



<b>Policy title:</b>	Customer Home Alterations Policy		
<b>Scope:</b>	Aspire Housing		
<b>Policy owner &amp; job title:</b>	Director of Investment, Maintenance and Sustainability		
<b>Approver:</b>	Executive Director - Place		
<b>Date:</b>	February 2022	<b>Review Due Date:</b>	February 2024

**Policy summary:**

- This policy covers all works and alterations, and potential works and alterations, which Assured Tenants in accommodation owned by Aspire Housing may wish to undertake in the future or have undertaken in the past.
- This policy ensures compliance with Aspire's obligations under the Housing Act 1988 as amended by the Housing Act 1996.

**Associated Policies & Procedures:** Rechargeable Repairs Policy, Adaptations Policy, Customer Home Alterations Procedure.

**1. POLICY STATEMENT****Background**

Through the Housing Act 1985, secure tenants were given the right to improve their homes and to receive compensation in certain circumstances when they vacated their homes. This was amended by the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993. No similar right was ever granted by Statute to Assured Tenants.

Housing Associations, and subsequently Registered Providers, often gave a contractual entitlement within Tenancy Agreements to tenants to allow them to improve their homes and receive compensation when they left the property. This was to demonstrate that tenants would not be unfairly disadvantaged when considering a Secure Tenancy compared to an Assured Tenancy.

Aspire Housing has now removed this contractual right from its Tenancy Agreements for all new Tenants. The contractual right remains in place for all existing customers where expressly permitted in the Tenancy Agreement.

Aspire Housing is responsible for providing accommodation which meets the following criteria:

- free of health and safety hazards
- in a reasonable state of repair
- reasonably modern kitchens, bathrooms and boilers
- reasonably insulated

In order to achieve these standards Aspire carries out planned and reactive maintenance:

- when the property is void
- as part of the Planned Improvement Programme
- when reactive repairs are reported by customers

### **Considering Applications for Customer Home Alterations**

All customers are eligible to complete a Customer Home Alterations Application through the Aspire Housing website. All applications will be considered to meet Aspire Housing's People First Approach. Some alterations may be permitted but only once the customer has been in their current property for over 12 months.

In considering applications to make alterations to the property, where the right to improve is granted in the tenancy, it is Aspire Housing's policy not to any permit alterations that:

- involve altering the heating system, electrical services, health and safety measures
- or basic structure of the property
- are out of keeping or inconsistent with the rest of the property
- make the property more difficult to let in the future
- will be unduly expensive to maintain
- Works that will be subject to a future planned programme, i.e. Kitchen will be subject to design approval by Aspire Housing.

Types of works that may be considered are:

- building an extension subject to necessary planning and building regulation approval
- erecting a garage, shed or greenhouse subject to necessary planning and building regulation approval

- fitting a new bathroom subject to specification approval
- fitting a satellite dish
- fitting an aerial
- installing an electric fire
- installing extra electrical sockets subject to NICEIC certification
- installing electrical components that do not require NICEIC certification, ie, change of lightbulbs
- plumbing
- redecorating the outside of your home subject to planning approval
- replacing doors subject to specification approval
- replacing or altering window panes
- Any alteration that refusal of alteration would place Aspire Housing in breach of the Equality Act

Types of works that will not be considered are:

- Installation of a gas fire
- Installation of a wood burning stove
- Replacement of full window sets
- Cat flaps in doors

Where works are approved for upgrade by the customer, the customer will be responsible for maintenance of these components.

Where a customer is applying to improve their home to help alleviate a disability Aspire Housing will support the customer in line with the terms of its Adaptations Policy.

### **Compensation and Recharges**

Where a customer has a contractual right to receive compensation for any improvements made, Aspire will pay compensation in line with the policy and procedure that was in place at the time the works were approved and carried out. It is a requirement that customers have evidence of Aspire's approval for the work to be carried out and of the cost of the work through paid invoices or receipts.

If any unauthorised work has been carried out to the property, and is discovered either during occupancy or at the end of the tenancy, Aspire reserves the right to recharge to the tenant the full cost of reinstating the property to its original condition.

### **Equality Impact Assessment:**

This policy has been considered against our Equality and Diversity Policy and provisions have been made within the Adaptations Policy and Tenancy Private Works Procedure as required.

## **2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEE**

All employees are required to be aware of the provisions of the policy and to administer Aspire's policy within the associated procedures.

## **3. RESPONSIBILITY OF ASPIRE**

Aspire is required to comply with all relevant legislation and any subsequent legislation or regulations. Aspire is also responsible for creating and managing an administrative process to deal with all applications from its customers to make improvements, all procedures will comply with Aspire's obligations under the Housing Act 1988 as amended by the Housing Act 1996.