



# Alterations Policy

## 1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out the circumstances in which Selwood Housing will allow tenants to make an alteration to their properties and the assessment criteria that are to be applied in reaching a decision.

This policy relates to any alteration that a tenant wishes to make to their home. An alteration is anything that is an addition, change or improvement to a home or its gas, electrical or water supply.

Leaseholders and shared owners will also need to apply for permission for any alterations to their property. Whether a resident can or cannot make improvements to their home will vary and be determined by their individual lease or tenancy agreement. There will be a charge to provide consent.

## 2. Underpinning principles

Selwood Housing recognises that from time to time tenants may wish to alter the property they live in; this may be due to a change in their circumstances, medical conditions or simply to change or enhance the property.

Permission will not be withheld unreasonably however we have a duty to ensure that by carrying out such works the tenant will not damage either the structure or fabric of the property or any adjoining property.

Selwood Housing will therefore not withhold consent for an alteration unless:



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- The work would have an unfavourable effect on the property
- The work would stop Selwood meeting our repairing or other legal responsibilities
- The works and/or materials would cause a nuisance to neighbours or other Selwood tenants

The work must also:

- Be safe and legal
- Be to a high standard using materials of an appropriate quality
- Receive all necessary external permissions (e.g. planning permission, building control)
- Follow any requirements that Selwood make when granting permission

There might be other times when we refuse permission, but we will not do so unnecessarily.

## 3. Policy details

Any alteration will always require written permission from Selwood Housing. Where a tenant undertakes an alteration without permission Selwood may require the tenant to remove it and reinstate the property to its previous condition at the tenant's expense.

Selwood will not usually give permission for an alteration in the following circumstances:

- A tenant is on a starter tenancy
- A tenant has rent arrears
- The property is less than 12 months old, during which period any repair works are carried out by the developer

Some alterations may be permitted in exceptional circumstances, e.g. disabled adaptations.



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Selwood may require a tenant to remove an alteration and reinstate the property to its previous condition at the end of their tenancy (e.g. use of non-standard internal doors, construction of a pond). This includes end of tenancy due to a mutual exchange.

## **Asbestos**

Where Selwood consider that an alteration is such that an asbestos survey is required Selwood will carry out the survey at no cost to the applicant.

If the proposed work requires that asbestos be removed, Selwood will carry out the removal work using their in-house contractors. Selwood will also replace any ceilings containing asbestos or boxing around pipes that are removed but will not carry out other work to make good where asbestos containing materials have been removed (e.g. where vinyl floor tiles are taken up).

If the occupants are required to move out whilst asbestos is removed the applicant will be responsible for all costs associated with moving out.

Selwood will not be responsible for any delay in work as a result of undertaking a survey or removal of asbestos containing materials.

## **Repairs, Maintenance and Servicing**

The applicant will be wholly responsible for the servicing, repair and maintenance to any improvements you make, except for the items which have been installed as part of a disabled adaptation (See Aids and adaptations policy for further information)



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## Compensation

Tenants may be able to claim money back for an improvement or alteration carried out if they leave the property.

## 4. Signposting

- Aids and adaptations policy
- Fencing and boundary management policy
- Compensation for improvements, claims and goodwill, regulatory and statutory payments policy
- Minor adaptations without delay Part 1: A practical guide for housing associations (College of Occupational Therapists)

**Policy Review Date: November 2024**

