



# Improving your home

## What this guide is about

This guide explains what you need to do if you would like to improve your home; it also tells you how you could claim a contribution of up to £500.

## Who is this guide for

For people who live in a Progress Housing Group home.

## Bitesize summary

- You will need our permission first before making any changes to your home
- You must always use skilled and qualified tradespeople
- We may be able to help with the cost of adaptations to help someone live more independently in their home
- We may be able to help with up to £500 towards to cost of home improvements.

We want you to make your home your own, but we need to ensure that any changes you plan to make will be safe and that any changes are suitable for possible future tenants.

If you wish to improve your home - other than decorating or changing the carpet - you will need our permission first.

Examples of improvements where you will need to get permission are:

- Installing a shower
- Updating kitchen cabinets
- Changing light switches
- Building a shed
- Installing any fixed flooring.

You will also need our permission to fit fixed flooring - hardwood or laminate, vinyl and ceramic or porcelain tiles.

If you want to carry out any work to your home other than decoration, please get in touch first. This ensures that any work is done safely and meets legal or regulatory requirements.

Carrying out works to your home without our written permission breaches your tenancy.

Sometimes, we might need to come out and inspect the property before we can decide on your proposed improvements.

## **Reasons why we may refuse permission**

We will always try to grant you permission, but sometimes we may have to refuse; usually, this is because the improvement needs to be more suitable or may devalue the property.

Other reasons include improvements that are:

- Not in keeping with the rest of the property
- Dangerous and likely to cause structural damage
- Likely to lead to difficulties with future lettings
- Unsuitable for new tenants.

If you have been refused permission, we will discuss the reason and advise you on suitable alternatives.

We may refuse to permit you to improve your home for several reasons. For instance, we would not allow alterations to interim properties; usually, because the improvement is unsuitable, it will move with the tenant when the tenancy is ended, or it would not add any value to the property to be changed.

Other reasons include improvements that are:

- Unsuitable for possible prospective tenants
- Expected to be carried out by us shortly.

If you are refused permission, we will discuss the reason and advise you on suitable alternatives.

## **Asbestos**

When you contact us to ask for permission to do any improvement work, we will let you know if we need to do an asbestos survey. This survey is for your safety. We can only permit the work once we have completed this survey on your home. You will then receive a copy of the survey to pass on to the responsible contractor.

## **Using qualified tradespeople**

When you ask for permission, you must tell us who will be undertaking the work and prove they are qualified and insured.

All building, wiring and plumbing work should be done by skilled tradespeople. For instance, a Gas Safe registered gas engineer should install gas appliances; an NICEIC registered electrician should carry out any electrical works to the property.

To comply with building regulations, a member of a Domestic Installer Scheme must complete specific jobs such as a rewire or partial rewire of a property or replacing a consumer unit.

We will also need a copy of any certification provided by the contractors.

## **Flooring**

If you fit a carpet in your new home, you are responsible for ensuring the internal doors open and close properly over the new carpet.

Before fitting any fixed flooring such as laminate, wood, ceramic or vinyl tiles, you must ask us first. Laminate floors are unsuitable in some properties because they cause a noise nuisance to neighbours. Once a fixed floor has been installed, should any repairs need to be carried out, we will not be responsible for reinstating any restored flooring that may have been uplifted during repair works.

## **Inspections**

We may require access to your property to inspect the completed work to ensure it has been carried out to a high standard and complies with the appropriate legislation. If the work still needs to be completed satisfactorily, we will discuss what you must do to bring it up to standard.

If you fail to do the necessary work to put it right, we may have to carry out the work and recharge the costs.

## **Ongoing maintenance and repair**

You will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and repair of any improvement you have or have been carried out on your behalf. If we grant written permission, there may be additional responsibilities you will need to adhere to, which we will set out in

the permission letter. If you decide to end your tenancy, we may ask you to reinstate your property to its original state.

## **Help with the cost of improvements**

If you are adapting the property to meet the needs of someone with disabilities, we may be able to help. For more information, please get in touch, ask for a copy of our leaflet, or visit our website.

We also offer a tenant match funding scheme to help you to improve your home. You can apply for up to 50% of the cost, subject to certain conditions, with a maximum £500 contribution from us.

Your application must be approved before starting any work.

Once the works are complete, you must notify us so that we can inspect the work. You also need to provide us with a copy of your paid invoice. Following this, we will reimburse you within 14 days.

You can apply for funding for any improvement work to your property that exceeds the repair and maintenance work we must do as your landlord.

Currently, we grant match funding for the following works:

- Installing an electric shower over the bath
- Extra lighting or plug sockets
- Additional kitchen cupboard space
- Fencing.

Further improvements may be added to this list from time to time or considered on a discretionary basis.

To qualify for the scheme, you must:

- Be up-to-date with your rent payments
- Have not received any formal notice or injunction for breach of tenancy from us in the last two years
- Put the full details of the work you intend to carry out in writing and provide quotes.

In some circumstances, and subject to a demand for the scheme, more than one application will be considered in the same 12-month period; we will assess this individually.

We will assess applications on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to budget availability.

## **Compensation for home improvements**

There is a right to a compensation scheme for tenants who have improved their homes and are ending their tenancy. If you have changed your home and are moving on, please get in touch with us to see if you are due any compensation.

### **You may also be interested in**

- Our approach to safe and sound homes, including our lettable standard
- Aids and adaptations.

## Form: apply for help with the cost of improvements

To qualify for help towards the cost of improvements, you must be up-to-date with your rent payments and have not received any formal notice or injunction for breach of tenancy from us in the last two years.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide details of the improvement that you want to carry out:

Have you applied for tenant match funding before?  yes  no

Will a contractor be carrying out some or all of the work?  yes  no

Will you be carrying out all or some of the work yourself?  yes  no

Would you require Progress Housing Group to quote for these works?  yes  no

I understand that I must only start work once written consent has been given. I understand that should I receive consent, I must keep a clear rent account and not breach my tenancy agreement. If I fail to do so, payments due under this policy may not be made or deducted from any rent arrears.

I understand that should electrical or gas works be involved, I must use a competent contractor that is a member of a relevant trade body and that complies fully with regulations or planning requirements.

I understand that the contribution from Progress Housing Group will be made once the works are completed and checked to their satisfaction.

By ticking this box, you and other tenants at this residency agree to the above statement.

Return this form to: Progress Housing Group, Sumner House, 21 King Street, Leyland, Lancashire PR25 2LW

Or, hand it into your local office.

## Form: Permission to make major improvements to your property

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Description of proposed works:

Please select as appropriate:

- I can confirm that no structural changes will take place to walls, windows or doors
- There will be some structural change, but I can confirm that planning and building consent will be applied for and that any necessary planning and building regulations will be complied with.

I understand that if permission is granted, all the work will be carried out to a high standard and that:

- Any work involving the installation of, or changes to, a gas supply or appliance will be carried out by a Gas Safe registered gas engineer
- A qualified NICEIC contractor will carry out the installation of or changes to an electrical supply or appliance
- On completion of the work, I will contact the inspector at Progress Housing Group, who will inspect the work to ensure that it has been carried out to a satisfactory standard

- I agree that I will remedy any defect to this work if the inspector is not satisfied within the agreed time scale or will pay the cost of this work being brought up to a satisfactory standard by Progress Housing Group contractors
- Progress Housing Group will respond to your request in writing. In some cases, an inspector may visit the property to discuss your plans in more detail
- I will only start the work or order materials once I have received written permission.

By ticking this box, you and other tenants at this residency agree to the above statement.

Return this form to: Progress Housing Group, Sumner House, 21 King Street, Leyland, Lancashire PR25 2LW

Or, hand it into your local office.

## Form: Permission to make minor improvements to your property

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I am asking permission to carry out the following minor works or changes to my property:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing for a washing machine   | <input type="checkbox"/> Install a gas fire                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing for a dishwasher        | <input type="checkbox"/> To erect a shed                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Install an electric shower       | <input type="checkbox"/> To erect a garage                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change light switches            | <input type="checkbox"/> Park a caravan on the drive/hard standing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Install an electric cooker point | <input type="checkbox"/> Park a boat on the drive/hard standing    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Install a gas cooker             | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                                     |

I understand that if permission is granted, all the work will be carried out to a high standard and that:

- Any necessary planning and building regulations will be complied with
- A Gas Safe registered engineer will carry out all gas alterations or installations. A Gas Safe safety certificate will be forwarded to us upon completion of the work
- An NICEIC registered electrician will carry out all electrical work, and upon completion of the work, an NICEIC safety certificate will be sent to us.

By ticking this box, you and other tenants at this residency agree to the above statement.

Return this form to: Progress Housing Group, Sumner House, 21 King Street, Leyland, Lancashire PR25 2LW

Or, hand it into your local office.



## Get in touch

The quickest way to get in touch is online at [www.progressgroup.org.uk](http://www.progressgroup.org.uk) by:

- Logging into your online tenant account
- Emailing us
- Live chat – available Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm.

You can also:

- Call us on 0333 320 4555
- Visit or write to us - Sumner House, 21 King Street, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 2LW.

 **Like us**  
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 **Share with us**  
[@progress\\_hg](https://instagram.com/progress_hg)

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## Report or track a repair or check your rent balance

You can pay your rent, check your rent balance and report or track a non-emergency repair online 24/7.

Log in or sign up for your online tenant account at [www.progressgroup.org.uk](http://www.progressgroup.org.uk)

## Complaints and compliments

Your feedback is very important to us and helps us to improve our services. If you want to tell us that we have been doing something well or are unhappy about something, please tell us using the contact details on the left.

Our Complaints, Feedback and Redress Policy and process follow the standards set out in the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. You can read more on our website or let us know if you would like a leaflet.

## Information in another format or language

This leaflet is available in the following formats:

- EasyRead
- Audio
- Large print
- Braille
- On yellow, pink or blue paper
- Other languages.

More information is available at [www.progressgroup.org.uk/access](http://www.progressgroup.org.uk/access)