



Tenant Alterations & Improvement Policy

Last Updated August 2023

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1.0 Alterations and Improvement Policy overview

This policy is managed and adhered to by the housing service. This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with government legislation, guidance

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1.1 Introduction

Under the Landlord & tenant Act 1927 and the Housing Act 1985, council tenants are entitled to make alterations and improvements to their home if they have gained written consent from their landlord.

As a landlord, it is important that we are aware of any plans for alterations and improvements so we can ensure that they are carried out in a way which considers the impact to the property and neighbourhood, as well as the health and safety of people living in or visiting the property.

Before carrying out any works you must obtain our written permission. To do this you can put in a request to carry out an alteration or an improvement to your home via our website [here](#).

This policy is relevant to all Council Tenants and Leaseholders.

The Council is required to respond to any local or national restrictions imposed by central government. The administration of this and other Council policies could, therefore, be impacted by a pandemic or other emergency for the period that such restrictions are in operation.

1.2 Aim(s) of the policy:

The aims of this policy are to;

- Set out our approach to granting permission for tenant alterations and improvements;
- Ensure there are clear guidelines for staff, tenants and leaseholders; and
- Ensure alterations and improvements are carried out appropriately, considering environmental impact as well as health and safety requirements.

1.3 Links to Council's corporate aims:

This policy supports the council's corporate priorities which are set out in ['Delivering for Dacorum – Corporate Plan 2015-2020'](#).

1.4 Equality and diversity

The council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services and has procedures in place to ensure that all Applicants and Tenants are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

1.5 Policy Statement(s)

Tenants must request written permission from the housing service before they start any proposed alterations or improvements (see 2.1).

We reserve the right to refuse permission for an alteration or improvement if we believe it is reasonable to do so (see 2.2).

We may offer compensation for improvements carried out by the tenant during the length of their tenancy (see 2.3).

Failure to comply with this policy may result in tenants being charged for any incurring costs to rectify works (see 2.4).

Leaseholders are required to request permission for any structural works or changes to the external appearance of the property (see 2.5).

2.0 Tenant alterations policy detail



2.1 Granting permission

A tenant who is planning on carrying out an alteration or an improvement to their home must [request permission](#) from the council prior to starting the works. Both secure and flexible tenants are able to carry out improvement or alteration works to their home as long as appropriate permission has been requested and granted.

You will need our written permission before erecting, removing or installing (this list is not exhaustive):

- Walls, windows, doors and floors;
- Electrical sockets / fittings;
- Central heating and fireplaces;
- Kitchen units;
- Garages, sheds, greenhouses and outhouses;
- Fences;
- Water meters, bathroom fixtures and showers;
- Satellite dishes and TV aerials;
- Hardstanding or dropped kerbs; and
- Conservatories, extensions, porches or loft conversions.

Tenants will need to request permission for any and all improvement or alteration works they plan to carry out within their home.

In some cases, an alteration or improvement will require building regulations or planning permission. If this is the case, the tenant or leaseholder will be responsible for obtaining these and will need to provide us with the original copies before approval can be given for works to start. An asbestos survey may also need to be carried out before any works take place.

When carrying out alteration and improvement works to their homes tenants must use a qualified contractor. Part of the request for permission will include the need to provide details of who is intending to carry out the work.

Alterations could lead to a re-assessment/grading of your property which could result in increases in rent (e.g. if there is an increase in bedroom spaces)

2.2 Refusing permission

In some cases we may need to refuse permission for an alteration or an improvement. We will refuse permission where:

- The proposed works are considered to be detrimental to the structure and/or long-term maintenance of the property;
- There would be any additional cost to the Council;
- The works may decrease the overall value of the property;
- The proposal will breach planning, building regulations or any other relevant legislation;
- The environmental impact of the proposal is considered to be detrimental to the surrounding area; or
- The works will impact the health and safety of those living in or visiting the property or block.

Where permission has been refused, the tenant may submit revised proposals for consideration.

Tenants currently within the introductory period of their tenancy are not permitted to carry out improvement or alteration works to their property.

2.3 Compensation

Under the Housing Act 1985, tenants have the right to compensation for any improvements they make to their property. Compensation will be offered when the tenancy comes to an end. The amount of compensation offered will depend on:

- The net addition of value added to the property as a result of the improvement;
- The reasonable cost of carrying out the improvement; and
- The intention of the council regarding future plans for the property.

2.0 Tenant alterations policy detail



The Council operates two schemes for reimbursing tenants for improvements they have undertaken. Compensation can be considered under either the Local Authorities (Compensation for improvements) Regulations 1994 or Section 100 of the 1985 Housing Act, or a combination of the two. Section 100 of the 1985 Housing Act is used where the improvement was undertaken prior to 1 April 1994 or the item of improvement is not included in the statutory scheme.

Any compensation offered will, in the first instance, be used to pay any outstanding debt owed to the council.

2.4 Failure to comply

A tenant who does not apply for permission prior to carrying out alteration or improvement works on their property will have to do so retrospectively.

If the tenants request was previously refused but they proceeded anyway, or if it is evident that the works would not have gained permission from the council had it been requested, the tenant will be required to meet the costs of re-instating the property to its original condition, or tenancy breach action will be taken.

If permission is granted but on inspection it is identified that the works have not been carried out to meet agreed conditions, the tenant will be required to carry out further work to rectify this.

In each of the above cases we will allocate the tenant a reasonable timescale to comply with our instructions. Failure to do so will result in legal enforcement action being taken against the tenant or leaseholder of which they will be liable for the costs.

2.5 Leaseholders

As a leaseholder, you will need to request permission and gain our consent for any structural alterations (internal or external) or changes to the external appearance of your property e.g. replacement windows or front door. You do not need to ask us for permission to install new kitchen units or bathroom suites unless the changes affect the electrical supply or water supply to other residents. Leaseholders will need to ask permission for any works involving boiler replacements or relocation of the boiler.

3.0

Links to other corporate documents

This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and strategies:

- Tenants Handbook
- Tenancy Agreement
- Leased Agreements & Covenants

4.0

Legislation

The legislation listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

- Landlord & Tenant Act 1927
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Housing Act 1985
- Local Authorities (Compensation & improvements) Regulations 1994
- Equalities Act 2010