



Colchester
Borough Council

Colchester Borough Council
Place and Client Services

Tenant Alterations Policy

www.colchester.gov.uk

Title	Tenant Alterations Policy
Users of Policy	Colchester Borough Council and Colchester Borough Homes tenants and staff.
Date Adopted	1 April 2018
Date last Reviewed	June 2022
Review Frequency	Every 3 years
Best Before Date	30 June 2025
Scheme of Delegation	
Formation of Policy	Portfolio Holder with delegated responsibility for Housing
Amendments	Portfolio Holder with delegated responsibility for Housing
Monitoring	Client Asset Manager
Implementation	Client Asset Manager
Approval of requests	Client Asset Manager delegated Head of Repairs & Maintenance, Head of Housing Management and Head of Asset Management at Colchester Borough Homes.
Appeals	Client Asset Manager delegated to Director of Business Improvement at Colchester Borough Homes.

1. Aims of Policy

- 1.1 The aim of the Tenant Alterations policy is to set out Colchester Borough Councils approach to allowing tenants to carry out alterations to our properties.
- 1.2 The policy will also cover the approach to unauthorised tenant alterations.

2. Definition of an Alteration

- 2.1 Any changes carried out on a Council owned property, by the tenant (or any person under the tenants instruction), other than decoration.

3. Related policy and Guidance

- 3.1 If you are a secure tenant, you have the right to make alterations to your home and garden, however, it is a condition of your Tenancy Agreement that you must seek written permission from Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) as your Landlord's managing agent (Leaseholders may also need written permission for some home improvements – see Leaseholders Guide). Introductory tenants can decorate their homes, but do not have the right to alter their homes in any other way.
- 3.2 For works which require planning permission and building control, it is the responsibility of the tenant to engage with professionals (surveyors, architects etc) to ensure the appropriate permissions are gained and compliance is met. CBH do not provide these services and will not approve requests without the necessary statutory permissions.

Planning and building control information can be found on the Council's website [Planning, Building Control and Local Land Charges - Colchester Borough Council](#)

4. The Policy- general provisions

- 4.1 Applications for alterations can be made by completing the on-line form available on the CBH website [Tenant Alterations - Colchester Borough Homes \(cbhomes.org.uk\)](#) . Other methods to request alterations will be available on request. Applications will need to detail the type of works to be carried out, by whom and evidence of their competence. The location of the works and any drawings or photo's that would assist in the application should be included.
- 4.2 Acceptable alterations with written permission include:
- Refitting kitchens and bathrooms
 - Replacing or upgrading electrical fittings, including any additional wiring to any part of the property and outbuildings
 - Renewal of doors or replacing internal doors (not fire doors)
 - Fitting satellite dishes (excluding blocks/schemes with digital tv)
 - Solid flooring which could include tiling or wood or laminate flooring in Houses, ground floor only and ground floor flats
 - Fencing or brick walls
 - Doorbell cameras not connected to mains supply and not fitted to doors and door frames (this will be subject to specific conditions)
 - Hardstanding and patio's – additional criteria for these alterations apply, see point 4.10 below.

4.3 Unacceptable alterations where written permission will not be provided include:

- Any alteration to incoming services utility, e.g. gas, electricity, water, sewerage distribution point
- Conservatories
- Car ports
- Loft conversions
- Decking
- Extensions
- Log burners
- Tiled, Laminate or solid wood flooring if you live in a first or second floor flat
- Door or Wall Flaps for pet access
- Any works which falls under the Party Wall etc. Act 1996 [Party Wall etc. Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56)

The lists in 4.2 and 4.3 are not exhaustive and other requests will be treated on an individual request basis and where appropriate referred to the Council's Client Team for consideration.

4.4 Permission will only be given if building control requirements are met.

4.5 It is the tenant's responsibility to maintain and repair the authorised alteration for the lifetime of the tenancy, unless stated otherwise on the permission letter.

4.6 Where permission is given, tenants will be notified if the alteration is considered 'permanent'.

4.7 At the end of the tenancy all alterations must be removed, unless the alteration is a 'permanent' alteration, and the property reinstated to its original condition; otherwise this work would be rechargeable to the tenant.

4.8 Prior to granting permission, we may need to visit your home to establish the suitability of the proposed alteration and to verify if certain conditions need to be adhered to.

4.9 Depending on the type of alteration carried out, CBH may need to inspect the work and you will be required to send copies of certification relating to gas, electrical works and any other certification relevant to the works.

4.10 Hardstanding – permission will be subject to service (utilities) location, access to the highway, impact on neighbouring properties, and other relevant considerations such as health and safety. Where appropriate an application to Essex County Council for a dropped kerb will be required, information can be obtained from the Essex Highways website, www.essexhighways.org .

Patio's – permission will be subject to service (utilities) location and other relevant considerations such as health and safety.

- 4.11 All authorised alterations must be carried out to the current and appropriate planning consent, building regulations and any other legislation.
- 4.12 Alterations must be carried out in a safe manner and by a competent person or contractors.
- 4.13 Where permission is given on the condition that certification(s) or other information is provided before or on completion of the work, if this is not provided by the tenant the alteration will be considered 'unauthorised', see point 5. below.

5. Unauthorised Alterations

- 5.1 If you carry out an alteration without permission, Colchester Borough Homes may need to carry out an inspection to grant retrospective permission. You may be charged for this inspection. In the event that retrospective permission is not granted you will be asked to remove the alteration and you may be charged for any remedial work.

6. Appeals Procedure

- 6.1 Appeals must be received within 28 days of the date of the decision not to allow works and must give specific grounds for the appeal whether it is based on the decision, policy or the procedure.
- 6.2 Appeals against decisions will be considered by the Director of Business Improvement at Colchester Borough Homes taking into account new supporting information provided by the applicant and they may consult with the Officer who made the original decision.
- 6.3 Where an applicant is appealing against how the policy and/or the procedure have been applied the Director of Business Improvement will investigate the case and respond using the Colchester Borough Homes complaints procedure.

7. Service Standards

- 7.1 Acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days of receipt.
- 7.2 Decision – the tenant will be notified of the decision within 28 working days of receipt of enquiry, or where this is not possible the tenant will be notified within the same period with the reasons and a revised target date for a decision.
- 7.3 Appeals acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days of receipt.

- 7.4 Appeal Decision – Customer will be notified of outcome within 28 working days of receipt of appeal, unless additional time is required to provide a full response, in which case the customer will be notified of the delay.
- 7.5 The Policy is covered by the Asset Management Strategy Equality Impact Assessment which is available to view on the Council's website [Equality Impact Assessments · Colchester Borough Council](#)

8. Monitoring and Review

- 8.1 We will monitor that the Service Standards set out in this Policy are met.
- 8.2 The policy will be reviewed every 3 years to make sure the policy continues to be efficient and effective, whilst ensuring it still meets current legislation and the Council's Constitution.

9. Communicating the Policy to Staff

- 9.1 Managers and staff involved in the implementation of the Policy will receive a copy of the policy including:
- Housing Officers, Visiting Officers, Asset Management, Adaptations, Customers Services, Members.
- 9.2 Colchester Borough Homes will provide sufficient training to enable staff to understand and comply with the Policy.
- 9.3 A copy of the Policy will be accessible from the Council's document management system and websites of Colchester Borough Council and Colchester Borough Homes.
- 9.4 Any amendments to the Policy will be communicated, in a timely manner, to managers and staff involved in implementing the policy.

10. Communicating the policy to customers

- 10.1 The policy will be communicated to customers using the following methods:
- Articles regularly in Housing News and Views
 - Sheltered Scheme newsletters
 - Colchester Borough Council and Colchester Borough Homes websites
 - Social Media
- 10.2 Colchester Borough Homes will develop and provide information including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to assist with enquiries from tenants