

### 1. Purpose and scope

Papworth Trust understand that tenants may wish to make alterations to their home. We seek to balance this against protecting the overall purpose and long-term security of our homes and in particular, any accessibility features and adaptations that have been installed to make our homes suitable for disabled people.

This policy outlines Papworth Trust's approach to tenant requests to carry out alterations to their home.

A tenant alteration is defined as 'any change, internal or external, made to a Papworth Trust home by a tenant, other than decoration'

An adaptation is defined as 'a physical alteration to a property or property grounds to improve safety, independence and function of the disabled person within that environment.' An example of this would be the installation of a ramp following an assessment by an occupational therapist.

Where the alteration being requested meets the definition of an adaptation, the request will be considered in line with the Adaptation Policy. The Adaptation Policy advises what information is required as part of an adaptation request. Where this information is not submitted the request will be considered as a tenant alteration under this policy.

### 2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Recognise that tenants may wish to make alterations to their property
- Ensure alterations do not have a detrimental impact to the immediate and wider neighbourhood and local environment
- Safeguard our homes to ensure that alterations do not adversely affect the property
- To find a balance between the above to ensure that permission is not unreasonably withheld
- Where permission is granted, ensure that alterations are carried out in a safe manner to the correct professional standard, to ensure the integrity of the building and crucially the safety of the household residing in the property

- Ensure that where an alteration is permitted, any ongoing financial liability or risk associated with the alteration lies with the tenants and not the Trust
- Provide adequate security, should a tenancy come to an end or where appropriate, the property will be returned to the original condition at the discretion of the Trust.
- Make the approach and responsibilities of any alteration request clear to tenants and staff.

### 3. General Provisions

There are a number of different tenures active within our stock and whilst the approach taken will be the same, the type of tenancy may affect the final decision.

If you are a secure or assured non-shorthold 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 before making any alteration.

If you are an assured shorthold tenant consideration will be given to the length of the fixed term remaining and the likelihood of you being offered a further tenancy when assessing whether to grant permission for an alteration.

If you are a starter tenant, or are still within a probationary period of a fixed term, you do not have the right to make alterations and permission will not be granted to any application

For alterations that require planning permission and building control approval, it is the tenant's responsibility to ensure the appropriate permissions are gained and compliance is met. Papworth Trust will not approve requests without the necessary permissions in place.

### 4. Tenant Alteration Requests

Tenants can apply for permission to carry out a tenant alteration in a variety of ways:

- email to [housing@papworthtrust.org.uk](mailto:housing@papworthtrust.org.uk).
- telephone by calling 0330 678 0008 option 2
- in writing to Papworth Trust Housing, 1 Saxongate, Bradbury Place, Huntingdon, PE29 3RR

This should detail what changes and work is being requested including any plans and drawings in support the request. It should also include who would

be undertaking the alteration including evidence of their qualifications and/or competence.

We aim to deal with all tenant alteration requests within 28 days. Where it is a complex request there may be an extension to allow for further investigation. The tenant will be advised where this is the case within 28 days and how long is likely to be required.

The request will be considered by a Housing Officer, with additional technical expertise provided by others to investigate whether the request is reasonable and permissible. When assessing the suitability of a request, we will consider the following:

- rent arrears or other debt owed to the Trust - Permission will not be granted to any request by tenants in rent arrears or owing any other housing-related debt to Papworth Trust.
- tenancy status (tenure)
- suitability of request
- any other housing management factor deemed relevant by the Trust
- whether the alteration removes or inhibits any accessibility features or adaptations
- the impact on the structural integrity or fabric of the building
- the impact of the alteration on neighbouring properties and the intended appearance of the local area
- the specification of any equipment to ensure that any adverse impact to existing structures/components will not be caused
- ascertain any maintenance/servicing/liability/upgrade or impact that the proposed tenant work will cause
- ascertain any financial impact to the Trust
- whether the alteration would need to be removed and reverted to the original at the end of the tenancy and the impact this may have

This list is not exhaustive, and each case will be considered individually.

An inspection may be required before a decision can be made on whether permission can be granted.

Tenants are expected to comply with reasonable requests for access and information relating to an alteration. Failure to reasonably comply with our requests will result in refusal of the tenant alteration request.

## 5. Specific Conditions

An inspection may be required to ensure the alteration has been carried out in accordance with any conditions of the permission.

Copies of all relevant certification will need to be provided to Papworth Trust.

It is the Tenants responsibility to repair, maintain and/or replace the authorised alteration and any specific conditions will be included in the permission. This may include accepting a variation of your tenancy agreement so that a service charge can be added to cover any cost associated with the alteration.

It is solely Papworth Trusts decision whether any alteration can be left at the end of the tenancy. This will be explained in any grant of permission. If removal and reinstatement to original is required, this will be at the tenant's expense and any additional work required that is associated with the alteration will be rechargeable to the tenant.

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to revoke any permissions granted and request reinstatement to original, where this is the case, the tenant will be given reasons for this.

From the date permission is granted a tenant will have a maximum of six months to carry out the alteration. If it is not completed during those six months a tenant will be required to reapply for permission for the alteration. This is to ensure that resources are used appropriately and any changes in policy and/or legislation can be enforced.

Tenants may be entitled to compensation for property improvements. Where removal and reinstatement to original is required, any compensation will be offset against the cost of any remedial work.

## 6. Unauthorised Alterations

Where an alteration has been carried out without our permission it is an unauthorised alteration.

Where an unauthorised alteration has been identified it may need to be inspected to ascertain whether it would have been granted permission. Further inspections may be required to determine whether it is compliant and safe.

Where it is found to be a permissible alteration, retrospective permission may be granted.

There may be a charge for retrospective permission inspections.

Where it is determined that permission would not have been granted, the tenant must reinstate the property to original and make good any damage. Timeframes will be agreed with the tenant dependant on the nature of the alteration and the risk it poses to the tenant and property.

Where a tenant fails to meet the agreed deadlines, Papworth Trust may request access and undertake the works. The cost of this will be recharged to the tenant in line with the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

## 7. Appeals

Tenants are entitled to appeal any decision not to grant permission for a tenant alteration.

This will be carried out by a Reviewing Officer of greater seniority than the staff member who made the original decision. They will have been uninvolved in the original outcome and will review the decision considering any new supporting information provided by the tenant. The Reviewing Officer may consult with the staff member that made the original decision.

No further appeal will be heard, and any subsequent complaint will be dealt with through the Papworth Trust complaints policy.

## 8. Document control

Owner	Business Manager – Housing Management
Consulted	None
Approver	Senior Business Manager- Property
Date approved	July 2024
Next review date	June 2027
Ratified by	N/A

## 9. Version tracker

Version number	Date	Approved by	Comments/Reason for issue
1.0	July 2018	Director of Operations	New policy
2.0	March 2021		Review at Scrutiny Panel

3.0	July 2024	Senior Business Manager-Property	Standard review
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