

Tenant Home Alterations Policy

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POLICY SUMMARY

Please note that where we use EPIC within this Policy, we refer to EPIC Limited.

This policy outlines our approach to granting permission to our tenants to make alterations to their home.

1. APPLICABILITY

- 1.1 The Policy applies to all assured tenants of EPIC.
- 1.2 This Policy does not apply to leasehold, shared ownership or properties with live Right to Buy / Right to Acquire applications.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the following aims and objectives are met:
 - That we comply with all legal requirements.
 - To ensure that we do not unreasonably withhold permission.
 - To ensure that EPIC manages its property portfolio effectively and responsibly, whilst recognising that properties are tenants' homes.
 - To ensure that we do not incur unreasonable ongoing maintenance costs.
 - To help tenants to make the right choice in deciding on improvements to their home.
 - To maintain consistency and fairness as set out by the criteria by which requests will be assessed.

3. CONTEXT

- 3.1 We will adhere to the following principles when deciding on whether to grant a tenant permission to make alterations to their home:
 - We will ask tenants to put alteration and improvement requests to us in writing if applicable.
 - We will not unreasonably withhold permission.
 - We will confirm in writing with the tenant whether permission has been granted if applicable.
 - Where permission is given, we will let the tenant know about any conditions they need to follow.
 - There is no right of appeal when permission is refused, but tenants can make a complaint via the Complaints Policy.
- 3.2 The Policy operates within the context of the following legislation and regulation:
 - Housing Act (2004)
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Human Rights Act 1998
 - The Regulator for Social Housing – Consumer Standards

4. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 4.1 We will categorise requests for alterations as either minor or major, with the distinction being based on the nature, value for money, complexity and reasonableness of the work required. Each request will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.2 We will generally grant permission where:
- The works will enhance the property.
 - The alteration will improve the quality of life for the tenant.
 - The alteration, due to the level of permanence, could be easily reversed in the future.
- 4.3 Tenants can carry out the following improvements without having to request permission from EPIC:
- Changing the toilet seat.
 - Wall mounting a television / mirror / picture.
 - Installing shelves.
 - Replacing flooring (except to kitchen and bathroom). Any laminate flooring will be required to have an acoustic underlay to prevent noise travelling between flats (if an upstairs flat).
 - Replacing flooring to a kitchen or bathroom. Any replacement flooring will need to be non-slip and sealed at the edges.
 - Decorating.
 - Fitting Handrails / Grab rails.
 - Fitting external gates – the gates must match adjacent fencing and must open inwards, onto the property, and should not be locked.
 - Having a water meter – where EPIC do not have to cover the expense for any pipework alterations.
 - Fitting a key safe.
 - Replacing skirting board and architrave. These will need to be secured with screws and Rawl plugs (no adhesive) and either painted or varnished.
 - Replacing light fittings, sockets, or switch fronts. These will require an electrical certificate to be submitted to EPIC after works completed.
 - Undertaking minor adaptations that fall under the Aids and Adaptations Policy.
 - Installing rotary dryers to gardens.
- 4.4 EPIC's policy is not to permit alterations if:
- The tenancy is an assured shorthold or licence.
 - The alteration would involve altering the heating system, electrical services and any health and safety measures.
 - The alteration would require the introduction of a service charge.
 - The alteration would significantly alter the property – such as changing the number of bedrooms.
 - The alteration would have specific, unique and ongoing maintenance requirements.
 - The alteration would impact adversely upon neighbouring properties and shared communal spaces.
 - The alteration requires planning permission.
 - The alteration would affect future letting ability.
 - The tenant does not have a legal or contractual right to improve their property.
 - The works would alter the building subject to regulations and living standards.
 - The tenant is requesting to install a wood or solid fuel burner.
 - The tenant is requesting to remove the kitchen or bathroom fans.
 - The tenant is looking to install car charging where dedicated space is not available.

- 4.5 Where an alteration is agreed:
- Relevant works must comply with the requirements of the Party Walls Act 1996.
 - All works must be conducted by a competent appropriately certified contractor, except for minor works.
 - Any relevant Building Regulations must be complied with.
 - We will provide, where necessary, the tenant with any relevant information such as asbestos surveys to allow them to make an informed decision.
 - We will post-inspect works to ensure that they have been done to the required standard.
- 4.6 Permission is always required to:
- Fit a shower.
 - Fit a wheelchair ramp or other disability adaptations as stated in the Aids and Adaptation Policy.
 - Fit your own bathroom suite.
 - Fit your own kitchen.
 - Install a shed in the garden.
 - Install external lights.
 - Install CCTV / Video doorbells.
 - Install wireless heating thermostat – where compatible with existing boiler. This will require an electrical certificate to be submitted to EPIC after works completed.
- 4.7 CCTV / Video doorbells:
- Whilst EPIC cannot reasonably withhold permission to allow a tenant to install CCTV at their home, they must be satisfied that the installation will be used for domestic purposes only. Further guidance for the use of CCTV is available via the website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-cctv-using-cctv-systems-on-your-property/domestic-cctv-using-cctv-systems-on-your-property>.
 - The owner (e.g. tenant) of the equipment will be classified as the data controller and will retain all responsibility for GDPR compliance and related GDPR issues / concerns.
- 4.8 We will look to respond to any permission requests within 28 days.
- 4.9 When the tenancy is ended, it is the responsibility of the tenant to complete any making good from any minor improvement works. This can be discussed at the end of tenancy visit, which is completed by a member of EPIC staff, as outlined in your tenancy agreement .

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The roles and responsibilities for key stakeholders across EPIC are detailed below.
- 5.2 The Director of Asset Management and Building Compliance is the Policy Holder for the following:
- Embedding the Policy through staff training, learning and development.
 - Evaluating, amending and enhancing the delivery of the Policy.
 - Monitoring the overall effectiveness of the Policy in terms of cost, quality and time.
- 5.3 It is the responsibility of the Repairs and Void Manager to:

- Develop and implement operational procedures to deliver the Policy objectives
- Report to the Executive Team on the operational effectiveness of the Policy.
- Ensure that there are adequate checks and controls in place to ensure that this Policy is enacted effectively.

6. TRAINING

- 6.1 We will ensure that all staff are trained in the operational requirement of enacting this Policy and accompanying procedures.
- 6.2 We will publicise our criteria to customers in advance and record feedback on the Policy on an annual basis.

7. DATA VALIDATION, REVIEW AND MONITORING

- 7.1 EPIC will keep tenant and customer information gathered and obtained in accordance with the relevant legislation, including the Data Protection Act.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 We are committed to ensuring and promoting equality of opportunity for all. We are opposed to discrimination on any grounds, including race, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, age, or any unjustifiable criteria. We are committed to developing a culture that values people from all sections of society and the contribution which everyone can make. We will ensure our approach to accessing properties is considerate to people's individual needs. We also adhere to the Equality Act 2010.
- 8.2 EPIC recognises that some people experience disadvantage due to their socio-economic circumstances and will strive to ensure no person or groups of persons is treated with injustice due to their personal circumstances. EPIC will also ensure that all services and actions are delivered within the context of current Human Rights legislation and will make sure the central principles of the Human Rights Act (1998) will be adhered to.
- 8.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in conjunction with this Policy; this Policy does not disproportionately affect any one group and will not lead to discrimination (direct or indirect) harassment, victimisation or less favourable treatment of people with protected characteristics.

9. MONITORING / REVIEW

- 9.1 This Policy will be reviewed every three years. A review may be conducted earlier if there are significant changes to either regulation, legislation, or EPIC's operating practices.

10. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Tenant Home Improvement Flowchart
- Tenancy Agreement
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy
- Aids and Adaptations Policy
- CCTV Policy

Version Control

Date of Review	Reviewer	Version Number	Changes	Date of Next Review	Approved By
March 2023	Director of Housing	V 1.0	Re-written	March 2026	Executive
April 2025	Repairs and Voids Manager	V 2.0	Amended	April 2028	Executive