

Leasehold Alteration Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Under the terms of their lease, leaseholders may be able to make alterations to their home with our written permission. This policy sets out our approach to this process.
- 1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:
 - Individual Leasehold Agreements
 - Leasehold Alteration Procedure

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers all leaseholders (full and shared ownership) in the Peabody Group, except for Town & Country Housing.
- 2.2 This policy does not cover social housing tenants, supported or sheltered housing tenants; for these please see our Tenant Improvements Policy.
- 2.3 This policy applies where we are the freeholder. Any applications made on properties where we are not the freeholder are determined by the freeholder or their appointed agent separately.
- 2.4 Individual lease agreements take precedence over this policy document.

3. Key terms and definitions

- 3.1 An **alteration** could be:
 - An addition to, or change in, the fixtures and fittings. Examples include built-in cabinetry, carpeting and tiling.
 - An addition or change to the provision of services to the home.
 - A change to the layout or floor plan inside the home.

4. Our approach

- 4.1 Leaseholders must seek permission from us for any alteration work.
- 4.2 Leaseholders are advised to investigate and ensure they have the necessary funds for the improvements as quotes can expire, leading to future problems.

Unpermitted alterations

- 4.3 We do not allow any alterations which would negatively impact the building, other residents, the environment or the value of the property.
- 4.4 If a leaseholder carries out an alteration without requesting permission as specified in this policy and their lease agreement, they are potentially in breach of their lease. In such cases, we may ask the leaseholder to reinstate the property to its previous state at their own cost.

Requesting permission

- 4.5 We do not offer a pre-application advice service; our surveyors engage with leaseholders after applications are submitted. We may answer general enquiries, but do not go into specific details without a full application.

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- 4.6 Leaseholders pay a legal and administrative fee to us when submitting an application. This is non-refundable regardless of outcome and the decisions made by our surveyors are non-negotiable.
- 4.7 We ask leaseholders to request alterations in writing, on the appropriate form that the Leasehold Compliance Team can provide.
- 4.8 All requests for alterations should refer to, and align to, the terms contained within the lease of the property. The specific clause within the lease must allow for the type of alteration requested for permission to be granted.
- 4.9 We ask leaseholders to provide the relevant clause from the lease permitting the alteration and to seek, and provide, legal clarification in the case of any ambiguity. In the absence of a clause permitting the alteration, we may refuse the request.
- 4.10 We ask leaseholders to submit detailed plans for the alteration which contains information about the design and materials to be used.
- 4.11 We ask to see planning permission and/or building regulations approval if these are necessary.
- 4.12 We encourage leaseholders to follow the process outlined in our Complaints Policy if they feel like we have failed to provide an appropriate service in relation to an alteration request.

Granting permission

- 4.13 We take a fair and reasonable approach when considering requests for alterations and treat all leaseholders in a fair and equitable way.
- 4.14 We aim for an initial response time of 10 working days, and information regarding timescales for a final decision is communicated to leaseholders in receipt of an application.
- 4.15 In some cases, we may require a surveyor to visit the property to discuss the proposed alterations before we grant permission.
- 4.16 We provide our decision, and reason for it, in writing.
- 4.17 Generally, we give permission to leaseholders to install internal wall, ceiling and floor insulation to improve cold spots which could result in condensation and mould if there is insufficient heating and ventilation.

Carrying out the work

- 4.18 We require the work to be carried out by a competent tradesperson who can certify their work, using suitable materials that do not result in a breach of building regulations.
- 4.19 Any contractor or tradesperson doing work should have appropriate insurance cover.

Future maintenance responsibilities

- 4.20 The leaseholder is responsible for future repairs and maintenance of alterations.
- 4.21 We recharge the leaseholder for any unforeseen arising costs we reasonably incur as a result of the alteration.

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Section 106 developments where we are not the landlord and external managing agents

4.22 We have no control over the approval of alterations by other landlords and external managing agents; leaseholders must obtain direct consent from the freeholder of the building. We provide the contact information for this and support leaseholders who remain under our affordable head lease to submit an application.

5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

5.1 All requests from leaseholders to accommodate their needs are considered and acted on, where possible, in accordance with our Reasonable Adjustments Policy and the Equality Act 2010. You can request a reasonable adjustment from us through the officer you are engaging with, or by contacting our Customer Hub. Examples of the support we can provide include providing information in alternative formats and adapting our communication method.

5.2 This policy aligns with our wider Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy by supporting the vulnerable, creating places where people want to live and building resilience in people and communities.

6. Legislation and Regulation

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1927 and 1987
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002

7. Responsibilities

7.1 The Director of Repairs has overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation.

Approval

Version number	1
Effective from	03/04/2023
Policy owner	Director of Repairs