permission for you to go ahead.

We will categorise the improvement in line with our current policy and procedure, ensure your plans comply with Building and/or Planning Regulations and inform you as quickly as possible if you can proceed.

## **WHY DO YOU NEED OUR PERMISSION?**

We have to make sure that the alterations or improvements you carry out:

- Are safe
- Do not devalue the property
- Comply with building and/or planning regulations
- Do not cause problems or interfere with the services provided to other tenants
- Do not make your property more expensive to maintain

If you carry out improvements like installing a new kitchen you could be eligible for compensation if you later leave the property.

**IF YOU'RE GOING TO D.I.Y YOU MUST BE ABLE TO REPAIR AND MAINTAIN THIS THROUGHOUT YOUR TENANCY. IF YOU FAIL TO DO SO YOU COULD BE ASKED TO REMOVE IT AND REINSTATE THE PROPERTY BACK TO IT'S ORIGINAL CONDITION. THE COUNCIL HAS NO OBLIGATION TO MAINTAIN WORK WHICH HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT WITHOUT PERMISSION.**

**ALWAYS ASK FOR LANDLORD'S CONSENT BEFORE YOU MAKE ANY ALTERATIONS OR IMPROVEMENTS.**