

Policy details	
Name of policy: Alterations	Author name: Nikki Spenceley
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1. Policy Statement

Co-op Homes wants to make sure customers are able to alter their homes to suit their own life styles and create homes that makes them feel as comfortable as possible. Equally, we also need to make sure that their homes remain safe for them to live in. Customers may therefore make major improvements and alterations to their home as long as they have obtained prior written permission from Co-op Homes and that the work is carried out to a high standard.

2. Minor Changes

Customers are free to carry out internal decorations such as painting without informing Co-op Homes or requiring permission. Co-op Homes will not inspect any minor changes carried out.

Any works carried out by the customer will not be made good or replaced if there is damage because of subsequent remedial repair works. For example, if there is a leak Co-op Homes will not repair decorations with like for like paint, wallpaper, flooring or ceramic tiles etc. Contractors will be instructed to adhere to the minimum void letting standard only.

Minor changes to homes of residents with disabilities are covered by Co-op Home' Disabled Adaptions Policy.

3. Major Changes

If a customer wishes to make major changes or alterations to their home they will need to inform Co-op Homes of their intention at the outset and receive **prior written consent** from Co-op Homes before proceeding with any works. Co-op Homes will post inspect all major works carried out. Major changes may include items like:

- New kitchen units, new bathroom suite, extensions, removing a wall, installing new windows

If a customer makes a change without Co-op Homes' prior permission they may be required to change it back at their own expense. It will also be the customer's responsibility to ensure that all works are carried out with the appropriate planning and building regulation permissions and by undertaken by fully qualified, competent and insured contractors.

Major changes to homes of residents with disabilities are covered by Co-op Homes' Disabled Adaptions Policy

4. Guiding Principles

Where there are rent arrears, the proposed improvement works will only be approved by Co-op Homes if the costs are minimal, or is being met by a third party **and** the proposed improvements will alleviate any existing medical, social or welfare needs.

Where works have already been completed Co-op Homes will assess the scope of works using the guiding principles set out in this document.

Following assessment, if the work is not approved the customer will be informed of Co-op Homes' decision in writing and be provided with a list of action they will need to take to either receive obtain retrospective approval or an instruction to reinstate the property to its original condition. Should the customer fail to comply with the terms of the decision, action will be taken against them as per the terms set out in the Tenancy Agreement.

Building Control Regulation/Planning approval is required for most alteration works to houses and flats.

In exceptional circumstances, customers may be entitled to claim compensation in respect of some improvement works when their tenancy ends. Compensation claims (minimum £50 to maximum of £1500) will only be considered when:

1. The customer can produce a copy of written permission to proceed from Co-op Homes which was granted prior to the commencement of any alteration or improvement works, and
2. The fixture(s) replaced as part of the alteration or improvement works were originally in a poor condition and would have been replaced by Co-op Homes within 2 years of the installation (e.g. as part of any Major Works packages), and
3. The alteration or improvement is still in excellent condition at the time the tenancy ends.

Additionally, if the customer has been permanently decanted to a new property and the alteration/improvement still has a remaining life span of at least 2 years they can apply for compensation.

Where the alteration proposes to increase the bedroom / living size, the customer will be informed that additional rent will be charged. The customer will be informed in writing of the new rent level and must confirm their agreement before approval for the alteration will be given.

5. Access to Information

Co-op Homes will provide information to residents on how to apply for major changes permission by way of the website by a link. A printed version of this Policy is available on request for those without internet access.

Co-op Homes will take action or withdraw any permission given if a customer knowingly and recklessly provides false information that results in the inappropriate permission being given.

6. Equal opportunities and Consultation

Co-op Homes is committed to providing equal access to all residents, regardless of race, nationality, ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, sexual orientation, gender; disability, age, illness, marital or employment status and will work to eliminate disability discrimination in all aspects of its housing services.

Appeals against any decision made in the application of the Alterations Policy will be dealt with through the Complaints Procedure and should be submitted in writing/by email to the Repairs & Maintenance Manager.

7. Responsibilities

The Repairs & Maintenance Manager is responsible for

- The overall implementation of the Alterations Policy
- Ensuring that the management arrangements and procedural systems in place are undertaken efficiently and effectively.
- Ensuring that relevant staff are trained in the policy and the associated procedures.

Co-op Homes will review this policy at least every 3 years.