

# **Repairs and Maintenance Policy**

## **Scope of Policy**

This policy sets out the overall approach that Platform Housing Group (the Group) will take in relation to the repair and maintenance of properties it owns and/or manages.

## **Applicability**

The principles of this policy apply to all customers regardless of tenancy type. However, the full provisions of this policy only apply to customers living in social, intermediate, affordable and market rented homes with assured, secure and assured shorthold tenancies.

The full provisions of this policy do not apply to:

- new homes that are within the initial defects liability period of up to a year after handover (customers should refer to their welcome pack for details); or
- shared ownership or leasehold properties (see section 10).

## **1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 We are committed to delivering a range of maintenance services that are shaped around the legitimate expectations of customers and to ensuring homes and communal facilities are safe and well maintained.

## **2. Context**

- 2.1 We own and manage approximately 45,000 homes located in 62 local authority areas.
- 2.2 Successive surveys undertaken by us have identified the repairs and maintenance service as being the most accessed of all the services offered by us and is a major determinant of customer satisfaction with Platform as a landlord.
- 2.3 In addition to applying an agreed set of standards, we will meet all applicable legal requirements and the regulatory requirements set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).

## **3. Aims and Objectives**

- 3.1 The principal aims and objectives of this policy are to provide an effective customer focussed maintenance service and support our Asset Management Strategy by having in place:
- An approach to service delivery and standards of performance that are shaped around the legitimate expectations of customers.
  - A reliable, timely and flexible responsive maintenance service to deal with unplanned 'demand driven' repairs.

- Planned maintenance programmes which deliver economies of scale by replacing or updating components before they become outdated or require excessive responsive repairs.
- Extensive and regularised maintenance arrangements aimed at keeping customers safe in their homes.
- Cyclical maintenance to prevent deterioration in the physical condition of customers' homes.
- An efficient and effective empty home repairs service to help protect the Group's revenue and provide good quality accommodation for customers.

## **4. Policy Outline**

### **4.1 Classification of Repairs and Maintenance Activities**

4.1.1 We classify our maintenance activities according to their type and frequency.

### **4.2 Responsive Maintenance**

4.2.1 This is generally unforeseen 'demand driven' episodic maintenance and are typically repairs reported by customers.

### **4.3 Cyclical Maintenance**

4.3.1 These are regularised programmes of maintenance undertaken at pre-determined frequencies. Examples of cyclical maintenance include, but are not restricted to:

- Building safety inspections and tests (e.g., gas and fire safety tests)
- External painting
- Grounds maintenance
- Service contracts

4.3.2 The specific arrangements for building safety related cyclical maintenance are provided for in separate policies.

### **4.4 Planned Maintenance**

4.4.1 These are planned programmes to update or upgrade properties or neighbourhoods, or to replace key components such as kitchens and bathrooms. Planned programmes often include an element of customer choice. The timing of replacements is agreed annually and informed by frequent stock condition surveys.

4.4.2 Cyclical and planned maintenance programmes are updated on an annual basis and indicative plans for the current and next four years are available on request.

#### **4.5 Repairing Responsibilities**

- 4.5.1 Under the terms and conditions of the Tenancy Agreement, there are repairs that are our responsibility and others that are the customer's responsibility.

#### **4.6 Group Responsibilities**

- 4.6.1 We are responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of the structure and common parts of properties as set out in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenants' Handbook. These responsibilities include:

- All repairs to the structure and exterior of the property (including drains, gutters and external pipes and any other fixtures and fittings provided by us.
- Maintenance of communal areas, including grounds maintenance and lighting to these areas.
- External paintwork.
- The repair and proper working order of installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity.
- Repair and proper working order of installations for space heating and heating water.
- Internal walls, floors and ceilings, doors and door frames, door hinges and skirting boards (but not including internal painting and decoration).
- Chimneys, chimney stacks and flues.
- All fixtures and fittings including kitchen cabinets and bathroom suites and showers.
- Boundary walls and boundary fencing, privacy panel fencing and storage sheds where provided by us.

#### **4.7 Customers' Responsibilities**

- 4.7.1 Customers are responsible for promptly reporting repairs for which we are responsible and for the repair, maintenance and replacement of certain items within the home as set out in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenants' Handbook.

### **5. Responsive Repairs Service**

#### **5.1 Reporting Repairs**

- 5.1.1 In order to ensure the service is accessible for all customers, we will maintain a range of ways for repairs to be reported. These include:

- by phone
- online
- via any Group colleague or representative

5.1.2 Customers are responsible for reporting repairs to us and must allow access to their home for any work, inspections or surveys to be carried out by us or any of our contractors or representatives.

5.1.3 All requests for repairs reported by customers will be assessed against our repairing obligations, as outlined in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenants' Handbook.

We may charge for undertaking repairs where damage has been caused by the customer, members of their household or visitors to the property.

5.1.4 Details of how recharges will be applied can be found in our **Rechargeable Repairs Guide (Appendix A)**.

## 6. Repairs Timescales and Appointments

6.1 The responsive repairs service exists to undertake work that cannot wait for cyclical or planned programmes of work and categorises repairs according to their urgency.

6.2 The three levels of responsive repairs service offered by us are:

Repair Service	Repair Type	Appointment offered to customer
<b>Emergency Repairs</b> (initial attendance at property within 24 hours. Priority will be to make safe or secure and may result in follow-up work being required)	<p>Attendance to deal with an immediate and serious risk to people or property. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• severe water leaks</li> <li>• total loss of power and major electrical faults</li> <li>• total loss of heating (autumn/winter)</li> <li>• passenger lift faults</li> <li>• major roofing or drainage problems</li> <li>• major structural problems</li> <li>• failed smoke or CO alarms to ensure minimum coverage is provided</li> </ul> <p>Repairs will be completed in a single visit where possible, providing they can be completed within one hour of attendance.</p>	No
<b>Appointed Repairs</b> (customers offered mutually convenient appointment at first)	All non-emergency and non-specialist repairs that need to be carried out to remedy building defects or component failure and that cannot reasonably wait	Yes

point of contact where possible. If works are of a larger more complex nature, customer would be informed and repair relogged under Major Repairs category)	for cyclical or planned/ programmed works.  Repairs will be completed in a single visit where possible within 28 days.	
<b>Major Repairs</b> (initial assessment within 28 days and completed within 90 days)	Larger scale, more complex non-emergency and non-specialist repairs that need to be carried out to remedy building defects or component failure and that cannot reasonably wait for cyclical or planned/ programmed works.	Yes

## 7. Home Improvements

7.1 A secure tenant has a legal right to make alterations and improvements to their home provided that they obtain written permission before they carry out any works and seek all relevant permissions including Planning and Building Regulations approval etc.

7.2 We will not unreasonably withhold consent when a request to carry out improvements/alterations is made. If consent is provided, the customer will become responsible for any subsequent repairs, maintenance or replacement of the improvement/alteration.

At the end of the tenancy, a customer may claim compensation for certain eligible improvements carried out provided they have the relevant consent.

7.3 Full details are provided in **A Guide to Undertaking Your Own Home Improvements (Appendix B)**.

## 8. Aids and Adaptations

8.1 We will ensure that our housing stock meets the needs of customers who have disabilities by:

- Maintaining a database of homes which have either been purpose built or adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person/persons.
- Establishing an annual budget which it will use to fund minor adaptations to the homes of existing customers.
- Not unreasonably withholding permission for properties to be adapted when funded by Disabled Facilities Grants and where no suitable alternative accommodation exists.
- Having in place servicing contracts for adaptive equipment regardless of how it was originally funded.

- 8.2 Full details are provided in our **Aids and Adaptations Policy**.

## **9. Leaseholder/Shared Ownership Obligations**

- 9.1 We will not carry out repairs for leaseholders where the terms of the lease state that a repair is their responsibility. Leaseholders' repair responsibilities are set out in detail within the individual lease agreement. The same recharge approach will apply to leaseholders as for tenants. We will not carry out repairs to homes we manage for third parties unless expressly identified in formal agreements.
- 9.2 We will consult with leaseholders before entering into a Qualifying Long-Term Agreement. This is an agreement that is 12 months or more in length where a leaseholder may have to make a contribution of £100 or more in any 12-month period. We will also consult leaseholders before carrying out Qualifying Works. This is a repair or major works where a leaseholder will be required to make a contribution of £250 or more. We will comply fully with the requirements placed on managing agents/landlords in respect of the consultation.

## **10. Equality and Diversity**

- 10.1 We are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief, family circumstances or offending history, as referred to in our relevant policies. Our aim is to ensure that our policies and procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly.
- 10.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out in respect of this policy and which identified no negative impacts on any person/group with a protected characteristic as a result of this policy.

## **11. Complaints**

- 11.1 We aim to meet the needs of our customers by providing an excellent service. However, it is acknowledged that occasionally things go wrong and customers may wish to complain. Should the need arise to make a complaint, please refer to our Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.

## **12. Monitoring and Review**

- 12.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or on the introduction of new legislation or best practice guidance, whichever is the sooner.
- 12.2 Members of the Group will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and recommend policy changes to improve service delivery and the customer experience. Performance and customer satisfaction outcomes will be reported through the respective Boards, Customer Voice Panel, Senior Management Teams and Scrutiny Panels to identify any areas for review and improvement.

- 12.3 Approved documents are valid for use after their approval date and remain in force beyond any expiry of their review date until a new version is available.

### 13. Associated Documents

- 13.1 List of documents - associated policies, procedures and publications:

- Aids and Adaptations Policy
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy
- Electrical Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Management Policy
- Gas and Fuel Burning Appliance Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Water Systems (Legionella) Management Policy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Our Customer Commitments
- A Guide to Undertaking Your Own Home Improvements
- Lettable Standard
- Rechargeable Repairs Guide

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# Rechargeable Repairs Guide





## At Platform Housing Group (PHG) we aim to provide an excellent and cost effective repairs service to our Customers.

Most Customers maintain their property to a high standard and help us to keep the inconvenience of needing repairs and repairs visits to a minimum that is why we feel it is unfair for all customers to pay towards other people's neglect or intentional damage of their home.

Where appropriate, we will charge for repairs which have not resulted from fair wear and tear and for occasions where customers have persistently failed to honour the appointments we have agreed with them.

**Please remember our repairs operatives and contractors are not responsible for raising charges and they are not authorised to waiver any costs.**

## What is a rechargeable repair?

As a Customer of PHG, you have the responsibility under your tenancy agreement to undertake repairs which have been caused to your home by damage or neglect, or by visitors who have been invited to your home.

You will normally be recharged for repairs undertaken by the Group in the following circumstances:

- Where the repair is not the result of fair wear and tear and is not the Group's legal responsibility
- When a contractor has attended and it is found that the repair is the responsibility of the Customer



## What type of things might I be charged for?

A more detailed list of who is responsible for different type of repairs is provided at the end of this guide.

The most common types of rechargeable repairs we undertake are:

- Accidental damage to windows, doors and internal fixtures or fittings
- Non-accidental breakages of glass where a crime reference number has not been obtained
- Breakages to sanitary ware - baths, wash basins, toilet basins and cisterns
- Floods from washing machines, basins, baths and toilet basins
- Blocked sinks or toilets
- Damage to doors and windows (where board up only would initially be actioned)
- Lost keys
- Removal of items after a Customer has moved out and subsequent cleaning of the property
- Damage caused during the execution of a warrant i.e. Police forced entry
- Overgrown and untidy gardens

**The list at the end of this guide provides a useful breakdown of PHG's responsibilities and customers responsibilities.**

## What if I cannot afford to pay in full?

If you cannot pay for the repair all in one go.

We operate a tariff for the most common rechargeable repairs we undertake a repayment plan over a longer period. Once you have paid for the rechargeable repair in full the job will be raised and repair completed.

As always, you have the option to complete your own repairs that are your responsibility, as long as you use a certified/qualified contractor. We may ask to survey works once completed.

This change does not affect your normal day to day repairs, and you can continue to request those as normal where there are property defects or fair wear and tear. This change only applies to rechargeable repairs where you or a visitor has caused damage or neglect, whether accidentally or intentionally.

Former Customers will be recharged by the Group if expenses are incurred for repairing, clearing or cleaning a property when it has been vacated, including if expense is incurred in redecoration due to the poor decorative order in which the property has been left.

It is advisable that Customers have their own contents insurance to cover any damage caused by them that the Group would deem as rechargeable.

Area of Property	Component	Maintenance Item	Responsibility
Roofing	Roof	Roof structure, roof covering and chimney repairs & Leaks	PHG
	Gutters	Gutter & gully repairs and clearance blockages	PHG
	RWP	Make safe defective rain water goods, soffit and fascia	PHG
External Finishes	Structural	Major structural defects	PHG
	Brickwork	Significant render & brickwork repairs	PHG
	Cladding	External façade including wooden cladding	PHG
	DPC	Failed DPC repairs	PHG
	Dampness	Penetrating dampness repairs	PHG
External Areas	Fencing	Removal of H&S dangers to fencing, gates, gate posts and boundary walls	PHG
		Repair or replacement of communal area fencing, gates gate posts and boundary walls	PHG
	Paving (General Stock)	Make safe H&S related hazards to paving and tarmac – only responsible for the path leading to the front entrance door, 1 flag wide, and around property to a side or rear entrance door 1 flag wide	PHG
		Repair, replacement or upgrade of paving, tarmac – only responsible for the path leading to the front entrance door, 1 flag wide, and around the property to a side or rear entrance door 1 flag wide	PHG
		Repair, replacement or upgrade of communal area paving, tarmac, turf	PHG - Check with Assets re: lease
	Garages	Repair or replacement of garage, external items inclusive of roof, rain water goods, brickwork, door	PHG
		Repair or replacement of garage internal and ironmongery elements inclusive of door locks and fittings, finishes	If wear & tear PHG, if caused by damage by the customer or visitor - customer
	Bins	Repair or replacement of bins to individual house or flat	Customer
	TV Aerials	Repair or replacement of TV aerials or satellite dishes serving an individual house or flat	Customer
	Washing lines	Repair or replacement of washing lines and rotary dryers to an individual house or flat	Customer

Area of Property	Component	Maintenance Item	Responsibility
External Areas (cont)	Garden	Maintenance of trees, grass, hedges, shrubs	Customer
		Maintenance of trees causing structural damage	PHG
		Removal or control of invasive weeds i.e. Japanese Knotweed	PHG
	Brick Outhouses	Repair or replacement of out-house items inclusive of locks and fittings, windows, doors, finishes	PHG
	Timber Sheds	Maintenance of timber sheds or of its removal if no longer required	Customer
Drainage	Within boundary	Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack etc. within property boundary	PHG - Unless this has been caused by damage or neglect by the customer
	Outside boundary	Blocked or leaking shared foul drain outside property boundary	Customer via utility company
External Joinery	Glazing	Board up of broken glazing (this will be carried out by PHG but is rechargeable item)	PHG
		Re-glaze windows if crime reference number provided, if no crime reference provided customer reimburses via recharge	PHG
		Replacement of failed double glazed units	PHG
	Windows & ironmongery	Repair or replacement of window inclusive of frame, external sealant, sash, sill, window board, operating mechanisms, restrictor catch, window handle, casement fastener, repair or replacement of internal sealant, window ironmongery inclusive of locks, replacement keys, casement stay	PHG
		Replacement of window keys if lost	Customer
	Doors & ironmongery	Repair or replacement of external doors inclusive of frame, threshold, weather board, hinges and operating mechanisms such as door handles, multi point locks and suited lock systems	PHG
		Repair or replacement of door locks, replacement of keys, letter plate, number plate, security chain, spy hole and other associated door ironmongery	Customer
		Replacement keys if door is vandalised - customer MUST report with a CRIME No from Police	PHG
	Fire doors - external and internal i.e. Kitchen	Repairs or replacement of fire doors inclusive of fittings and fixtures that provide fire protection i.e. letter box, spy hole, emergency latch, spring door closer, single push bar, overhead door closer, intumescent fire strip and smoke seals	PHG

Area of Property	Component	Maintenance Item	Responsibility
Communal Areas	Lifts	Lift breakdown repairs	PHG
	Door entry	Repair or replacement of door entry equipment	PHG
	Security lighting	Repair or replacement of communal security lighting	PHG
	General lighting	Repair of general lighting appliances	PHG
	AOV	Automatic opening vents	PHG
	Fire alarm	Repair and replacement of fire alarm equipment	PHG
	Fire fighting	Repair or replacement of firefighting equipment i.e. extinguishers	PHG
	CCTV	Repair or replacement of CCTV equipment	PHG
	TV aerial	Repair or replacement of communal TV aerials	PHG
	Gates barriers	Repair or replacement of gates and barriers	PHG
	Laundry equipment	Repair or replacement of laundry equipment	PHG
	White goods	Repair or replacement of white goods	PHG
	Communal Kitchen	Repair or fitting of cookers and cooker connections such as bayonet fittings	PHG
	Warden call system	Repair or replacement of warden call systems	PHG
	Pest control	Removal/destruction of mice, rats and other vermin in communal areas	PHG
	W.C. Repairs	Repair or replacement of W.C. including seat	PHG
	General repairs	Repair or replacement of general maintenance items	PHG
	Asbestos	Assessment and removal of asbestos containing materials	PHG
Water	Water supply	Loss of water supply	PHG
	Leaks	Leaks to water pipes and water tanks	PHG

Area of Property	Component	Maintenance Item	Responsibility
Gas & Heating	Gas leak	Gas leak	PHG
	Pipework leaks	Leaks to heating pipes and radiators	PHG
	Flues	Blocked flues - boiler, fire	PHG
	Boilers/fires	Repairs to heating appliances - boiler, electric fire, storage heaters	PHG
	Radiators	Bleeding of radiators	Customer
	Cookers	Repair or fitting of cookers and cooker connections such as bayonet fittings	Customer
	Meter cupboards	Internal meter cupboards i.e. located in Customer hallway	PHG
		Communal area meter cupboards including lock (cupboard to be fire compliant)	PHG
		External meter cupboards servicing individual tenancy (cupboard lock tenants responsibility)	PHG
Electrics	Power supply	Unsafe electrical power supply or fittings e.g. unsafe wiring, sockets, light fittings, extractor fans	PHG
	Sockets	Repair or replacement of laundry equipment	PHG
	Light fittings	Repair of essential electrical items - consumer units, sockets, light fittings, starter motors, extractor fans, TV sockets	PHG
	Light bulbs	Replacement of light bulbs - general need properties	Customer
		Replacement of light bulbs - Older persons schemes	PHG
	Doorbells	If hard wired and fitted by PHG (mainly newbuild)	PHG
		If battery operated or fitted by a previous Customer	Customer
	Security & alarms	Repair or replacement of security lights, burglar alarms or other security devices	Customer




Area of Property	Component	Maintenance Item	Responsibility
Smoke/CO Alarms	Mains detectors	Repair or replacement of mains-operated interlinked smoke detectors	PHG
	Battery detectors	Repair or replacement of battery operated smoke detectors	PHG is responsible for the replacement of faulty or damaged detectors, Customer is responsible for replacing the batteries in the detectors
	CO detector	Repair or replacement of CO detectors where solid fuel appliances are present	PHG
		Repair or replacement of CO detectors where solid fuel appliances are not present	PHG
Sanitation	Leaks to items	Leaks to basins, sinks, baths, showers and toilets, and associated internal pipework	PHG
	Repairs to items	Repair or replacement of basins, sinks, baths, showers and toilets	PHG
	Blocked W.C.	Blocked W.C.(unless caused by misuse)	PHG
	Blocked sink etc.	Blocked basins, sinks, baths, showers and level access shower wet room gullies	Customer
	Taps	Repair or replacement of taps and tap washers	PHG
	Plug, tap washer	Replacement of plug, chain, bath panel	Customer
	Showers	Repair or replacement of shower inclusive of riser rail, shower head (not including curtain) were shower is primary form of bathing facility i.e. there is no bath in property	PHG
		Repair or replacement of shower inclusive of curtain, riser rail, shower head were shower is not primary form of bathing facility i.e. there is a bath in property	PHG
		Repair or replacement of level access shower wet room non slip flooring	PHG
	W.C. Seats	Repair or replacement of W.C. seat - general needs	Customer
		Repair or replacement of communal W.C. seat	PHG
		Replacement of W.C. seat - Older Persons Schemes	PHG



Area of Property	Component	Maintenance Item	Responsibility
Internal Finishes	Plasterwork	Major wall and ceiling plaster work defects i.e. scratch coat repairs, holes greater than 1cm, cracks greater than 5mm wide	PHG
		Minor wall and ceiling plaster work suitable for filling with pollyfiller	Customer
	Tiling	Repair or replace wall and floor tiling finishes inclusive of bathroom and kitchen splash back tiles	If through wear & tear PHG, if through damaged caused by Customer or visitor - Customer
	DPM	Repair or replacement of floor damp-proof membrane and associated concrete repairs	PHG
	Flooring	PHG Install floor coverings in Kitchens, Bathroom, and WC ONLY During planned works – these we will repair for fair wear & Tear	PHG
		Customer must have contents insurance to cover in case of Damage done by any workman, whilst accessing a repair. A disclaimer will be asked to be signed before work commences	
		Other floor coverings - customers own responsibility	Customer
	Kitchen Appliances	Communal kitchen appliances. Repair or fitting of cookers and cooker connections	PHG
		General Kitchen appliances	Customer
		Market/Intermediate Rent appliances if provided i.e. cookers etc. Repairs or fitting of cookers and cooker connections	PHG
	Flooring	Repair or replace communal floor finishes	PHG
	Condensation	Customer is responsible for managing condensation in their home – please send attached leaflet	Customer
		Appropriate cleaning materials should be used on small areas of black mould on sealant etc.	Customer
		A spread of black spot mould on walls and ceilings may require an inspection/treatment by PHG, and education on condensation management	PHG
	Decoration	Painting and decoration (General Needs)	Customer

Area of Property	Component	Maintenance Item	Responsibility
Internal Joinery	Kitchen units	Cupboard doors/drawers that become loose due to fair wear and tear	Customer
		Other repairs – broken drawer/damaged cupboard doors – maybe recharged	PHG/Recharge
		Repair or replacement of kitchen sinks and taps	PHG
	Doors	Make safe H&S related internal door repairs	PHG
		Repair or replacement of internal doors and door ironmongery	PHG - Where caused by fair wear & tear. Where caused by damage or neglect - Customer
		Door changes to accommodate carpets including re-fixing of any draught excluders	Customer
	Door frames	Repair or replacement of internal door frames	PHG
	Curtain rails	Repair or replacement of curtain pole, rail or track replacement	Customer
	Handrails	Repair of H&S hazards to handrails, balusters, newel post, stair tread	PHG
	Skirting	Repair or replacement of skirting	PHG
	Stairs	Repair or replacement of stair treads, risers and nosing's	PHG
	Flooring	Make safe H&S related timber flooring repairs	PHG
		Repair or replacement of timber flooring i.e. floor boards	PHG
Vermin & Infestations	Vermin	Removal of mice, rats and other vermin in communal areas	PHG
		Removal of mice, rats and other vermin in non-communal areas	Customer
Adaptations	Minor adapts	Minor repair and replacement adaptations < £1,000	PHG
	Major adapts	Major repair and new adaptations > £1,000	PHG
Cleaning	Void Clean	Small environmental clean if former tenant not carried out	Former Customer
	Void Clean	Large environmental clean if former tenant not carried out	Former Customer
Upgrades		Upgrading of new or additional components outside of PHG replacement timescales or to a higher specification than standard	Customer



# A Guide to Undertaking **Your Own Home Improvements**



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# Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide customers with guidance and advice when they wish to carry out alterations to their homes.

This document should be used to help customers decide whether to proceed with making an alteration request.



There are three types of alteration requests as follows:

1. Requests that **will not be permitted**.
2. Requests that **will be permitted** without the need for you to submit a formal application. You will still need to contact us and obtain our permission for these requests.
3. Requests that **may be permitted** and require Platform Housing to consider the application on an individual basis. You will need to submit a formal application for these. These requests fall into two categories:
  - a) Requests for substantial alterations that require us to undertake a pre inspection to determine whether approval can be given, and if approval is given undertake a post inspection to ensure works have been carried out correctly. Evidence will also need to be provided to demonstrate that the work has been completed to the required standards.
  - b) Requests for major alterations that will not require us to undertake pre and post inspections of the work. You will still need to demonstrate the work has been completed to the required standards.





# General Conditions

There are various considerations that should be taken into account before making an alteration request, including:

## **The type of tenancy agreement you have**

Alteration requests will only be considered if you have a secure tenancy such as an Assured General Needs or Fixed Term. If you have a Starter Tenancy you are not permitted to undertake major/substantial alterations (type 3a and 3b requests).

If you have a market or intermediate rent property, or are a shared owner or leaseholder you will need to follow the Home Ownership process for requesting alterations. Please call our customer contact centre for more information.

## **Tenancy breaches**

A tenancy alteration request will automatically be refused if there is a breach of tenancy. Tenancy breaches may include:

- Significant non-payment of rent
- Evidence of wilful damage or neglect to the property
- Unauthorised alteration requests
- Involvement in or subject to an antisocial behaviour order.

## **Retrospective applications**

No work should be undertaken without our permission. However, if you have undertaken work without our permission you will need to apply for retrospective consent. This will involve going through the same process as detailed in this guide and works will either be Approved or Refused.

Please call our customer contact centre for more information.

## **New build properties**

Alteration requests will generally not be considered if your property is less than 12 months old as alterations may invalidate the new build warrantee.

The only exceptions to this are the following if the property is a house or bungalow:

- A digital TV aerial or standard satellite dish
- A shed or greenhouse
- Laminate flooring

Subject to specific requirements being met, these requests will normally be Approved without the need for you to submit a formal application, (refer to Alteration Requests section 2 below).

## **Undertaking the work**

All work must be carried out by competent tradespersons/contractors to the complete satisfaction of Platform Housing.

For certain works undertaken, evidence will need to be provided that the works have been undertaken to the required standards and you have complied with all statutory obligations.

# General Conditions (cont)

Platform Housing will not be responsible for any future maintenance costs relating to the improvements or alterations you undertake.

It is your responsibility to maintain insurance cover and make sure any installation is kept in a well maintained condition not to cause damage to any property or injury to persons.

You must not work with, damage, or remove materials that you know or think might contain asbestos. If you think there are materials in your home that may contain asbestos and are damaged or in a poor condition please call our customer contact centre.

## Potential costs and other charges

Before deciding whether you would like to undertake an alteration you should carefully consider the following potential costs and re-charges:

- **Poor workmanship** - if Platform Housing deems the workmanship is unsatisfactory, you will be required to either complete the works to the necessary standards or re-instate the property to how it was before the alteration took place.
- **At the end of the tenancy** - if at any time you vacate the premises, you may be required to reinstate the property to how it was before the alteration took place.
- **Unauthorised works** - if you carry out unauthorised alterations, you will be required to reinstate the property to how it was before the alteration took place. Unauthorised works include work undertaken which have been refused, work undertaken before Platform Housing has confirmed a decision,

works that have not been undertaken in accordance with the correct statutory/legal requirements, or if the required certification/documentation has not been received by us within 12 months of the approval date.

- **Subsequent repairs** - if damage to the property occurs due to the alteration or while the alteration is being undertaken, you will be required to undertake the necessary repairs and possibly re-instate the property to how it was before the alteration took place.
- **Impeding future maintenance** - if your alteration impedes future maintenance work that Platform Housing is responsible for, re-instatement works may be required or the extra-over cost of being able to undertake the required maintenance will be re-charged to you.
- **Impact on your future rent** - some alterations may have an impact on your rent, e.g. if you intend to form an additional bedroom it may mean your rent will need to increase. This should be discussed with your Neighbourhood Officer as part of the application process.

If you have not satisfactorily completed the alteration or re-instatement works have not been completed within the required timeframe (that will be determined by Platform Housing depending on the nature and extent of the work) Platform Housing will carry out the necessary work and you will be re-charged.

Re-charges will include the cost of the work required, administration costs and VAT where applicable.



# General Conditions (cont)

## **Other consents/approvals may be required**

It is your responsibility to check if Planning permission or Building Regulation approval from the Local Authority is required. If it is, you will need to obtain the necessary consents and provide copies of such documentation to Platform Housing as soon as possible. You will also need to provide written confirmation if it is not required.

It is also your responsibility to check whether the Party Wall (etc) Act 1996 will apply to the work you intend to carry out. If so, you will need to obtain the required consents from your neighbours, and cover the costs of any associated work and agreements that may be required. You will need to provide copies of the necessary documentation to Platform Housing before commencing works.

It is also your responsibility to check whether any other consents or approvals are required.

Penalties issued by the Local Authority for failing to have the necessary consents in place can be severe, so please ensure you have the relevant approvals first.

If you carry out alterations without the necessary consents/approvals, the 'Approval' you have received from us will be retracted and the works will be deemed 'Unauthorised'.

## **Alterations required for medical reasons**

In some cases, adaptations may be required to assist you for medical reasons such as the installation of handrails, ramps, over bath or level access showers. If you require this sort of help, you should contact an Occupational Therapist. They can assess your needs and formally recommend to us what alterations may be required. If the alterations are minor, and we have the funds, this work would be done free of charge by us. If the works are major, then funding may be available from the Local Authority through a Disabled Facilities Grant.

Works processed in this way need to be approved by Platform Housing in accordance with our Aids and Adaptations Policy, but you will not need to make an Alteration Request.



# Alteration Requests

The 3 types of alteration requests are now explained in more detail.

Please note the following lists are not exhaustive and if you wish to undertake work not listed then please contact us for further advice.

## 1. Requests that **will not** be permitted

The following requests are an automatic Refusal by Platform Housing.

Reasons for refusal are provided next to each request. Any applications received for these types of requests will not be processed and you will be notified of this by our contact centre.

Request ID	Type of request	Reason/s for refusal
1.1	Installation of a pond.	Extensive future maintenance and re-instatement costs. Health and safety implications.
1.2	Installation of a new shed or greenhouse in a front or side garden.	Not an appropriate location for these types of structures.
1.3	Installation of a new shed or greenhouse in a communal area/ garden.	Not part of property tenancy.
1.4	Installation of a new shed or greenhouse if one already exists in that location.	Given the size of most rear gardens one of each is considered reasonable.
1.5	Upgrading or providing new fencing to a communal area/ garden.	Not part of property tenancy.
1.6	Installing new fencing to a private garden if no physical boundary has existed before.	Closing off open boundaries will impact upon the locality and will often contravene planning conditions of new estates.
1.7	Installing a dropped kerb if no driveway exists or if an existing driveway has not had approval.	Approval for driveway must be provided before a dropped kerb approval will be given.
1.8	Installing a garage on a designated parking space.	Restricts future letting of parking space and extensive re-instatement costs.

# Alteration Requests (cont)

1.9	Installation of a hot tub	Extensive future maintenance and re-instatement costs. Health and safety implications.
1.10	Installation of decking to any location	Extensive future maintenance and re-instatement costs. Health and safety implications.
1.11	Installation of an outside tap in a communal area.	No control of water usage or potential misuse.
1.12	Installation of a sky dish or aerial on a block of flats/maisonettes.	Contravenes planning requirements. Connection must be made to a communal system. If no communal system in place then contact us for further advice.
1.13	Changes to existing external doors, including the installation of cat flaps.	Will permanently impact on the integrity and performance of the door.
1.14	Any work within loft/attic, including the installation of a loft ladder.	No access to loft/attic areas is permitted in tenancy agreement.
1.15	Installation of any gas heating appliances (except cookers).	Health and safety implications.
1.16	Installation of any solid fuel heating appliances.	Health and safety implications.
1.17	Installation of any oil/LPG heating appliances or oil/LPG storage tanks.	Health and safety implications.
1.18	Installation of laminate, vinyl or tiled flooring to any flat or maisonette (vinyl is permitted in bathrooms and kitchens).	High noise transmission to neighbouring properties.
1.19	Painting over or covering of any kitchen or bathroom fixtures and fittings.	Permanent damage caused to fixtures and fittings.

# Alteration Requests (cont)

## 2. Requests that **will be** permitted by Platform Housing without the need for you to make a formal application request

The following requests are an automatic Approval by Platform Housing. Should you wish to undertake any of these works you do not need to make a formal application alteration request but you must ensure you adhere to any specific requirements provided.

For these requests you must email or phone our customer contact centre to explain what works you intend to carry out so that we can update your tenancy records. Failure to do so will invalidate the Approval status and works will be deemed 'Unauthorised'.

Request ID	Type of request	Specific requirements
2.1	Installing a dropped kerb if an approved driveway currently exists.	Permission for these works must be provided by Highways, who will also undertake the work on your behalf. They will charge you a fee for this.
2.2	Installation of a new shed or greenhouse in a rear garden.	Only if garden is part of tenancy agreement. The structure is classified by the Local Authority as Permitted Development – for guidance refer to: <b><a href="http://www.planningportal.co.uk">www.planningportal.co.uk</a></b> You have consulted with your adjacent neighbours. The structure must not be within 1m of any property or boundary or be placed over any drainage pipework, gullies or manholes. Only one of each structure is permitted per property.
2.3	Upgrading existing or installing new fencing to a garden area.	Only if garden is part of tenancy agreement. Fencing is not more than 1.8m high or 0.9m high if adjacent to a pavement or road. Fencing must be positioned on the original boundary line (i.e. the previous fencing, hedge or other physical boundary must be removed prior to installation).

# Alteration Requests (cont)

2.4	Installation of an outside tap in a garden area.	Only if garden is part of tenancy agreement. Only if a competent plumber undertakes the work. You take full responsibility for water usage, potential misuse and water hygiene risks i.e. legionella.
2.5	Installation of a sky dish or aerial on a house or bungalow.	The equipment must not cause interference to neighbouring signals. Approval will be retracted if planning enforcement action is taken by the Local Authority.
2.6	Installation of a washing machine or dishwasher.	Only if a competent plumber undertakes the work. Unnecessary pipework 'deadlegs' are not introduced into the system.
2.7	Installation of an additional radiator or towel radiator	Only if a competent plumber undertakes the work. Unnecessary pipework 'deadlegs' are not introduced into the system.
2.8	Installation of a shower (refer to section 3 below for electric shower).	Only if a competent plumber undertakes the work. Unnecessary pipework 'deadlegs' are not introduced into the system.
2.9	Change of existing light fittings.	Only if a competent electrician undertakes the work. Spot lights must be adequately fire rated.
2.10	Upgrading or replacing internal doors.	You are not permitted to change any fire doors. Door architraves and frames are not to be replaced.
2.11	Changing of door locks.	New locks must be min 5 lever and no lesser standard than the existing. Min 2 keys must be provided for each lock at the end of your tenancy.

# Alteration Requests (cont)

2.12	Replacing or installing energy meters (water, gas, electric).	Work must be undertaken by your energy supplier.
2.13	Redecoration of walls and ceilings.	Work to be undertaken by a competent tradesperson.
2.14	Fixing of mirrors/shelves and similar fittings.	Work to be undertaken by a competent tradesperson.
2.15	Upgrading/replacing small areas of wall tiling, floor tiling or plaster up to 2m <sup>2</sup> .	Work to be undertaken by a competent tradesperson.
2.16	Installation of laminate, vinyl, or tiled flooring in a house or bungalow.	Floor tiles must not be installed on timber floors. Floor coverings installed in bathrooms and kitchens must be non-slip. Work to be undertaken by a competent tradesperson.



# Alteration Requests (cont)

## 3. Requests that **may be** permitted but require Platform Housing to consider the application on an individual basis

You will need to submit a formal application Alteration Request for these. These requests fall into two categories:

- a) These requests are for substantial alterations that are likely to materially alter the property or have an impact on others. These types of requests require:
- You to submit an application by completing the customer alteration form on our website (we can post the form to you if you do not have access to the internet). Once received, we will log the request and aim to contact you within 28 working days with a decision. In some cases, we may need longer than 28 working days to reach a decision in which case we will communicate this to you.
  - Us to undertake a pre-inspection visit to determine whether approval can be given. Technical aspects will be carefully considered along with how your proposals may affect other properties/persons in the locality and the impact it may have on future letting of the property.
  - Us to confirm to you whether the application has been refused or approved.
  - If approved, you will need to notify us that the works have been completed so that we can undertake a post inspection to ensure the works have been carried out correctly.
  - You will also need to provide evidence to demonstrate the work has been completed to the required standards and in accordance with applicable legislation, such as Planning consent, Building Regulation approval, the Party Wall Act, structural calculations, electrical and gas installation certificates etc.
  - You to notify us that works have been completed and provide the evidence required within a 12 month period from the date approval is given. If you haven't provided us with the documentation required or notified us of reasons why this is not possible within 12 months the alteration will be deemed 'Unauthorised works'.

An alteration request can include more than one item of work, however, we will not accept multiple applications for the same property at the same time i.e. the works for one request must be fully complete before another application can be considered.

The following requests are likely to require Planning permission, Building Regulation approval and other consents may also be required.

The 'Typical information required' below has been provided as a guide only and it is your responsibility to check and confirm to us what is or is not required.

# Alteration Requests (cont)

Request ID	Type of request	Typical information required
3.a1	Building a new extension, porch, conservatory, loft conversion or garage/outbuilding.	Planning consent (or confirmation it is Permitted Development). Building Regulation completion certification. Party Wall consent (if required). Structural calculations (if required). Gas, electrical, other certification.
3.a2	Structural alterations to external walls.	Structural calculations. Planning consent (or confirmation it is Permitted Development). Building Regulation completion certification. Party Wall consent (if required). Gas, electrical, other certification.
3.a3	Installing external wall insulation or cladding.	Planning consent (or confirmation it is Permitted Development). Building Regulation completion certification. Party Wall consent. Structural calculations. Gas, electrical, other certification. Before and after Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's).
3.a4	Alterations to internal walls.	Building Regulation completion certification. Party Wall consent. Structural calculations. Gas, electrical, other certification.
3.a5	Alterations to chimney breast/stacks.	Planning consent (or confirmation it is Permitted Development). Building Regulation completion certification. Party Wall consent. Structural calculations. Gas Safe/Oftec (oil)/HETAS (solid fuel)/electrical certification.



# Alteration Requests (cont)

3.a6	Installing a new kitchen or changes to existing.	Plans and specifications. Gas/electrical certification.
3.a7	Installing a new bathroom or changes to existing.	Plans and specifications. Gas/electrical certification.
3.a8	Installing internal wall insulation.	Building Regulation completion certification. Party Wall consent. Structural calculations. Gas, electrical, other certification. Before and after Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's).
3.a9	Installing new wall/floor tiling or plaster over 2m <sup>2</sup> .	Product specification.
3.a10	Installing a new driveway, hardstanding or patio area.	Planning consent (or confirmation it is Permitted Development). Building Regulation completion certification. If a driveway is approved, you must follow guidance in 2.1 to ensure correct dropped kerb is installed.
3.a11	Installing new renewable energy equipment such as photo voltaic, solar thermal, air or ground source heat pumps.	Planning consent (or confirmation it is Permitted Development). Building Regulation completion certification. Party Wall consent. Structural calculations. Gas, electrical, other certification. Before and after Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's).
3.a12	Installing CCTV/security system to your property	Police crime number or consent from the Police. Electrical certification.



# Alteration Requests (cont)

b) These requests are for major alterations but are unlikely to materially alter the property or have an impact on others. These requests will still be considered on an individual basis but will not require us to undertake pre and post inspections of the work. You will still need to provide evidence to demonstrate the work has been completed to the required standards and in accordance with statutory consents.

Request ID	Type of request	Typical information required
3.b1	Installing new windows or external doors (with no works required to structural openings).	Building Regulation completion certification or FENSA certification.
3.b2	Installing cavity wall or loft insulation.	Building Regulation completion certification. Before and after Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's).
3.b3	Installing new electrical circuits or changes to existing circuits.	Building Regulation completion certification or NICEIC certification.
3.b4	Installing a new electric shower (either over bath or walk in) or electric cooker.	Building Regulation completion certification or NICEIC certification.
3.b5	Installing a new gas cooker.	Building Regulation completion certification or Gas Safe certification.

# Potential Compensation for Improvements

The Housing Corporation Regulatory Circular 94-33 titled 'Right to Repair & Right to Compensation for Improvements' issued in December 1994 and revised in August 2002 sets out the rights of Customers to compensation when they carry out certain designated improvements to their homes and terminate their tenancy before the expiry of the life of the improvement.

Compensation may only be paid at the end of the tenancy and is subject to Platform Housing providing approval for the works undertaken. To apply for compensation you must write to Platform Housing between 28 days before the end of your tenancy and 21 days after your tenancy with copies of all invoices and written evidence that Approval for the alteration was given.

The maximum amount of compensation payable is £5,000 and the minimum is £100. Any calculated compensation figure below this value will not be payable. Compensation is calculated based on the life expectancy of the improvement and the cost of the improvement.

The designated improvements with their respective life cycles are as follows:

Designated improvement	Life expectancy (yrs)
Bath or shower	12
Wash hand basin	12
Toilet	12
Kitchen sink	10
Storage cupboards in bathroom/kitchen	10
Work surfaces for food preparation	10
Space or water heating	12
Thermostatic radiator valves	7
Insulation of pipes, water tank or cylinder	10
Loft insulation	20
Draft proofing of external doors/windows	8
Double or secondary glazing	20
Rewiring or provision of power and lighting or other electrical fittings	15
Anything which improves the security of the dwelling (not burglar alarms)	10

## Example of compensation calculation

A Customer installs a shower at a cost of £1,200. The life expectancy is 12 years. If the Customer terminates their tenancy after 5 years of carrying out the improvement the compensation payable is:

Each year of its installation would equate to  $1/12$  of its value = £100.

$£1,200 - £500$  (less 5 years of its life)  
= £700 compensation.

