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# Tenant & Leaseholder Alterations Policy

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# Documentation Master Sheet

Amendments to this Document are Detailed Below

| Version Number | Date Amended | Comments         | Date Approved | Author | Approved By |
|----------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|--------|-------------|
| 01             | 24/05/21     | Draft v1         | 27/05/21      | RP     | AG          |
| 02             | 10/05/22     | V2 following EIA | 10/05/22      | RP     | MH          |
| 03             |              |                  |               |        |             |
| 04             |              |                  |               |        |             |
| 05             |              |                  |               |        |             |
| 06             |              |                  |               |        |             |
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## INTRODUCTION

We recognise that our customers have a right to enjoy their home, allowing them to make improvements, alterations and adaptations to meet their needs.

This policy sets out how we will give our customers permission to carry out improvements within their homes in line with legal and regulatory guidelines. It also ensures that all requests are dealt with fairly and that everyone is treated equally.

## SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy sets out GCH's approach to our customers' rights to make improvements and alterations to their home. It provides guidance on what alterations will be allowed, under what circumstances and how they will be processed.

It covers all customers that live in social housing, supported and sheltered housing properties. It also covers Leaseholders and Shared Owners. The policy should be read in conjunction with the Aids and Adaptations Policy which covers GCH funded alterations linked to disabilities.

If there is any variance between this policy and individual leases or tenancy agreements, then the lease or tenancy agreement will take precedence.

This policy does not cover the following works, which are generally permitted:

1. Painting and decorating
2. Planting plants (not Trees)
3. Installation of floor coverings (apart from wooden or laminate floors in flats from the first floor and above), curtains, blinds and poles
4. Other items listed in the tenancy agreement

## REQUESTING PERMISSION

Permission for alterations or improvements must be requested by the customer in writing, and then written consent obtained from us, before making the improvements to their homes. If the customer is unable to write to us, then they should contact GCH for support.

Verbal permission is not acceptable because as a landlord, we need to record any improvements if they affect the fabric of the building or could affect health and safety.

To request an alteration, customers must submit to their housing officer or the leasehold manager in the case of leaseholders and shared owners:

1. Description of the work, including photographs and/or plans (hand-drawn are acceptable)
2. Details of who will carry out the work and copies of their insurances and professional registration
3. Approval from the Planning Department or Local Authority Building Control, where required

Special consideration will need to be made for the potential for asbestos in the area to be altered. A qualified surveyor will review the request within 15 working days and provide written approval or refusal. Where approval is granted, further certificates and method statements may be required once works are completed. Reasons behind refusals will be explained.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM IN RENT ARREARS?

Where a resident is in arrears, under notice or similar, alterations will normally be refused until the rent or charges arrears are cleared.

## PERMITTED WORK

GCH will normally provide approval for the following works:

- Installation of sheds and similar garden structures in private gardens as long as they are at least 5 metres from the nearest property
- Satellite dishes (apart from properties built in the past 5-years)
- Garden fences and walls
- Replacement of internal doors, where a fire door is not required
- Kitchen replacement
- Replacement of bathroom suite
- Minor electrical works such as installing a new light fitting or moving a socket (subject to the necessary certification by an approved installer)
- Patios and paths

- Outside taps

## **NON-PERMITTED WORK**

Permission will normally be refused if the intended work would:

- Involve a structural change to the premises
- Increase our maintenance costs
- Reduce the living space
- Breach planning, building or conservation area regulations.
- Reduce the value of the property
- Adversely affect the thermal efficiency of the property
- Enclose parts of external communal areas

Specific examples of home improvement we will not allow customers to carry out include:

- Works that create health and safety risks
- Installation of outside structures within 5 metres of the property
- Layout change (addition or movement of walls)
- Change of use of rooms (e.g. relocating kitchen / bathroom)
- Replacement of complete window sets (glazing and frame) or external doors, unless installing a 30 minute fire safe door, with appropriate seals and door closer, to a flat or maisonette
- Replacement or removal of internal fire doors
- Installation of security bars on windows or doors, due to restriction of fire escape
- Installation of cat or dog flaps as they will affect the fire integrity of the door
- Installation of solid fuel heating appliances
- Removal of chimney breasts
- Anything that involves the removal of landlord's fixtures that are an essential feature of the structure or installations e.g. the boiler, wiring infrastructure and pipework.

## **SIGN-OFF AND UNAUTHORISED WORKS**

Customers must write to GCH, once works are completed, to allow a GCH surveyor to sign-off the works. Any certificates requested when works were approved must be provided. The surveyors opinion on the quality and scope of works is final.

Where works are sub-standard or the necessary certificates are not provided, the resident must correct the work or reinstate the property to its original condition, at their expense. Failure to do this may constitute a breach of tenancy or lease and will be referred to the Housing Team.

Where unauthorised works proceed have been carried out, customers will have the opportunity to apply for retrospective approval. Unauthorised works may constitute a breach of tenancy or lease and the case will be referred to our Housing Team for review and possible action if the breach is serious. Any damage caused through alterations will be charged to the customer.

## CONSULTATION

The Housing Team, Assets, and Tenant Panel were consulted in the drafting of this policy

## APPEALS

Appeals will be dealt with through the GCH complaints process.

## REVIEW

This policy will normally be reviewed triennially to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, unless an earlier review is required due to regulatory, statutory, or other requirements.

### **Gloucester City Homes Limited**

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