

# A guide to Tenants Home Improvements





## Your Landlord

As the tenant of a council property you have the right to carry out some types of alterations or home improvements at your own expense, but you must get written agreement from the Council before you start work.

If you have a flexible tenancy agreement you do not have the right to carry out any changes to the property.

If you have a secure tenancy you may be entitled to make changes to your property, but you **will** need our approval in writing before you start any work. Depending on the type of alteration or improvement you wish to carry out you may also need to seek planning permission and/or Building Regulations approval before you start.

You can make an application for approval by completing the form in the centre of this booklet, and posting it back to us, or by filling in the on-line application form on the council's website.

If you are in any doubt, please contact our Responsive Repair team and they will book an appointment for one of our inspectors to visit you and discuss the proposed work with you.

### Tenant Improvements

2 August 2017





## Alterations or improvements you will need permission for could include:

- a. structural alterations such as removal of an internal wall or sub-dividing any bedroom or living room, this also includes laying laminate and hard flooring.
- b. alterations to the council's fixtures and fittings, such as replacing kitchen units, doors, bathroom suites.
- c. any work connected to the provision of services to the property (gas, water, electricity and drainage), including extra radiators, wall lights, over bath showers, free standing shower units, solar panels, wind turbines, and utility meters.
- d. the erection of any radio or television aerial or satellite dish.
- e. any external decoration, provision of fencing and removal of any established hedge.
- f. construction of a vehicle hard standing or erecting a car port.
- g. erecting a garage, conservatory, greenhouse, shed
- h. construction of major garden features such as ponds, decking or patios.





# Planning permission & Building regulations

What is the difference between **planning permission** and **building regulations**. Planning permission ensures the right thing is built in the right place, whilst building regulations ensures what is built is structurally safe.

## Planning permission

Some improvement may need planning permission; porches, garages, sheds, satellite dishes and even some fencing. There may be extra planning restrictions if you live in a conservation area.

## Building regulations

If you're planning any building works, you must make sure it meets the minimum standard set out in the Building Regulations.

It is your responsibility to establish if planning and/or building permission is required before you start any work. If you are unsure whether you need planning permission and/or building regulations approval, visit the '[Do you need permission](#)' webpage on the government's planning portal or contact:

Development & environment on 020 8726 6800 or  
Building control on 020 8760 5637

**If planning and/or building permission is required you will have to make an application directly to them and pay their fee.**





# What conditions will the Council Impose?

We will impose a set of standard conditions:

- You must meet the full cost of the proposed work including alterations to existing services e.g. gas, electric and fixtures and fittings to enable the work to be carried out.
- A NICEIC registered and qualified person must carry out any electrical installation within the property and the installation must meet current standards.
- In the case of gas works a Gas Safe registered and qualified person must carry out any gas installation.
- Any work you undertake is done so at your own risk.
- Make sure a competent person carries out the work. The work must comply with all relevant Building Regulations and planning consent and any national standards or regulations. Work on party walls and boundaries may be subject to the Party Wall Act.
- You will be responsible for any damage to your property or your neighbours property as a result of the work.
- The Council does not take on any responsibility for any maintenance implications that might arise as a result of the works.
- At the end of the tenancy you must:
  - ◆ Leave the installation in place, or
  - ◆ Remove the installation, in which case you must restore the property to its original condition before the work was done. This must be done at your own expense.





## Once the work is completed

- Once the work is completed a final inspection will be carried out by our Repairs Inspector to check that everything has been completed and complies with all the relevant building regulations and planning consents.
- A post inspection form will be completed and signed by yourself and the repairs inspector to confirm that:
  - The works have been completed to the required standard.
  - You have complied with all conditions set out by the council and have all the approvals required.
  - You have handed over all the required certificates/warranties.

You will be provided with a copy of this form to keep.

### Health & Safety

If you carry out any improvements, with or without our permission, and that improvement causes damage to the property or is in itself dangerous by being badly constructed, we may enter the property to carry out any necessary repair or remove the improvement and may charge you for any reasonable cost incurred in doing so.



# Garages, Hard standings, Carports & Parking



**You must not keep any motor vehicle in the front garden of your property without an approved hard standing and dropped kerb access**

## Garages

You will require the Council's written permission before you erect a garage. These must not be built directly in front of the property. No window will be permitted.

## Hard standing—carports

The hard standing must be used for parking only. **Vehicle repair work is not permitted.**

## Parking for caravans, boats or trailers etc.

- You must not park, store or keep a caravan, motor home, boat, trailer or commercial vehicle without first obtaining our written permission
- Vehicles must not protrude over the footpath or boundary.

Permission will only be granted if a dropped kerb application has been submitted and approved by the Highway Authority. See page 8 Dropped Kerbs for more information.





## Dropped Kerbs & Crossovers

### Making a dropped kerb/crossover application

When you make a dropped kerb/crossover application you will need to submit a copy of the relevant planning permission or a declaration that you do not require permission on the planning form. There is a non-refundable application charge by the highways department of £150\*.

### Planning permission

You may need planning permission to form the crossover (vehicle access over the footpath), you will always need planning permission if the vehicle access is to be formed onto a classified road. Details of roads that are classified and require planning permission can be found in the vehicular crossover application pack.

### What to include in your planning permission application

If planning permission is required, you will need to submit a separate application to the planning section with a fee of £172\*. Getting planning permission can take up to 8 weeks.

More information on dropped kerbs and crossovers can be found on the Council website or to request a application pack telephone Highways on 020 8726 6100

\* price correct at the time of publication





## Electrical Work



If you want to change socket outlets, light switches or light fittings you will require permission from the Council but will not require permission from Building Control.

Any electrical work to your property should be carried out by a qualified Domestic Electrical

Installer or NICEIC qualified electrician to ensure that this meets the Councils standards

## Replacement heating systems



The Council **will not** give permission to replace a boiler, radiators or electrical storage radiators. If you think that your boiler and/or radiators are inefficient please contact the Repairs service on 020 8726 6101 or [croydonrepairs@axiseurope.com](mailto:croydonrepairs@axiseurope.com) and we will arrange for either a gas engineer or electrician to check your heating system for faults and carry out an assessment.





## Kitchens and Bathrooms

You will require the Council's written permission before you carry out any work in your kitchen or bathroom.

You must **not** undertake anything which is likely to damage the structure of the building or cause damage to shared services, such as plumbing, water supply pipes, electricity, gas supplies, or sewerage.

We will also need to know about any alterations which affect walls, windows or doorframes.

The Council has an improvement programme for the replacement of kitchens and bathrooms.

If you wish to check whether replacement of these items is due to be carried out in your property you should contact the Council's Asset Management team either via the main contact centre on 020 8726 6100 or by email [HS\\_StockInvestment@croymdon.gov.uk](mailto:HS_StockInvestment@croymdon.gov.uk)



# Satellite dishes & Radio aerials



## Satellite dishes

You will require the Council's written permission to erect a satellite dish on a house.

Requests for provision of a satellite dish on a block of flats **will not** be granted.

## Radio aerials

The Council **will not** grant permission to erect radio aerials in or on council properties.

# Sheds, Greenhouses & Fences



## Sheds & Greenhouses

If you wish to erect a pre built shed or greenhouse that you can purchase from garden centre's or DIY stores you will first require written permission from the Council.

Sheds/greenhouses must not be used as a utility room to house electrical appliances such as freezers, tumble dryers, washing machines etc. Sheds must not be used as living accommodation.

## Fences

You will require the Council's permission before erecting any fences or walls and these should be constructed using a suitable material for the purpose.

The fence must be positioned along the established boundary line and will be checked by our repairs inspector on completion.





## Doors and Windows

You will require the Council's written permission before you change or replace any of the windows or external doors in your property.

### Windows

More information on specifications for window replacement can be provided on request.

### External Doors

Any replacement external doors should meet the required fire safety specifications.

For flats where your front door opens onto a balcony or walkway the door should meet FD30S fire safety specifications.

The Council has an improvement programme for replacement of windows. If you wish to check whether replacement of your windows is due to be carried out you should contact the Council's Asset Management team either via the main contact centre on 020 8726 6100 or by email [HS\\_StockInvestment@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:HS_StockInvestment@croydon.gov.uk)



## Lofts

The Council **will not** give permission to make any changes or alterations to the loft space of your home either in a house, flat or maisonette.

### Tenant Improvements

16 August 2017



## Extensions or Conservatories



### Extensions

The Council **will not** give permission for you to build a permanent extension to your property as this will fundamentally alter the structure and configuration of the building.

If you feel that the property is not large enough for you, then you should in the first instance speak to your tenancy officer to understand what options are available to you

### Conservatories

You will require the Council's written permission before you erect a conservatory. We will only consider approval if this is not a permanent structure and does not cover any manholes or drains, or exceed any of the boundary lines of the property

## Laminate or hard wood Flooring



You will require the Council's written permission before you install any laminate or hard wood flooring in your property.

We will normally give permission for this to be laid in houses, but we will not give permission for this to be laid in flats due to noise transfer.





# Claiming compensation for improvements

## Your right to compensation

If you have carried out improvements or alterations to your home after 1 April 1994 and have a secure tenancy agreement you may be entitled to claim compensation for some improvements you have made at your own expense.

Compensation is payable only when you end your tenancy. If you wish to claim compensation, you must claim no more than 28 days before or 14 days after your tenancy ends.

When you give notice to end your tenancy our tenancy officer and repairs inspector will carry out an inspection of the property and will discuss with you any improvements or alterations that you have made. If it is agreed that you do not need to remove them or return the property to its original condition then you may be able to claim compensation.

To qualify, you must be able to show:

- that you got permission from the Council to carry out the work before it began.
- how much each improvement cost, together with all relevant bills / receipts.
- date the improvement started and finished





## How the compensation will be worked out

We will work out the amount based on such factors as the cost of the work, how long ago it was done, and the condition of the improvement when the tenancy ends.

The Improvement will devalue as it gets older, as a result of normal 'wear and tear'. The components of an improvement have a notional life cycle, compensation will be based on this and the condition when you make your claim.

To avoid disproportionate administrative costs there will be a lower threshold of £50 per improvement to avoid minor claims whilst the upper limit will be £3,000 per item. Both limits may be revised from time to time and any outstanding debts will be deducted from the compensation payable. The upper limit on the scheme is £3,000.

