

# Home Improvements

We feel it is important that where you live feels like your home, to achieve this we understand that you may want to put your own stamp on it. This could be changing the paint colour scheme or putting up shelves and photos. Below are some answers to some frequent questions we get and our expectations.

## **Can you make improvements to your home?**

It depends on what improvements you want to make to your home as to whether we would give you permission or not. Your tenancy agreement can give you an idea of what home improvements are usually allowed in your property.

In most cases we'll be happy for you to paint, decorate and do some minor DIY in your home, but you'll need to check with us first before you start any work.

It is important to not there may be time where would not consider a request to make home improvements. This could be due to several factors, such as other disputes on your tenancy such investigations into anti-social behaviour.

## **What sort of improvements can you make to your home?**

This depends on your tenancy, so please read your tenancy agreement alternatively you can contact us via the form below to discuss your request.

It is important to remember that even if you just want to make a small improvement to your home, we need to make sure there are no legal or technical reasons why it can't be made, and that none of your neighbours will be affected by the work.

For example, something as simple as swapping your carpet to hardwood floors could create a noise problem for your neighbours. We'll also check whether the work might cause any safety concerns or compromise the structure of the building.

If you'd like to make a change that involves electrics or plumbing (for example, installing an electric shower) you'll need to use a certified contractor once we have given you permission to make the improvement.

Always ask our permission before making any changes to your home, and do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Please note, we don't normally allow changes to be made in communal (shared) areas.

## **How do you request permission?**

The quickest way to contact us about improving your own home is to use the form below.

This will ask you to supply details of what you want to improve and will collect enough information to help us make the right decision.

Please don't start any work on your home until we've said yes. If you do, you might put your tenancy at risk. If we give permission, we will usually expect any works to be completed within 12 weeks - please talk to us if you think the work might take longer

### **What will we do?**

Once you contact us and have asked for our permission, we will assess your application and all the information that you have provided. We will consider the building, your tenancy and the circumstances of your request.

Depending on the change you want to make, we may need to visit and inspect your home.

We will come back to you within four weeks, sometimes sooner. If we think we will need a little longer to assess your application and decide, then we will let you know in this period.

If we say no, we will always give a reason. If you are unhappy with our decision, you will have the opportunity to appeal.

### **What are planned improvements?**

Every year we carry out improvements to our properties. We prioritise which improvement works need to be done each year by using our property data, information gathered from residents, and the updates provided by care staff on site.

Planned improvements are different from reactive repairs when we respond to reports from residents that something in their home is broken. It is proactive, instead of reactive.

Each year we need to balance our desire to invest and improve our homes, with how much money we must spend on planned improvements.

- Our planned improvement programmes include:
- Re-roofing and structural improvements
- Communal painting and decorating

As a minimum, we are committed to ensuring that our homes meet the Government's **Decent Homes Standard**. Link goes to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-decent-home-definition-and-guidance>

### **What do we do when we complete planned improvements?**

If we are planning to complete some planned improvements to your home, or building, we will discuss these with you.

We will explain the process, the impact on you, and the expected timeline.

Should the planned improvements impact any of our homeowners, then we will consult with them on this prior to beginning any work. This is because residents housing benefits pay a share of the cost of improvement works to things such as roof replacements or structural improvements.

We will arrange inspections and site visits to confirm and validate what work needs to be completed.

We will complete some of the planned maintenance ourselves, and in some cases, we will ask our contractors to complete the works. We have negotiated contracts with suppliers that we believe provide value for money and quality for residents.

We will communicate with you throughout the process, and where appropriate, check with you at the end that you are happy with the works.