

Thinking of doing improvements or alterations to your house or flat.

For council tenants and leaseholders

What is an improvement or alteration?

An alteration or improvement to your home is any work you undertake which alters or improves the current fabric of the building, its grounds or the fixtures and fittings within it.

Before you start

You need landlord permission

Your tenancy agreement says you need to get prior written permission from the council before carrying out any improvement works to your home.

If you are a leaseholder, your lease states you need the Landlords prior written consent to make or permit any alteration. If you fail to do this, any future sale could be put at risk.

This permission needs to come from the council as your landlord. Depending on the work you intend doing, you may also need Building Control approval and/or Planning permission.

Don't start work until you have received all the necessary permissions.

Send us details of what you intend to do, tell us who will be carrying out the work on your behalf. Provide a plan, drawing or sketch of the proposed alteration and/or improvement and give us details of materials you intend using. Photographs can be useful to show where you intend to do the work. We're happy to get this by post or by email.

Do not start work until you have received all the necessary permissions.

Leaseholders charge

If you are a leaseholder, there will be a charge of £60 to consider your request for landlords consent to make or permit any alteration.

Things we'll consider

When considering your request the things we will look at include:

- Why you want to do the improvement
- What impact it will have on others and the surrounding area
- Is it safe, could it be dangerous to others
- Are there any other health and safety implications
- Who will do the work
- Could you maintain it in the future
- Could the council incur any future cost
- Would it decrease the value of the property
- Would it breach the tenancy agreement, lease, covenants or planning restrictions
- Would it detrimentally affect the layout of the property
- Could it affect the re-letting of the property in the future (for rented homes)

If you are a tenant, we will first check the terms of your tenancy agreement and will check to see if there are any tenancy breaches e.g. if you have rent arrears.

Can you afford it?

Make sure you can afford to do all the work you want to do and can afford to maintain it, before you start.

Use an appropriate tradesperson

All work needs to be carried out in a professional manner by a qualified tradesperson with membership of the appropriate trade organisation.

All gas work must be done by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Visit www.gassafe.co.uk to find local engineers.

All electrical and plumbing work needs to be carried out by a registered competent tradesperson.

Visit www.competentperson.co.uk to find out more about competent persons.

Replacement windows need fitting by a FENSA registered installer. Find local installers at www.fensa.co.uk

Landlords permission granted

If we are happy that the improvement or alteration you've requested is reasonable and sustainable we will write to you giving you conditional permission for the work.

These conditions could include:

- Future maintenance and possible reinstatement
- Completion of works date, usually six months from date on permissions letter.
- Request for certificates

You will need to comply with the conditions within the letter and provide any certificates and/or documents requested.

If you start work, we will consider you accept the conditions set out and if you don't comply with the conditions we will ask you to reinstate the property to the original condition prior to the work, or up-grade any sub-standard work (as appropriate). If you fail to re-instate the property or up-grade the work, we will do the work and charge you for it.

Paying for it

The work must be carried out entirely at your expense. There must be no immediate or future cost to the council.

Landlords permission refused

If we are not happy with your proposals we will not give permission for the improvements. We will write to you detailing why permission has been refused.

Some work will need more than landlord permission

You need to check if your improvement needs to comply with any Planning or Building Control conditions. Visit www.planningportal.gov.uk for further information.

You must comply with the law as appropriate. You must meet all regulations and comply with planning permission.

Building Regulations

Many jobs in the home, including electrical works, may need to be notified to and approved as being compliant with Building Regulations by Sussex Building Control unless carried out by installers registered with a Competent Person Scheme who can self certify that their work is compliant.

Sussex Building Control (Crawley)

www.sussexbuildingcontrol.org

Email: info@buildingcontrol.org

Phone: 01403 215151

Gas

This is governed by 'The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018' and you must always use a Gas safe registered engineer for any gas fittings.

www.gassaferegister.co.uk

Email: enquiries@gassaferegister.co.uk

Phone: 0800 408 5500

Water

Some plumbing work may be governed by the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999. Visit the Water regulations advisory scheme to find out more and to see if you need to notify work to your water supplier.

www.wras.co.uk

Email: info@wras.co.uk

Phone: 0333 207 9030

Planning permission

More information is on the planning portal www.planningportal.gov.uk or on the council's website www.crawley.gov.uk/planningpermission. If you are unsure as to whether you need planning permission you can complete a Planning Pre-Application Enquiry form on the council's Do I need Planning permission page.