

Policy	Property improvement policy
Date adopted	March 2023
Date of next review	March 2026
Version	2
Responsible board	Homes board
Responsible officer	Head of neighbourhoods

We are committed to providing excellent customer service, so that every time you contact us you have a good experience. This policy sets out what you can expect when planned improvements are carried out to your home or when you request to make your own improvements to your home.

Policy scope

This policy sets out the approach to improving property owned by Homes Plus and includes meeting legal and regulatory requirements (principally the Decent Homes Standard) while balancing business needs and customer expectations.

A considerable amount of time and money is spent on property improvements, and it is essential that value for money is achieved.

The property improvement policy covers the three areas listed below. For further information and guidance, please see the related key factsheet.

- ◆ Planned works carried out by us
- ◆ Requests received from customers to undertake their own improvements
- ◆ End-of-tenancy compensation for improvements completed by customers

This policy applies to:

- ◆ Properties that we own or manage under a tenancy agreement or lease, commercial properties and any land owned by us.
- ◆ Our employees, partners, customers, and any external organisation supported or engaged by us.

Please note: no property improvements or planned capital repairs will be carried out on a property if the customer has applied to buy it under the Preserved or Voluntary Right to Buy. Only responsive repairs will be carried out, in line with our repair policy.

We want to:

Comply with the government's Decent Homes Standard. Improvements may be carried out to higher standards if they are contained within the approved business plan and do not compromise other spending on repairs and/or compliance work.

Ensure programmes are developed using property data collated through our stock condition surveys and following the business plan. Our programmes will be reviewed periodically as surveys and the business plan are updated.

Work with our customers who may wish to undertake alterations and improvements to their home. We will agree timescales with the customer, which will be adhered to. Customers will be treated fairly and we will clearly explain the process for requesting permission, as well as providing advice and guidance about how any improvement should be completed.

We will:

Provide information to you about our property improvement programmes, in advance of any work taking place.

Offer a choice of materials and products, where this is practical and subject to maintenance. If there is a need for adaptations, we will explain how to request an occupational therapist referral.

Consider if improvements to a property should be halted if a customer is in breach of their tenancy, until the breach is remedied. Vulnerabilities and/or disabilities will be considered when exploring the circumstances surrounding the tenancy breach. Any postponement or cancellation of an improvement for this reason will be limited to kitchens, bathrooms, front and rear doors, and windows.

We are responsible for:

Considering requests to install or replace a fitting or fixture outside the repair policy and/or improvement programme.

Setting out the reasons why any consent for an improvement request from you has been withheld.

Advising of any conditions, such as local authority permission or certification, when approving your request to make improvements to your home.

Providing information about the right to compensation and how to apply, when approving your request to make improvements to your home.

Ensuring legal obligations are met when reviewing requests for compensation. There are exclusions and financial limits set out in the legislation, with a minimum and maximum value for any single improvement.

You are responsible for:

Recognising that you may wish to carry out improvements to your home, which you will pay for yourself. You can exercise the right to improve your home under the Housing Act 1985.

Obtaining permission from us before carrying out any improvements. Permission will not unreasonably be withheld but it will only be granted if you meet all legal requirements, such as approvals from local authority.

Ensuring that permitted work is undertaken by a qualified person and providing us with any certificates of completion or other certification, as detailed in the permission letter from us.

Damage arising to the property because of works carried out by you. We are not liable for this damage and may charge you to reinstate or repair the property, following the work you carry out.

Giving access to us for inspection during or on completion of the improvement, on request.

Making sure we do what we say

We will monitor the planned works investment programme to ensure that each year we are investing in, repairing, improving and maintaining homes. The schedule to replace kitchens, bathrooms, boilers, and external doors is based on the age and lifespan of these fixtures.

We will respond in writing; setting out the amount of compensation offered and explaining how that has been calculated in accordance with the Housing Act. We will also provide a key fact sheet.

Links to other policies

- ◆ Repair policy
- ◆ Recharge policy
- ◆ Compensation policy
- ◆ Supported temporary move (decant) policy
- ◆ Complaints policy
- ◆ Details of the Right to Improve and the Right to Compensation for Improvements are in the Leasehold Reform Housing and Urban Development Act 1993
- ◆ Compensation for Improvements Regulations – Housing Act 1985

Policy review

We will review this policy in three years unless it is required before.

Related key fact sheets

- ◆ How we will improve your home
- ◆ Requesting to carry out your own home improvements
- ◆ How to request compensation for eligible improvements when you have given notice to end your tenancy



POL010 - v2