

<b>Policy name:</b> <b>Improvement Policy and Procedure</b>	
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<b>Exec responsible:</b>	Director of Property Services
<b>Review by:</b>	Property Services Manager
<b>Tenant review:</b>	No
<b>Authority to amend:</b>	Chief Executive
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<b>Responsibility for delivery:</b>	Property Services Manager
<b>Strategy:</b>	Asset Management Strategy
<b>Associated risk ID:</b>	Risk 5 - Data quality and data management is not sufficient to support the business Risk 7 - Unable to attract, retain, develop and motivate staff Risk 15 - Value for money is not delivered/ demonstrated Risk 21 - Procurement
<b>Health &amp; safety:</b>	Highlighted below
<b>Equality &amp; diversity:</b>	Highlighted below
<b>Associated costs and value for money:</b>	Highlighted below
<b>Associated documents:</b>	Health & Safety scheme files Asset Management Strategy The Big Plan feedback

**VERSION CONTROL**

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Sections Amended</b>	<b>Date of update</b>	<b>Approved by</b>
1.0	First issue in new template	November 2014	<i>CE</i>
1.1	Minor amendments to job titles	March 2018	<i>CE</i>
2.0	Full review	September 2025	<i>CE</i>

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# 1.Purpose

This policy outlines Cornerstone Housing's approach to planning, delivering, and managing property improvements and planned maintenance works. It ensures our homes are safe, well-maintained, energy-efficient, and meet the needs of our tenants while remaining compliant with legal, regulatory, and health and safety standards.

## 2.Health & safety.

- All safety procedures must be followed when on site.
- Whilst the H&S Policy applies across the whole organisation- the work of the Improvements Section presents one of the greater risks.

## 3.Equality & diversity

We are committed to embedding equality and diversity into all aspects of our planned works. This includes ensuring fair treatment, inclusive practices, and equal opportunities for staff, contractors, and service users throughout the planning, delivery, and evaluation of works.

Our objectives are:

- To promote a respectful and inclusive working environment.
- To ensure planned works are accessible and considerate of diverse needs.
- To comply with the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

## 4.VFM & benchmarking.

Cost effectiveness and improvements work will be monitored by an independent agency. We will comply with procurement legislation and utilise procurement frameworks and where appropriate a procurement consultant to ensure that we understand and seek value for money in our procurement activities.

## 5.Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required by legislation, operational needs, or tenant feedback.

- Performance will be monitored through:
- Delivery against planned works programme KPI reporting
- Resident satisfaction surveys
- Internal audits and reporting to the Board

## 6.Policy

Cornerstone operates an ongoing programme to modernise and improve its housing stock. This work is guided by a stock condition survey, resident feedback from The Big Plan and our Decent Homes data review, which cross-correlated complaints,

repairs and tenants' data. It will sit alongside an Asset Management Plan and Strategy, which inform future planned maintenance and improvements.

Decisions regarding the method of delivery whether through Cornerstone's Direct Labour Force (DLF) or external contractors are made by the Board. In most cases, improvements are carried out by Cornerstone's in-house DLF team with exceptions made for specialist improvements or improvements where we do not yet have suitably trained and qualified workforce available

For improvement schemes involving major structural or environmental works, proposals are developed with the input of an architect and submitted to the Board for approval. These proposals include cost estimates, which are verified by Quantity Surveyors when necessary.

Tenants affected by improvement schemes are consulted during the planning stage, with ongoing engagement throughout the works. Their feedback is taken into account, as are their individual and family needs in relation to any protected characteristics, and lessons learned may inform future programmes. The Housing team works closely with the property services team to ensure residents receive appropriate support and communication before, during, and after the works. Residents who need to be temporarily rehoused ("decanted") receive an allowance, which is reviewed at the end of each scheme.

Responsibility for preparing schemes lies with the Chief Executive, Director of Property Services and the Property Services Manager, with support from other Directors/Managers on more complex projects. Competitive pricing for materials is sought via the appropriate procurement routes, and workforce requirements are carefully considered. All materials must be sourced from approved suppliers, and orders will follow a set schedule of quantities for each phase of the work.

Improvement works are closely monitored by the Property Services Supervisor, with additional oversight from the Property Services Manager as needed. Actual costs are regularly compared against the approved budgets, with updates provided to the Executive Team. Any significant budget variances are reported to the Board.

## **7.Procedure**

The Property Services Manager will provide the necessary drawings for all schemes and ensure that all required permissions and regulatory approvals are obtained.

Following this, the Property Services Supervisor will assess the scope of work and compile a list of required materials for each phase of the project.

Materials and services will be sourced from approved suppliers in accordance with the Procurement Policy.

Wherever feasible, the same suppliers will be used for both routine material needs and project improvements to maintain consistent pricing. Suppliers are expected to

notify Cornerstone Housing in advance of any price increases, along with a justification for the change.

## **7.1 Ensuring Site Safety**

Ensuring the safety of all personnel on site is a core priority. This policy outlines the measures and continuous improvement strategies aimed at maintaining and enhancing safe working environments for both staff and contractors.

### **Objectives**

- To prevent accidents, injuries, and health hazards on all operational sites.
- To ensure compliance with relevant health and safety legislation and industry best practices.
- To foster a culture of safety awareness and proactive risk management.

## **8. Our key commitments are:**

### **8.1 Risk Assessments and Site Audits**

- Conduct regular and thorough risk assessments for all sites.
- Implement site-specific safety audits to identify hazards and improvement opportunities.
- Ensure findings are documented and actioned promptly.

### **8.2 Training and Induction**

- Provide comprehensive safety inductions for all staff and contractors before site access.
- Deliver ongoing training tailored to roles, risks, and changes in procedures or legislation.
- Maintain records of all safety training and certifications.

### **8.3 Clear Communication and Signage**

- Ensure all safety procedures are clearly communicated and accessible.
- Maintain visible and up-to-date safety signage across all sites.
- Use digital platforms where appropriate to reinforce safety messages and updates.

### **8.4 Incident Reporting and Review**

- Encourage prompt reporting of all incidents, near misses, and unsafe conditions.
- Investigate incidents thoroughly and share learnings across teams.
- Review and revise safety protocols based on incident data and feedback.

## 8.5 Contractor Management

- Vet contractors for safety compliance and relevant qualifications.
- Require contractors to adhere to site-specific safety rules and procedures.
- Monitor contractor activities to ensure ongoing compliance and safe practices.

## 8.6 Continuous Improvement

- Regularly review safety performance metrics and feedback.
- Engage staff and contractors in safety improvement initiatives.
- Invest in new technologies and practices that enhance site safety.

## 9. Materials

All materials must be sourced exclusively from approved suppliers in line with Cornerstone's Procurement Policy.

For each property requiring improvement works, the Property Services Supervisor will issue a unique job number. This number must be shared with the supplier and referenced on all related invoices.

For general material orders, the Property Services Supervisor will record scheduled delivery dates and provide the Property Services Manager with a copy of the order, including the order number.

Scaffolding and bulk materials such as windows and doors will be arranged by the Property Services Supervisor, who will liaise directly with supplier representatives to confirm delivery schedules. The Property Scheduling Team will assign and document a specific order number for these items. Any changes to delivery dates or stock availability must be reported to the Property Services Manager without delay.

The Property Services Supervisor is also responsible for arranging all plant hire necessary for the project.

Upon delivery, the Property Services Supervisor must check all items against the original request form and the supplier's delivery note. Any discrepancies must be reported and resolved immediately, in collaboration with the Property Services Manager.

Although deliveries are generally scheduled to coincide with installation timelines, secure storage options are available if early delivery is required. These options include a designated property, a steel security unit, or an outdoor compound suitable for larger items.

All orders must be authorised according to the following financial limits:

- Property Services Supervisors – up to £3,000
- Property Services Manager – up to £15,000

- Director of Property Services – up to £20,000
- Chief Executive – £ 1 million

## **9. Labour**

### **DLF Staff Site Attendance and Reporting Requirements**

All DLF staff are required to be on-site during the following hours:

Monday to Thursday: 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Friday: 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Staff must check in twice daily using their assigned Peoplesafe device (for lone working compliance) and must accurately report their daily working hours. This report should include all working time, any downtime, lunch breaks, and training activities.

The Property Services Manager reserves the right, at their discretion, to assign maintenance staff to cover absences within the Improvements Team due to sickness or annual leave.

Each week, individual timesheets must be submitted for review and approval by the Property Services Manager or supervisor. These timesheets must contain a detailed breakdown of all assigned tasks and be completed with accuracy and thoroughness.

When surplus staff are available, the Property Services Manager may reassign them to support the Repairs Team or assist with other site-related duties. The Property Services Supervisor is responsible for notifying the Manager of the number of available personnel to ensure appropriate planning for material procurement and task allocation.

## **10. Planned Maintenance Programme**

We maintain a rolling 5–30-year asset management plan, informed by:

- Stock condition surveys (updated every 5 years or sooner).
- Resident feedback – through The Big Plan consultation or complaints
- Legislative changes and regulatory guidance.
- Technological advances and sustainability targets.

Types of Planned Works may include:

- External works (e.g., roofs, walls, windows)
- Internal fittings (e.g., kitchens, bathrooms)
- Mechanical & electrical systems (e.g., heating systems)
- Energy-efficiency upgrades (e.g., insulation, solar panels)
- Health and safety compliance works

# 11. Resident Engagement

We are committed to involving residents in planned improvements by:

- Communicating positively with residents in ways that build trust about why the improvements need to take place.
- Working alongside residents when they raise challenges, complaints or questions about improvements works with the aim to understand the resident concerns and meet their needs wherever reasonable and practicable.
- Providing advance notice of upcoming works.
- Offering choice where appropriate (e.g., kitchen colours).
- Conducting satisfaction surveys post-completion.
- Providing a clear process for raising concerns or feedback.
- Take into account residents protected characteristics when communicating about, planning or undertaking works
- Have a communications plan in place for sites where significant works are being undertaken that impact more than 2 households.

# 12. Resident Improvements (Alterations by Tenants)

We recognise the importance of allowing residents to personalise and improve their homes. This section outlines our approach to managing tenant-led alterations within the scope of planned works, ensuring safety, compliance, and fairness.

## 12.1 Permission and Assessment

- All resident improvement requests must be formally submitted and assessed for feasibility, safety, and compliance with property standards.
- Works must not compromise the structural integrity, safety, or future maintenance of the property.

## 12.2 Health and Safety

- Any approved alterations must be carried out in accordance with health and safety regulations.
- Residents and contractors must follow site safety protocols during the works, including use of appropriate PPE and safe working practices.

## 12.3 Quality and Compliance

- Alterations must meet agreed specifications and relevant building regulations.
- Inspections may be carried out before, during, and after works to ensure compliance.

## **12.4 Equality and Accessibility**

- Requests for alterations related to accessibility or specific needs will be prioritised and assessed with sensitivity.
- All residents will be treated fairly and consistently in the approval and support process.

## **12.5 Communication and Support**

- Clear guidance will be provided to residents on the process for requesting and completing alterations.
- Support will be offered where appropriate, especially for vulnerable residents or those requiring reasonable adjustments.

# **13. Variations and Additional Works**

All variations or additional works exceeding a value of £2,500 must be authorised by either the Property Services Manager or the Director of Property Services prior to commencement.

Occasionally, unforeseen issues may arise during planned works—such as the discovery of structural defects (e.g., rotten joists) or hidden service complications. In such cases, the Property Services Manager will assess the situation and determine the appropriate course of action, in line with their financial authority limits.

Where necessary, the Manager may consult with the appointed architect or relevant technical specialists to ensure that any proposed variation is appropriate, cost-effective, and compliant with project specifications and safety standards.

All variations must be documented, justified, and tracked to ensure transparency, budget control, and accountability.