

Alterations & Improvements Policy

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Implemented by	Property Services Manager
Approval Body	Management Committee
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1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

We welcome tenants and sharing owners undertaking alterations and improvements to their homes and this policy will support tenants in their endeavours as much as possible. Our Property Services staff are available for advice and can offer practical information with regard to tenants and sharing owners plans and the process of applying for permission.

Our Tenancy Agreement and Occupancy Agreement detail the right of tenants and sharing owners to apply for permission to carry out an alteration or improvement. They also provide information on the right of a tenant to claim compensation for a 'qualifying improvement', where applicable.

In general an alteration can be described as replacing a fixture or fitting with one of a similar standard; removing an existing fixture or fitting; or removing or replacing any of the existing fabric of the building or its grounds.

An improvement can be described as replacing a fixture or fitting with one that, in our opinion, is of a higher standard; installing a new feature within the property where there wasn't one before; or extending the property in some way.

THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER

The Scottish Government's Social Housing Charter came into force in April 2012. The Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that tenants can expect from social landlords, in terms of the quality and value for money of the services they receive, the standard of their homes, and opportunities for communication and participation in the decisions that affect them.

The relevant standards and outcomes for the Tenant Alteration and Improvement Policy are:

Outcome 1: Equalities

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:

Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognized, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

Outcome 2: Communication

Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

Outcome 5: Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements

Tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.

Outcome 11: Tenancy Sustainment

Social landlords ensure that:

Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.

2. LINK TO VALUES

This Policy will allow us to work with and support our tenants and sharing owners **Fairly** and in **Partnership**, while **Listening** to their requests.

3. INFORMATION

We will publish and make readily available clear, comprehensive information about our procedures for applying for permission to carry out an alteration or improvement, and about our standards and conditions relating to specific categories of work.

In accordance with our Equalities policy, we will work with tenants and sharing owners if they require assistance including information being made available in alternative forms and in other languages as required.

4. GRANTING OR REFUSING PERMISSION

Granting permission

Granting of permission will be subject to certain conditions being met, some of which will be statutory, including granting of planning permission and/or building warrant as well providing the Completion Certificate. These are the responsibility of the tenant. Other conditions that require to be met will be imposed by ourselves and will include carrying out work to a high standard and, where applicable, to a Prospect specification; making good any damage caused to property in the course of the works; maintaining the alteration or improvement throughout its lifetime and to reinstate the property to its former condition at the end of the tenancy, if required. Prospect may also apply additional conditions or restrictions to ensure the works are undertaken to the required standard and/or limit the aesthetic or environmental impact.

Depending upon the type of improvement or alteration there may be compensation due to tenant or sharing owner and the end of their tenancy or occupation of the property and we will ensure that this information is made available.

Refusing permission

Sometimes permission will be refused. Generally, this will be where the proposed works are considered to be detrimental to the structure and/or long-term maintenance of the property; where the proposal has been refused statutory permission; and where the likely aesthetic or environmental impact will be detrimental. Proposals can however be revised and re-submitted at any time.

5. TENANTS WHO DO NOT APPLY, OR FAIL TO MEET STANDARDS

Where permission has been given but unfortunately the work does not meet the agreed standards or conditions the tenant or sharing owner shall be required to undertake further work to meet those agreed standards, within a reasonable time period. If the work is not undertaken, as agreed, then the tenant or sharing owner shall be required to reinstate the property to its original condition.

Where permission has not been given and the tenant or sharing owner has undertaken work, retrospective permission will have to be applied for. If permission is subsequently not received, then the tenant or sharing owner shall be required to reinstate the property to its original condition, within a reasonable time period.

Where permission has been refused, but the work has been undertaken anyway will be required to reinstate the property to its original condition within a reasonable time period.

In situations where we believe the safety and integrity of the structure or the health and safety of residents, visitors or members of the public are at risk, we will arrange as a matter

of urgency, the required work to be carried out. The costs of the work and any other associated costs may be charged to the tenant.

6. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Tenants and sharing owners have the right of appeal with regard to decisions taken and also have the right to make a complaint at any stage of the process if they are not satisfied.

7. PROSPECT EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT RECORD

Title of policy/ practice/ strategy	Tenant Alterations and Improvements
Department	Property Services
Who is involved in the EQIA	Neil Munro
Date completed	27 th November 2024

Stage 1: Screening Record

What is the main purpose of the policy?

The aim of the Alterations and Improvements Policy is to ensure a clear understanding of what an alteration and improvement is and considerations to be taken when granting, refusing or dealing with retrospective permission being sought. This policy contributes to the following outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter:

- Equalities
- Communication
- Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements
- Tenancy Sustainment

Who will the policy benefit and how?

This policy impacts on all of our tenants and sharing owners as it outlines how tenants may alter or improve their home or garden and may also impact surrounding properties and tenants.

For each equality group, does or could the policy have a negative impact?

Protected characteristic	Negative	Positive/no impact	Don't know
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief (including no belief)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are there any potential barriers to implementing the policy?

Failure to consider our tenants and their needs or characteristics.

	Yes	No
Is a full EQIA required?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

An Equality Impact Assessment is required as the Alteration and Improvements Policy has the potential to impact all of our tenants and sharing owners.

Stage 2: Assessing the impacts

Considering Prospect's Equalities Data and Community Profile summaries, how might the policy impact on people who share protected characteristics? Include both positive and negative impacts.

Protected Characteristic	Description of Impact
Age	A proportion of our tenants are elderly. We will offer help and advice with regard to alterations and improvements, if requested. We will undertake individual tenant visits to further discuss proposed works, if requested. We will offer help and advice with regard to alterations and improvements, if requested
Disability	We always offer help and advice with regard to Stage 3 adaptations and regularly meet both tenant and Occupational therapist when dealing with Stage 3 (medical adaptations). We also offer help and advice with regard to other alterations and improvements and undertake individual tenant visits to further explain proposed works, when requested.
Gender reassignment	None identified.
Marriage & civil partnership	None identified.
Pregnancy & maternity	None identified.
Race	Tenant may require a translation service and help and advise with regard to planning and building regulations.
Religion or belief (including no belief)	None identified.
Sex	None identified.
Sexual orientation	None identified.

How does the policy promote equality of opportunity?

This Policy recognises that different groups have unique needs we will, as far as possible, provide tailored support to meet those needs.

How does the policy promote good relations?

By taking a positive approach to alterations and improvements tenants can be assured that we will support them in their request, and we will be fully transparent in our decision making and appeal process.

Stage 3: Decision making and monitoring

Identifying and establishing any required mitigating action

Does the assessment show a potential for differential impact on any group(s)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is there potential for unlawful direct or indirect discrimination?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

What arrangements could be implemented to reduce or mitigate any potential adverse or negative impacts identified?

Tenants and sharing owners are encouraged to make contact to discuss the potential work before undertaking any to seek guidance and clarification should they require it.

Describing how Equality Impact analysis has shaped the policy making process

We have considered the protected characteristics of our tenants and sharing owners and identified relevant issues and considerations.

Monitoring and Review

No monitoring required. The policy and EQIA will be reviewed in three years.

Stage 4 - Authorisation of EQIA

Please confirm that:

- ◆ This Equality Impact Assessment has informed the development of this policy:

Yes No

- ◆ Opportunities to promote equality in respect of age, disability, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race and religion or belief have been considered, i.e.:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation
- Removing or minimising any barriers and/or disadvantages
- Taking steps which assist with promoting equality and meeting people's different needs
- Encouraging participation (e.g., in public life)
- Fostering good relations, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding

Yes No

Declaration

I am satisfied with the equality impact assessment that has been undertaken for the Tenant Alterations & Improvements Policy.

Name: Neil Munro

Position: Property Services Manager

Authorisation date: 27 November 2024