

Home Alterations



Requesting Permission. Customer Fact Sheet.

Requesting Permission for Home Alterations

Customer Fact Sheet

To make your house a home, you might want to make changes or do some DIY - but it's important you don't start any work without talking to us first.

We're happy for you to make minor changes (like decorating, changing carpets or putting up shelves) without our permission. For anything else, you'll need to let us know what you want to do and ask us for permission before you begin.

Tenants can make alterations to their homes provided certain conditions are met. If you wish to make alterations, you will need to complete an application form and supply us with any relevant documentation (eg building control, planning permission).

This factsheet will help you to understand when permission is required. If you are unsure or have any questions you should call us to discuss on 01274 257777

Examples where you do not need permission

PERMISSION NOT REQUIRED	Conditions that must be complied with	Comments
Fitting of house numbers (agree permitted sizes/materials)	No to flats (fire door integrity must be maintained) Door/fire warranty maybe voided by drilling into upvc etc .	
Internal decoration- standard wallpaper/paint.		
Replacing Fence Panels at same height, like for like.		Landlord duty.
Small scale digging over of gardens/gardening (no electric/plumbing)		
Curtains, Carpets, Blinds.		
Minor fixings. Eg Shelving/ picture/mirror hanging		
Fitting White Goods if supply is already available		

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Examples where you'll need permission

You'll need our permission before making any alterations to your home - including:

Alterations that may be permitted subject to approval Alteration	Conditions that must be complied with	Comments
Laminate or wooden flooring	Permitted only in houses, bungalows, and ground floor flats. Incommunities will not be liable for any damage or requirement to uplift to allow repair/major repairs works/access to services. The flooring must be removed when tenancy ends or removal cost will be recharged.	The tenant who installed the flooring is responsible for removal at the end of their tenancy, at their cost. However, if the new tenant wishes to retain the flooring and Incommunities is satisfied that it is in good condition, it may remain in the property.
Internal decoration- other than wallpaper/paint	If Artex/plaster effects, PVCu cladding, wood panelling, glitter effect paint, affixing self adhesive film to any surfaces (eg kitchen cupboard doors, worktops), decorative plaster arches et al: consent is required	
Sheds, summerhouses, scooter stores.	Must be erected on solid concrete or paved base. Must consist of timber. Must be a minimum of 2m from any existing dwelling. Sheds can be erected only in rear gardens. The shed must be maintained in good order by the resident. If the shed is not	Maximum size no larger than 2.5m X 1.8m X 2.4m (LxWxH). No mains power to shed unless a disability need and all work by an approved electrician.

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	<p>maintained it will be removed by Incommunities and any costs incurred recharged.</p> <p>Up to two sheds/summerhouses per property may be permitted, provided that together the two buildings are in proportion to the size of the garden and do not cause an obstruction or have any other adverse impact.</p>	
Driveway	<p>If fence line is opened, gates must be installed to match or be in keeping with the existing perimeter fence. Planning permission must be granted in writing first from the local authority to drop the kerbs.</p>	<p>Gates to open inwards to avoid causing an obstruction to the public footpath.</p>
Fencing / walls	<p>Maximum height of 1.8m in rear gardens and 1m in front gardens. Must be within own boundary line, blockwork must be rendered and suitably capped. All gates must be inward opening.</p>	<p>Check boundary ownership (eg sold properties and also rights of way- eg rights of access across the rear of terraced housing).</p>
Bathrooms	<p>Bathrooms must be installed in compliance with Incommunities specification.</p>	<p>Persons wishing to install shower cubicles must follow Incommunities specification for adapted/accessible bathrooms. Eg no quadrant style cubicles are to be allowed.</p>
Kitchens	<p>Kitchens must be installed in compliance with Incommunities specification and must be left if tenancy ends. If a kitchen is removed at the end of the tenancy, we will recharge for reinstatement.</p>	
TV Aerial	<p>When fixed to a</p>	<p>Not on chimneys.</p>

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	bracket within the loft space.	
Wall-mounted televisions	Must be adequately fixed by a competent tradesman using a TV bracket recommended by the manufacturer. No chasing out of walls is permitted for the running of cables.	
Security / burglar alarm	Full details must be provided of installer / company carrying out the installation.	Fitting to clad dwellings must use correct fittings.
Close circuit television (CCTV)	Full details must be provided of installer / company carrying out the installation. Camera to be recording own property only and be installed in relation to CCTV data protection guidelines.	Please see the Incommunities data protection and CCTV policies. Need to check camera direction and impact on neighbours for intrusion "Field of vision" must be demonstrated.
Dog kennels	Maximum size of 1m wide x 1.2m long x 1.2m high. A maximum of two kennels per property.	Any approval to be in line with Tenancy Agreement re: number/type of animals.
Animal kennel(s) Aviaries or any structure to hold animals/birds of any description.		Provision for assistance animals (hearing/guide dogs) would be considered in line with the Equality Act and may be eligible for IC to financially assist with funding.
Satellite dish/cable TV installation	Can only be fitted/drilled into structural brick/block for example, not into any form of panel, cladding/insulation, pebble dashing etc.	Not on blocks of flats or conservation areas. Not to be fitted on chimneys. Any damage will be recharged. Requires removal at end of tenancy: if not a recharge will be raised for making good all damage
Key safe / door entry system / temporary ramp / temporary stair lift	Where requested by CBMDC Social Services or similar for households with particular needs.	Often installed to enable end of life care.
Tiled floors	Permitted only in houses, bungalows and ground floor flats. Will not be permitted where the property is still under a defects liability period.	

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Tiled walls	Will not be permitted where the property is still under a defects liability period.	
External taps	Internal pipework must be insulated and fitted with a ballofix valve to isolate the external water supply.	Not to be attached to properties with EWI cladding.
Paving	Paving works must have a minimum of 100mm hard core to support the paved area and be free from any trip hazards (loose or uneven paving or coping stones). The paved area must also be maintained by the current tenant. Manholes and gullies must not be covered. Permission will not be given for paved areas which, in IC's opinion, are out of proportion with the size of the garden as a whole.	The paving/concreting/covering of complete gardens is not allowed
Fitted wardrobes	No structural changes allowed and room must be reinstated to original layout when tenancy ends.	The tenant who installed the wardrobe is responsible for removal at the end of their tenancy, at their cost. However, if the new tenant wishes to retain the wardrobe and IC's is satisfied that it is in good condition, it may remain in the property.
Internal doors	Fire doors must be replaced with doors of equal or approved fire rating. Any glazed doors must have regulation safety glass.	
Stair lifts, through floor/step lifts and fixed bathing aids such as powered seats.	The tenant must remove and refix stair lifts at their own expense, if this is required when IC's have to carry out repairs or other works to the property. Any	All equipment requires removal and making good at the end of the tenancy. Applicant should be advised they maybe eligible for IC or CBMDC to provide such facilities.

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	works on the electrics must be carried out by a NICEIC approved contractor. A completed test certificate must be submitted to IC on completion of the work. The stairlift must be regularly maintained and insured.	
Electrical works, eg changing sockets/switches, adding sockets, adding floodlights etc	All work on electrics must be carried out by a NICEIC or equivalent approved contractor. A completed test certificate must be submitted to IC on completion of the work.	Assess impact on floodlights on neighbours
External decorating	Only rendered surfaces may be granted permission for decoration. Colours must complement the surrounding area.	Properties which have been overclad with external wall insulation must not be decorated.
Connecting gas cookers	This must connect to an existing point and must not involve moving or altering pipework. All gas works must be completed by an appropriately qualified Gas Safe Registered engineer/plumber. Copies of a complete certificate must be provided to IC on completion of the work.	
Planting of trees/hedging		Assess impact on foundations/buildings/structures and ongoing maintenance. Fast-growing varieties such as maple, beech, poplar, willow, elm, oak, chestnut and / or conifers such as Leylandii are not permitted.
Garden decking	Garden decking may	

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	<p>be approved subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> IC being satisfied that the proposed decking will not cause any obstruction or similar hazard. <input type="checkbox"/> The tenant provides evidence that the decking will be properly and safely installed. <input type="checkbox"/> The tenant confirming that they will carry out required maintenance. <input type="checkbox"/> The decking does not cover more than 30% of the garden area. <input type="checkbox"/> The decking must be removed before the tenant moves out and ground re-instated (eg turf/seeded/left fit for purpose) 	
Flags/banners/flag poles/advertising boards	Complex area, to decide on case by case.	Depends on message/symbol displayed and potential to cause offence
Garages or carports.		
Installation of telephone/ cable services (conditions apply if breaching a fire compartment e.g. wall between a communal area & flat)		
Electric car charging points		
Cat and dog flaps to doors/walls (fire and security integrity must be maintained)		Doors must not be cut to fit "cat flaps"
Fitting a Water Meter and alterations to water supply pipes and drainage		Permission required in all circumstances.

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Building/construction works to alter access: eg steps, handrails or wheelchair ramps	Must consider impact on other public users and assess risk accordingly	Includes temporary/portable ramping
“Christmas” or any other religious festival or occasion where the property may have decorations fixed to it of a substantial nature (albeit temporary)	Must consider impact on neighbours, eg length and time of operation.	Major concern is overloading and safety of any electrical circuits and the safety of installed decorations, in particular where displays are created under the heading of “charitable purposes”. The householder may require public liability insurance under such circumstances.

Examples where we would never grant permission

There are some circumstances where Incommunities would never grant permission to make alterations. This is usually in circumstances when the alteration would significantly alter the structure of the property. If we would not grant permission, the work must NOT go ahead.

Alteration	Conditions that must be complied with / Comments
Any structural alterations to dwelling or relocation of internal partitions.	
Any form of property extension, including Extensions/ Conversions/ Conservatories/ Porches or the enclosure of adjoining outhouses to the properties structure.	
Any non-structural alterations to partition walls, doorways or archways.	This includes larders and wardrobes.
Laminate or wooden flooring in flats which are not ground floor.	
Removal of level access or wet-room shower rooms to	Some flexibility may be given depending on age/condition/shower specification- i.e it maybe VFM if

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replace with a bath.	tenant removes.
Recessed light fittings.	
Ceiling fans.	
Any alterations to loft spaces.	
'Velux' windows.	
Photovoltaic cells (Solar Panel) or any derivative eg ground source heat pumps et al installed by any other installer other than IC.	
Patio/bi-fold doors	
Any works affecting a party wall or boundary	
External fittings to properties fitted with overcladding.	For example Satellite dishes, external light fittings, post boxes, door numbers, brackets, water hose storage unit, washing lines.
Removal of grassed areas or garden ground to lay stones/paving/artificial grass unless part of agreed measure to remedy problematic land drainage.	No large scale removal of grassed areas will be allowed.
No gas works apart from a gas cooker which is the tenant's responsibility. This must be replacing an existing cooker and not involve moving or altering pipework.	No permission for gas fires.
Fires, installation and swapping gas to electric or vice versa or any central heating alterations.	
No asbestos removal works. This must be carried out by IC's asbestos department.	This includes removal of hearth and surrounds if asbestos is present.

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External painting of brickwork and properties with external wall insulation.	
Multi fuel/log burner/coal, open or closed stoves/fireplaces.	See IC gas policy.
Garden decking covering more than 30% of the total area of the garden.	Any existing decking that has had previous approval must be removed at the end of the tenancy.
Any works that will affect the integrity of the building ie water/damp ingress.	
Any work that breaches building, fire or any other regulations.	
Cavity wall insulation of any kind.	
Ponds/water features	It is acknowledged if they are already in place that the The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 will apply as some species are protected by this act and thus the installation cannot necessarily be immediately removed.
Hot tubs, spas, saunas and swimming pools.	With the exception of small temporary surface/paddling pools.

How to ask for permission

Please “contact us” first to discuss your plans on 01274 257777. We'll ask for full details of what you'd like to do. You will need to complete an application form and we will need to carry out a series of checks, which may include a home visit before permission is either granted or refused.

You must not carry out the work until our permission has been granted. If you do, you will be in breach of your tenancy and may risk legal action being taken against you..

Making your alteration

If we give you permission to go ahead with the work, you'll need to:

- Follow any of the requirements we may give you.
- Get building or planning permission if needed, or any other consent required.
- Have the work carried out by a competent person in a professional manner.
- Provide any certification that you need for the work, such as electrical or FENSA (double glazing) certificates.

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- Put right any damage caused during the work to your home or neighbouring properties.

Once you have received permission to carry out the work within 56 days of the permission being granted

When the work is finished

Please contact us on 01274 257777 so we can arrange to inspect the alterations.

You'll need permission from us if you decide to remove the alteration or improvement, so please contact us.

The cost of alterations

You'll need to pay for any alterations you want to make (for example, installing a new kitchen) or DIY in your home.

In some cases the alterations you're planning might be those we'd make ourselves in the future anyway - in which case we may cover part of the cost in the form of compensation. However, this will only be paid to you at the end of your tenancy.

Alterations made without permission

If you make alterations to your home without asking our permission you must return the property to its original condition. If you don't, we will take legal action against your tenancy and we will carry out the work ourselves and charge you for the cost.

Terms and conditions for home alterations- in more detail.

You should receive our written approval prior to commencing any alterations works and keep all receipts, and forward these or copies to the association.

Unless otherwise agreed with Incommunities Group, the total cost of the work and related expenses will be met by yourself as the tenant of the property.

You must advise us when works are due to commence and when works are completed in order that the Surveyor may inspect.

Any contractors you employ must be suitably qualified and members of the respective trade organisation and hold a current Public Liability insurance policy. Where applicable, the manufacturer or contractor should provide a guarantee for improvements.

You must ensure that the appropriate statutory authorities are involved where necessary:

- You may need planning permission or building regulation approval before undertaking some works - if this is the case, the approval must be sent to the Neighbourhood Officer before the association can give permission for the work to be carried out.

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- Notices may need to be served on the District Valuer, gas, electric and water boards; drainage inspectors, etc. If required, the Association will need to see proof of these notices before giving consent for works to go ahead. Any conditions required by these statutory authorities should be met.

In carrying out the alteration, you will be required to ensure:

- a. that if there are common parts to the building, they must be protected and clear of obstruction. After the works have been completed, common parts should be cleaned and free from dust;
- b. that any damage caused during the works are notified and put right at your expense. You will be liable for any claims of damage from a third party;
- c. you should notify all neighbours likely to be affected by the works and take all possible steps to minimise inconvenience and nuisance to them. In particular no work should be undertaken outside the hours of 8.00 am to 9.00 pm and noisy operations which may disturb others should only be undertaken between the hours of 9.00 am - 5.00 pm Monday to Friday;
- d. where works necessitate the interruption of services to neighbours, ie temporary disconnection of gas, water and electricity, mutually satisfactory arrangements must be made with them beforehand;
- e. access is available for our Surveyor to inspect works. Should conditions not be met and/or the works are not progressing in a satisfactory manner, the Association reserves the right to order the works be stopped.

When you leave the property, you may:

- a. remove the alteration, but you must reinstate the property to its original state prior to when the alteration took place. Our Surveyor will need to visit and confirm this has been done;
- b. decide to leave the alteration in the property to remain as part of the Association's fixtures and fittings.

We will pay compensation for the alteration should you vacate the property, provided:

- the alteration remains as part of the Association's fixtures and fittings.
- in order for compensation to be paid you should supply copies of invoices and receipts so that the amount can be calculated.

Some works may mean that a rent increase is necessary if the Association require to maintain or service the alteration. You may wish to clarify this before you commence works.