

1. Background and objectives

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to set out how Alliance Homes will manage existing property alterations and requests from our customers when they want to make improvements to their home and to ensure that our customers' homes are not detrimentally affected by any proposed changes. We also want to ensure that all requests for consent are formally approved by us using transparent, fair and consistent protocols, and that customers are treated with respect and feel listened to. Alterations must be completed to an acceptable standard by suitably qualified tradespersons, meet all safety regulations and statutory requirements, and must not present future maintenance or safety problems for residents or Alliance Homes. Requests will be considered in conjunction with our ongoing planned works programme where we continue to invest significantly in our customer's homes through works which include replacement kitchens, bathrooms, boilers and an upgrading of the energy rating of our customers' homes, including safety improvement works.

2. Policy detail

Scope and definitions

- 2.1. The policy covers our General Needs and Age Restricted Housing customers and our customers living in our Extra Care and Learning Disability schemes.
- 2.2. It does not cover properties designated as temporary accommodation although we will advise customers in these properties should they request minor alterations or improvements to fixtures and fittings.
- 2.3. Our Shared Ownership and Leasehold customers may need to gain permission from us for alterations or improvements, depending on the wording of the lease. Customers will be encouraged to contact our Leasehold Team for assistance if after checking their lease they are unsure whether the work they want to carry out requires permission.
- 2.4. If there is any variance between this policy and the terms and conditions within a tenancy agreement, lease, or restrictive covenant associated with the property, then the latter will take precedence.
- 2.5. A customer improvement or alteration can be defined as:
 - 2.6. Where a customer permanently removes an existing Alliance Homes fixture or fitting within the property.

Alterations and Improvements Policy



- 2.7. Where a customer replaces any Alliance Homes fixture or fitting with one of their own.
- 2.8. Where a customer installs a new fixture or fitting not previously seen in the property.
- 2.9. Where a customer makes any change to the existing fabric of the building, the grounds of their home, the boundaries or adjacent land not within the tenancy, e.g., land taken for parking or moving a fence over land owned by others.

Who can apply to make alterations and improvements?

- 2.10. Customers must hold an Assured (periodic or fixed term) Tenancy or lease to be eligible to apply to have alterations or improvements to their home.
- 2.11. Customers holding a License to Occupy or Assured Shorthold Tenancy are not permitted to carry out alterations or improvements.
- 2.12. At the time of request customers owing any housing-related debt or in breach of any tenancy conditions will not be permitted to carry out significant alterations or improvements.

Customer responsibilities

- 2.13. It is the responsibility of our customers to gain written consent from us prior to any works being carried out. A Property Alterations and Improvements Form must be submitted including full details of the proposed works and estimates, and any architectural or technical drawings.
- 2.14. If the proposed works are estimated to cost over £5,000, the customer must provide evidence of affordability prior to permission being granted. A referral will be made to our Financial Inclusion Service so that they can discuss means and review any budgetary requirements.
- 2.15. Improvements must comply with any building or planning regulations and / or party wall notices. Approvals are to be obtained by the tenant and copies of the required documentation must be submitted to Alliance Homes as part of the permissions process.
- 2.16. Improvement work must not exceed that which had been agreed. If a customer seeks to expand the work further, they must apply for supplementary permission.

- 2.17. If an alteration or improvement by a customer causes damage to the property, a neighbour's property or communal space, they will need to put it right. If they fail to do so, and Alliance Homes must make the corrections, our customer will be recharged in line with the Chargeable Costs Policy.
- 2.18. If Alliance Homes is not the freehold owner of the property (whether this is a house or a block of flats), then a separate application may have to be made to the freeholder to obtain their approval for the proposed works.

Appointing a contractor

- 2.19. If we grant the appropriate permission customers must ensure that their contractor(s) or consultant is competent, suitably qualified and insured, and they must provide us with evidence of such. Ensuring contractors have the right level of insurance cover protects our customers, properties and Alliance Homes from any incidents or accidents that may arise due to a customer's builder, contractor, or architect. For any major structural works, we advise contractors have the following cover:
- 2.20. Employers Liability Insurance - £10 million – This is a legal requirement if your contractor employs one or more persons. The statutory minimum for this is £10 million and must come from an authorised insurer.
- 2.21. Public Liability Insurance - £ 5 million – This covers any event where the contractor causes damage/injury through their negligence or poor workmanship. Reputable builders carry sufficient cover as standard practice, and the amounts advised are industry thresholds which safeguard not only our customer but also Alliance Homes as the owner of the property.
- 2.22. If we grant permission, customers will be required to let us know when the work has been completed so that an inspection (if deemed necessary) can be carried out to ensure alterations or improvements have been completed to an acceptable standard. Where the proposed alteration/improvement includes electrical, gas or plumbing works Alliance Homes must be satisfied that the works carried out meet all relevant safety regulations and are completed to an acceptable standard. All such works must therefore be carried out by an appropriately qualified contractor who is able to provide the relevant safety certificate on completion of works. Final sign-off of the alteration/improvement will not be given until Alliance Homes has been provided with all relevant safety certificates.

- 2.23. In carrying out alterations or improvements customers must ensure that they do not cause an unacceptable disturbance, noise level, annoyance or distress to neighbours.
- 2.24. No further requests for customer improvements should be made from the date any tenants apply for the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire until the application is closed and they do not proceed to buy the property.

Alliance Homes' responsibilities

- 2.25. We will acknowledge requests from customers within five working days of receiving a fully completed application form. Assuming all the information required has been supplied, we'll notify the customer of a decision within 28 working days.
- 2.26. When assessing the suitability of a request, we will consider the following:
- whether the alteration removes or inhibits any accessibility features or adaptations
 - the impact on the structural integrity or fabric of the building
 - the impact of the alteration on neighbouring properties and the intended appearance of the local area
 - the specification of any equipment to ensure that any adverse impact to existing structures/components will not be caused
 - ascertain any maintenance/servicing/liability/ upgrade impact that the proposed work will cause
 - any financial or operational impact resulting in a need to move our customer to alternative temporary accommodation whilst works are carried out
 - any financial impact on tenant or Alliance Homes where the work is likely needed to be removed or reverted to the original fittings at the end of the tenancy

Survey fees

- 2.27. Depending on the nature of the work, a surveyor's visit may be required to consider giving permission for major works or structural alterations. We reserve the right to make additional charges on a case-by-case basis.

Other administrative costs

- 2.28. Alliance Homes and our customers should be aware of possible asbestos

content in the home. Alliance Homes must undertake an Asbestos Survey and provide the customer with a copy of our asbestos report. If asbestos removal is required due to poor condition, it will be Alliance Homes' responsibility to remove the asbestos. If part of the works requires asbestos removal, we will arrange for this to be completed by our approved Asbestos contractor. Depending on the improvement to be made the cost of removal may be covered by Alliance Homes. If the cost is not going to be covered by Alliance Homes, our customer will be informed as part of the permissions process.

Granting Permission

- 2.29. We will consider granting permission for alterations and property improvements whether they are large or small. These are listed in Appendix B.
- 2.30. We will also sympathetically consider environmental and garden improvements, including landscaping where these changes will improve the quality of life of families, particularly where a member of the household has a disability or life limiting illness.

Refusal of permission

- 2.31. In some cases, we may need to decline permission for an alteration or improvement. Where we do refuse permission, the customer may submit revised proposals for further consideration. Examples of where we will refuse permission can be found in Appendix B.

Lapsed permissions

- 2.32. When permission has been granted, you will be expected to complete the alteration or improvement within six months of the approval being granted. If the works are not completed within that time, permission will be withdrawn, and you will have to reapply.
- 2.33. If it is likely that the works will take longer than six months to complete, you should advise us at the time of seeking permission. Consideration will then be given to extending the timescale.

Changes to proposed works

- 2.34. The works carried out must be in accordance with those proposed on the application form. Any variations to the original works must be approved in writing.
- 2.35. If works carried out are not in line with those on the application form,

permission may be withdrawn, and the application cancelled. The applicant may then be required to re-instate the property to its original condition or meet the cost of reinstatement by Alliance Homes.

Customers who have made existing alterations to their home

- 2.36. Should Alliance Homes find unauthorised work has been carried out to a property, and this is either undesirable and/or not to a suitable standard, we will notify our customer that they are required at their own cost to re-instate the property to the original condition prior to the unauthorised work, or up-grade any sub-standard work (as appropriate) within a period of one month. A caution for breach of tenancy or lease will be issued.
- 2.37. If our customer fails to re-instate the property or up-grade the works, then Alliance Homes will undertake the work and charge a fee.
- 2.38. If the unauthorised work is found to be acceptable, retrospective permission will be granted upon the receipt of a completed Property Alterations and Improvements form.
- 2.39. Alliance Homes will also not accept any liability for injury or damage caused resulting from improvements or alterations carried out without our permission.

Repairs and Maintenance of any approved improvements or alterations

- 2.40. Where an improvement or alteration to a home has been approved by us, our customers are responsible for the ongoing repairs and maintenance of their own property improvements and alterations.
- 2.41. We do have the right to carry out any immediate remedial work if any alteration or improvement poses an urgent health and safety risk and in doing so, the cost of any of this work will be the responsibility of the customer. This may include the repair or removal of the alteration or returning the home to its original condition.
- 2.42. Customers moving into a property by Mutual Exchange must take on the full future responsibility for any alterations or improvements carried out by the outgoing tenant. This includes maintenance costs and any removal or replacement. The situation must be highlighted and discussed at the Mutual Exchange property inspection so both incoming and outgoing customers are aware of their obligations. Any repairs or removal required to an improvement or alteration to meet health and safety standards will be addressed with the

outgoing tenant. Remedial action will be undertaken by either the outgoing tenant or Alliance Homes as agreed. The Mutual Exchange cannot progress until Alliance Homes is satisfied upon follow-up inspection that repairs to any alterations or improvements are compliant with health and safety standards.

Compensation for Improvements

2.43. Under the Housing Act 1985, tenants have the right to compensation for any improvements they make to their property. Compensation will be considered upon request when the tenancy comes to an end. The amount of compensation offered will depend on:

- The net addition of value added to the property because of the improvement
- The reasonable cost of carrying out the improvement
- The notional life of an improvement i.e. how many years an improvement would benefit an individual
- The intentions of Alliance Homes regarding any plans for the property

2.44. When a tenant applies for Right to Buy or Right to Acquire, they are required to provide a list of any improvements they have made to the property that they consider have added value (over and above their agreement to keep the property in good decorative order). An open market valuation is made less any value attributable to those improvements.

Appeals Process

2.45. A customer has the right to appeal a decision in relation to an alteration or improvement request if they are dissatisfied with any ruling. They will be directed to our Customer Complaints Policy and procedure.

3. Monitoring, consultation, and review

We monitor our performance in delivering the objectives of this policy by reporting to our leadership teams the number of customer requests to alter or improve our properties, the scope of such requests and our response times consistent with our service standards.

Customers, colleagues, and service users may be involved in giving feedback on this policy, leading to amendments where appropriate.

The Head of Assets and Sustainability is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

Alterations and Improvements Policy



This policy will be reviewed within two years of its approval by The Head of Assets and Sustainability and will be approved by our Executive Team.

4. Equality and diversity

- 4.1 This policy is subject to a periodic Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).
- 4.2 The purpose of such an assessment is to consider the effect of the policy regarding the recognised protected characteristics of equality and ensure that it does not unfairly impact any individual or group. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or other grounds set out in our Equality and Diversity Strategy and Single Equality Scheme. Remedial action will be undertaken if a detrimental effect is identified.
- 4.3 The EIA also requires the policy author to consider whether the policy is likely to negatively impact on a person's Human Rights.
- 4.4 This policy and any other related Alliance Homes publications can be provided in other formats for those with visual, literacy or language difficulties.

5. Complaints (remove if not external)

- 5.1 If you would like to raise a complaint in relation to this policy, you can do this by calling us on calling us on **03000 120 120** or emailing us at **act@alliancehomes.org.uk**.
- 5.2 All complaints will be handled in line with the latest Alliance Homes Complaint Handling Policy.

6. Associated documents

- Landlord & Tenant Act 1927
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Housing Act 1985
- Local Authorities (Compensation & improvements) Regulations 1994
- Equalities Act 2010
- The Party Wall Act 1996
- Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements Policy
- Tenancy Agreement

7. Version control and approval dates

Approval stage	Date completed
Equality Impact Assessment completed	September 2025
EIA reviewed by Equality & Diversity Manager	September 2025
SLT review / approval	13 October 2025
Next review date	31 October 2027

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact

Appendix B - Our approach to Improvements or alterations *

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment must be conducted alongside the review of an existing policy or the creation of a new one.

GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING AN EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT IS AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

1. Name the Strategy, Policy, Procedure or Function (SPPF) being assessed and name of author.

Alterations and Improvements Policy – Andrew Cartwright

2. Aims of the SPPF being addresses.

- *Whose need is it designed to meet?*
- *Are there any measurable elements such as time limits or age limits?*

The aim of this policy is to set out how Alliance Homes will manage existing property alterations and requests from our customers when they want to make improvements to their home and to ensure that our customers' homes are not detrimentally affected by any proposed changes.

3. Who has been consulted in developing the SPPF?

- *Make reference or links to consultation/evidence documents.*

- Assets and Sustainability Team, Repairs, ACT, Leasehold Team, Tenancy Services Team

4. Does the SPPF promote equality of opportunity?

Yes

5. Identify potential impact on each of the diversity “groups” by considering the following questions:

(The list is not exhaustive but an indication of the sort of questions assessors should think about):

- *Might some groups find it harder to access the service?*

Alterations and Improvements Policy

- Do some groups have particular needs that are not well met by the current SPPF?
- What evidence do you have for your judgement (e.g. monitoring data, information from consultation/research/feedback)?
- Have staff/residents raised concerns/complaints?
- Is there local or national research to suggest there could be a problem?

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	Information source/s*	Comments/Evidence
Race	x				
Disability	x				
Gender	x				
Transgender	x				
Sexual Orientation	x				
Religion or Belief	x				
Age	x				
Marriage and Civil Partnership	x				
Pregnancy and Maternity	x				
Rural Issues	x				
Social Mobility	x				

Alterations and Improvements Policy



**Possible information sources for assessing impact or understanding issues related to target group, such as:*

- *Demographic data, studies of deprivation, statistics on health etc*
- *Results of consultations, results of equality monitoring data, complaints, customer feedback*
- *Information collected from partner agencies and groups, support groups, professional expertise, 'peer review', project leads/teams, inspection reports etc.*

Was there a negative impact identified in question 5? If yes go to question 6. If not go to question 7.

6. If "negative impact" identified in table (4) above, is it?

Legal	YES	NO
What is the level of impact?	HIGH	LOW

If it is not legal and/or high impact (i.e. If you have highlighted NO to legal and HIGH to impact) **then the document should be referred to Head of HR**

7. If positive impact has been identified in table (4) above, how can it be improved upon or maximised, either in this SPPF or others?

8. Full EIA (or if you decide full EIA is not necessary but some changes should be considered)

- *Are there changes you could introduce which would make this SPPF work better for this groups of people?*
- *Is further research or consultation required?*

9. Does this proposal have any human rights implications?

If yes, please describe (If necessary, please refer to the Alliance Homes Human Rights Policy)

No

Appendix B

Our approach to Improvements or alterations *

* Anything not detailed on this list will need to be referred to Alliance Homes for permission to be considered.

** Alterations and improvements linked to Disabled Facilities Grants, adaptations or reasonable adjustments proposed by medical professionals will be considered.

*** Subject to any restrictive covenants or new build settlement considerations that may be in place. We will always be guided by the relevant lease or tenancy agreement.

Where **permission** is **not needed**: (Subject to checking whether planning permission or other consents are required). If customers would like permission in writing, this can be provided free of charge.

- Internal painting and decorating (please note that before carrying out any changes to or interfering with Artex, checks for the presence of asbestos must be made by a qualified contractor)
- Fixing pictures and mirrors***
- Putting up shelves***
- Securing flatpack furniture to walls***
- Replacing like for like floor coverings e.g., carpet with carpet (laminates will usually require permission for flats)
- Temporary / removable garden water features***
- Toilet seats and lids
- Tv/Sky aerial*** (Permission will be refused where there is already a communal source available and where wall cladding is compromised)
- Curtain rails
- Additional phone sockets (by telephone provider)
- Lock changes
- Security cameras or security lighting subject to any data protection restrictions*** (subject to CCTV guidance)
- Hot tubs in areas that are not shared/communal spaces***

Where we **will consider** granting **permission**:

- Electrical works such as light sockets, light switches
- Shower or bath installation***
- Replacement or alterations to the kitchen or bathroom***
- Fencing, patios and paving***
- Changing internal doors***
- Stairlifts***
- Installation of solar panels
- Ponds in private gardens***

Alterations and Improvements Policy



- Outside taps***
- Laminate or Hardwood floor coverings in flats (ground floor only)
- Putting up a standard shed***
- Temporary garden structures such as chicken runs, kennels***
- Additional parking***
- Electric car charging point***
- Removal of hedges that have significantly deteriorated
- Alterations and additional fixtures to communal areas**

We will not grant permission for:

- A gas fire
- A flueless gas fire
- A log/wood burner or coal fire
- A solid fuel heater
- Cat or dog flaps in any composite or fire door
- Any alterations to the loft space including boarding
- Hard standing that takes up more than 20 percent of the garden footprint. This includes dry lay paving slabs
- Cavity wall insulation
- Textured walls
- Decking that adjoins the property or property boundary
- Roofing works of any type

We will refuse permission to an alteration or improvement where:

- The proposed works are structural and for a flat
- At the time of request customers owe any housing-related debt or are in breach of any tenancy conditions
- The lease does not allow us any discretion and therefore, granting permission would be a breach of the lease
- The customer is currently within the probationary period of their tenancy or within the final 12-months of a Fixed Term tenancy agreement
- The proposed work may reduce the overall value of the home
- The proposed work will breach any planning, building or health & safety regulations or any other legislation
- The proposed works are detrimental to the overall structure or fabric of the building
- The proposed works may have an impact on the chargeable rent (change in the number of bedrooms)
- The home is still within its new build guarantee (NHBC) and any proposed work would invalidate this
- The environmental impact of the proposed work may be detrimental to the surrounding neighbourhood

Alterations and Improvements Policy



- The proposed work will impact on the health and safety of anyone living in or around the home (e.g. Installation of decking)
- The proposed works will create additional ongoing costs for Alliance Homes
- The proposed alterations are for communal areas (unless reasonable adjustments are considered under the Equalities Act)