

<b>Policy name:</b>	
<b>Right to Improve Policy</b>	
<b>Section:</b>	Property Services
<b>Exec responsible:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Review by:</b>	Property Services Manager, Compliance Manager, Health and Safety Lead
<b>Resident review:</b>	No
<b>Authority to amend:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Frequency of review:</b>	Every 3 years
<b>Last review:</b>	January 2026
<b>Next review:</b>	January 2029
<b>Responsibility for delivery:</b>	Property Services
<b>Strategy:</b>	
<b>Associated risk ID:</b>	61: Failure to meet resident expectations
<b>Health &amp; safety:</b>	All improvement work undertaken must meet Health & Safety Legislation
<b>Equality &amp; diversity:</b>	
<b>Associated costs and value for money:</b>	
<b>Associated documents:</b>	Appendix 1 – Compensation for Improvements

<b>VERSION CONTROL</b>			
<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	CE
1.1	Slight amendments and inclusion of appendices	December 2017	CE
2.0	Full amend	January 2026	HB

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## **1. Introduction**

Cornerstone residents have the right to make certain improvements to their home only with written permission, in line with the law, their tenancy agreement and this policy.

This policy sets out our approach for when our residents want to make improvements to their home.

## **2. Policy Aim**

This policy applies to all Cornerstone residents.

If there is any variance between this policy and individual tenancies, the tenancy agreement will take precedence.

An improvement will generally count as a landlord's fixture where it becomes a fixed part of the structure or installations of the building, as defined in the Landlord and Tenant Act. For example, new bathrooms and central heating will be landlord's fixtures and we have a duty to keep such items in good repair.

## **3. Legislation**

- Housing Act 1985
- Statutory Instrument 1994 No. 613 of the Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulations 1994
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 •
- Fire Safety Act 2021 •
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Equality Act 2010

## **4. Related Policies And Procedures**

This policy should be read in conjunction with their individual tenant's agreement and the following Cornerstone policies:

- Aids and Adaptations Policy and Procedure
- Repairs Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Cyclical maintenance policy
- Improvement Policy and Procedure
- Minimum lettable standard

## 5. Managing Requests

Residents may have the right to carry out improvements and alterations to their home at their own cost, provided they obtain written consent from Cornerstone beforehand. The right will depend on what is permitted in the tenancy agreement.

Those on Starter tenancies or in Rent plus properties **do not** have the right to carry out improvements.

Each application is considered on its merits, and permission will not unreasonably be withheld.

Should Cornerstone refuse permission, reason(s) will be given in writing.

### **The sort of improvements for which permission is required includes:**

- Installing your own bathroom or kitchen
- Changing the layout of your home
- Knocking down or putting up walls, inside or outside your home
- Taking doors off or installing additional doors
- Installing a driveway
- Fitting satellite and phone dishes
- Installing CCTV or smart doorbells
- Changes in the provision of services in your home such as changing the position of gas, electrical or water supplies
- Installing sheds, greenhouses, lean to's or outbuildings
- Installing laminated or wood flooring
- Painting the outside of your property
- Installing a cat flap
- Installing a hot tub

### **Permission for home improvements will be refused if the intended work is:**

- Structural alterations such as construction of porches, loft conversions, extensions, car ports or garages, unless through a disabled adaptation request
- Conservatories
- Carports or garages unless through a disabled adaptation request
- Loft conversions
- Decking
- Ponds
- Extensions
- Log burners
- Laminate flooring (if you live in a flat)
- Spy holes in already installed fire doors

Once permission has been obtained from Cornerstone, residents must comply with building regulations, planning requirements and listed building consent if applicable. Residents are advised not to start any work until written approval is received.

We recommend that if the Improvement is agreed, the resident must try to obtain at least three estimates and say which is being accepted.

Residents will be expected to sign an undertaking which is a written agreement whereby the resident agrees to take responsibility for the repair, replacement and or removal of the improvement before they leave the property.

Cornerstone insists that alteration works are carried out by a named qualified contractor with appropriate public liability and indemnity insurance. All gas and electrical work must be carried out and certified by a qualified tradesperson.

Improvement works must not cause serious disruption or nuisance to neighbours or other people in the community.

Cornerstone Property Services Surveyor will inspect the completed works and provide written confirmation that they have been completed to an acceptable standard and works are to the original approved specification. A diary note will be made at the time that consent is granted to follow up after an appropriate period to check whether the works have been completed.

If we identify that the improvement has not been completed to the correct agreed specification, we will engage with the resident and may advise them (in writing) that they need to rectify the works or remove the improvement and return the property to the original specification. In these situations, we will follow up with the resident to check works and if this does not happen, we may enforce tenancy conditions.

Where repairs are needed as the result of poor-quality improvement works, we may agree to carry these out, but they will be treated as a rechargeable repair in line with our Repairs Policy

The resident is responsible for the maintenance of any addition or alteration and making good any damage caused by this addition or alteration.

Any permanent alteration or addition becomes the property of Cornerstone by law and cannot be removed when the resident leaves the property.

Improvements will not result in an increase in the residents' rent.

When a resident leaves their home, they may be entitled to compensation for a qualifying improvement they have carried out. The maximum payment is £2,000 and the minimum payment is £50.

We only pay compensation where we have given written permission for and approved the finished works.

We calculate compensation using the receipts provided by the tenant for the completed works covered in the estimate that formed the basis of our permission.

We only pay compensation for an improvement where the tenant is moving home permanently, such as through a permanent decant or transfer. We do not pay compensation for tenant improvements where a tenant is evicted or the tenancy changes through a joint tenancy, assignment or succession.

Where we do agree to pay compensation for an improvement, we first use the compensation to clear any debt the tenant has with us.

## **6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

We understand that residents may need to make home improvements to support themselves to remain independent and live in their own home. We support them with this by signposting to our Aids and Adaptations Policy and providing information on how a request for aids and adaptations can be made.

All requests from residents to accommodate their needs are considered and acted on where possible, in accordance with our Reasonable Adjustments Policy and the Equality Act 2010. You can request a reasonable adjustment from us through your Housing Officer, or by contacting our Customer Services team.

Examples of the support we can provide include providing information in alternative formats and adapting our communication method.