

## TENANT ALTERATIONS + IMPROVEMENTS GUIDANCE



If you wish to carry out any work in your home that would be described as an alteration or improvement, **please read this leaflet BEFORE you start any work.**

If you want to:

- alter, improve or enlarge the house, fittings or fixtures;
- add new fittings or fixtures (for example kitchen or bathroom installations, central heating or other fixed heaters, double glazing, or any kind of external aerial or satellite dish);
- put up a garage, vehicle runway, shed, pigeon loft, greenhouse, fence, wall, dog run, hot tub or any other structure;
- decorate the outside of the house;
- lay any other form of flooring other than carpet or linoleum.

**You must also first get our written permission.** We will not refuse permission unreasonably.

### Why must I ask for permission?

Homes for Life want to:

- ensure any work carried out by tenants does not detrimentally affect the property, or cause undue nuisance or annoyance to other residents within the area
- be satisfied that all work is carried out by competent and suitably qualified tradespersons and any statutory permission is obtained (where appropriate).
- make sure any alterations or improvements will not incur undue maintenance for the Association nor detract from the future letting of the property.
- make tenants fully aware of their responsibilities regarding the upkeep of any alterations and improvements, they have made and reinstatement of any fixtures and fittings belonging to the Association (where appropriate)
- ensure tenants are aware of the procedures for applying for and receiving compensation for improvements where eligible
- ensure equality of opportunity in the handling of requests to carry out alterations and improvements.

### **What do you mean by 'alteration' or 'improvement'?**

An **alteration** is where you wish to:

- replace a fixture or fitting, such as kitchen units or internal doors, with items which are of the same quality or standard as those we would normally provide, or fit laminate flooring (in flats – ground floor only);
- remove an existing fixture or fitting and not replace it.

An **improvement** is where you wish to:

- replace an existing fixture or fitting with one which in our opinion is of a higher quality than we would normally provide;
- install an item where there is none at present, e.g. a new shower; extend the property in any way, e.g. by adding a conservatory or porch.

### **What do I have to do?**

Contact Homes for Life Housing Partnership to ask them for an Alteration/Improvement application form.

### **Do I need to contact anyone else?**

Depending on the type of work, you may have to apply for Planning Consent and /or a Building Warrant from East Lothian Council (Tel: 01620 827827).

For some types of work, obtaining Planning Consent and/or a Building Warrant before you start is a legal requirement. You are responsible for checking if either or both permissions are required. If they are, you will be responsible for applying to the Council and paying the necessary fees etc.

When you apply for our permission you will have to tell us whether Planning Consent or a Building Warrant are required and if yes, whether you have applied for and received permission. We must see any necessary permission before we agree to any work starting.

### **What if I do not ask for your permission before carrying out any work?**

Asking for our permission is a condition of your tenancy. If you do not get our permission first, we have the legal right to request that you 'undo' any work you have done and reinstate the property as it was before - at your expense.

### **What about re-decoration?**

You do not have to tell us if you plan to re-decorate using wallpaper and paint.

### **Do I need your permission to install a satellite dish, laminate flooring or a burglar alarm?**

Yes. We will not approve a satellite dish where we provide communal digital aerials – check with us first if this applies to your address. We will also require adequate routing and fixing of

cables as well as sealing of entry points. For laminate flooring we have specific requirements you have to follow. Guidance for laminate flooring will be provided on application.

#### **What happens after I send you my application form?**

We will acknowledge receipt within 5 working days. We will consider your proposal and if necessary, contact or visit you to obtain additional information or clarify any questions. If Planning Consent and/or a Building Warrant is required, we will confirm that you must show these to us before we give permission and you start any work.

#### **How long will it take for you to consider my application?**

Most applications will be straightforward and should be dealt with within 2-3 weeks. Others may take longer but our aim will be to reply in writing within 28 days at the latest. If the proposal is very complicated, we may need longer but we will keep you advised about when we expect to be able to reply.

#### **Will you attach any conditions if you approve my application?**

For some types of work, we have some standards you may have to meet. We may also need to make some conditions about how the work is done or remind you that the work must be carried out by qualified or registered tradesmen. For example, if you wish to install gas appliances you must use a Gas Safe registered contractor, and any electrical work must be carried out by EIC contractors. They must give you safety certificates to confirm the work they have done meets relevant standards and you must provide us with copies.

#### **What happens when the work is completed?**

You need to tell us. Along with the letter giving you permission you will receive a Completion Form which you should send to us when the work is finished, together with any necessary certificates not already submitted. We will arrange to inspect the work and then advise you if it has been carried out satisfactorily or not. If any other work is required to meet our standards, we will give you details of what has to be done and agree a timescale for the work with you.

#### **What information do I have to supply with my application?**

This all depends on the type of work you are planning. Here are some examples:

Garden Hut A plan of the garden showing where the hut is to be placed and giving the dimensions of the hut and the distance from the property and boundary fences. The application should state the materials to be used for the walls and roof.

If we need more information after you make your application, we will contact you.

### **Do I require permission to install a Hot Tub?**

Yes, permission is required to install a Hot Tub. Whether permission is granted will be determined by a number of factors including:

- Location
- Competency of installer
- Drainage
- Electrical safety consideration
- Noise

### **What do am I required to do upon Termination of my Tenancy?**

Upon Notice to Terminate your Tenancy being provided; you may be required to reinstate to pre-installation condition. Whether the reinstatement is acceptable will be determined by HFLHP.

### **Important Supplementary Information**

Alterations or extensions to the electrical wiring system or to gas supplies or pipework must only be carried out by competent and qualified tradesmen. They must give you a safety certificate, completed and signed by them, to verify that the work has been carried out correctly. We will need copies of these certificates. You are responsible for employing competent tradesmen and for making sure you have these certificate(s) at the end of the work.

We hope that the information in this leaflet has been helpful to you.

**If you have any other questions, please contact Homes for Life Housing partnership in the first instance.**

### **You can contact us for further information at:-**

Homes for Life Housing Partnership  
57 Market Street  
Haddington  
East Lothian  
EH41 3JG

Tel: 01620 829300  
Email: [info@homesforlife.co.uk](mailto:info@homesforlife.co.uk)