



Home improvements you can make

A clear guide to making
changes in your Acis home



Welcome

We want your home to feel like a place you truly enjoy living in. Sometimes, a few changes can help make that happen.

This booklet explains what you can do, when you need to ask us first, and how to make sure everything is carried out safely and to a good standard.

And if you ever have a question or you're unsure about something, we're only a call away.

Telephone:

0800 027 2057

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Website:

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1 What improvements you can usually apply for

If you have an Assured or Secure tenancy, we'll normally say yes to reasonable and appropriate home improvements.

If you live in a new-build home that's under 12 months old, you can usually only request:

- A TV aerial
- Small disability related adaptations
- A standard 6x4 ft shed (where no covenants prevent this)

We'll always explain your options before you start anything.



2 Getting work done safely and properly

Who can carry out the work?

You can choose your own contractor, but the work must be done by:

- Someone competent, and
- A qualified professional for jobs like electrical or gas work

When you apply, we'll let you know which improvements need certificates or checks afterwards.

If any work isn't completed to the right standard, we'll ask you to have it put right. If there's ever an immediate safety risk, we may need to make it safe straight away — and we'll recharge this work to you.



3 Looking after your improvements



Anything you install yourself will be yours to look after.

If an alteration causes damage to your home and we need to repair it, we'll need to recharge you for this.

Some improvements may need to be removed when your tenancy ends. We'll talk this through with you during your pre termination inspection, so you know exactly what's expected.

Adaptations installed through a Disabled Facilities Grant are normally looked after by Acis — except stair lifts, through floor lifts and temporary items, which you'll be responsible for under your agreement with the local authority.

4 If work is carried out without permission

Some improvements need approval first. If you go ahead without asking us, you may be breaching your tenancy agreement.

We may ask you to remove the improvement. Sometimes we can give permission afterwards, but this depends on the circumstances.

If you're unsure whether something needs approval, just check with us first - we're here to help.



5 Asbestos and other materials

Some older homes contain asbestos materials. These are usually safe as long as they aren't disturbed. DIY tasks such as drilling, scraping or sanding may release fibres - so please get in touch before doing this type of work.

If you think something may contain asbestos:

- Don't touch or disturb it
- Call our Customer Service Centre on 0800 027 2057

If asbestos needs to be removed, we'll arrange this at no cost to you.

You can also request a copy of your property's asbestos survey before starting work.



Where might we find asbestos?

Asbestos in the home

*Asbestos usage has declined dramatically over the years and in all cases, its usage has been banned. As a result, older homes are more likely to be at risk.



A Exterior surfaces

1. Roof felt and shingles
2. Window putty
3. Cement asbestos board siding / undersheeting

B Insulation

1. Vermiculite insulation
2. Batt insulation

C Flooring

1. Vinyl asbestos flooring material

D Interior surfaces

1. Sprayed-on ceiling material
2. Textured paint

E Boilers, heating and piping

1. Heat source covering
2. Door gaskets
3. Duct lining
4. Wall gaskets and lining

F Electrical equipment

1. Recessed lighting
2. Wiring insulation
3. Fuse boxes
4. Outlets

G Appliances

1. Refrigerators / freezers
2. Range hoods
3. Woodstoves (heat reflectors)
4. Clothes dryers

*Not shown: dishwashers, toasters, slow-cookers, portable heaters, hair dryers

H Miscellaneous

1. Fireplace logs

J Automotive

1. Brake linings, gaskets, and clutch facings

6 Before starting any DIY

Big repairs or replacements, such as kitchens or bathrooms, are our responsibility.

For anything else, especially electrical, gas or structural work, please speak to us first. We'll check what's safe and what your tenancy agreement allows.



7 Your tenancy agreement

This booklet is a helpful guide, but your tenancy agreement is the official document that sets out what you can and can't do.

If your agreement says something different, the agreement will take priority.



8 Adaptations

We want your home to work for you - and sometimes a small change can make everyday life that bit easier. If you think you'd benefit from an adaptation, we're here to help you explore your options.



Minor adaptations

We may be able to carry out some minor adaptations free of charge, depending on what you need. These could include simple adjustments that make moving around or using your home easier. If you'd like to be considered, just get in touch with our Customer Service team and we'll talk everything through with you.

Major adaptations

If you need something more significant, such as bigger structural changes, these may be handled by your local authority through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). The first step is to speak with your Occupational Therapist (OT). They'll assess your needs and guide you through the process if a grant might be suitable.

Whether it's a small tweak or a more complex adaptation, we'll do our best to support you every step of the way. If you're unsure where to start, just give us a call — we're always happy to help.

9 Improvements you can make without asking us

You can make certain small changes to your home without needing our permission first.

Each alteration has a few simple conditions to follow so everything stays safe and in good condition. If something you want to do isn't listed here, please check with us before you start.



Internal decoration

You're welcome to decorate your home inside.

Conditions:

- Please don't decorate a new build home in the first 12 months - this helps the walls fully dry out.
- Don't use textured coatings or non domestic paints (like Artex).
- Don't paint fixtures, fittings or appliances such as baths, sinks, toilets, radiators, boilers, fires, kitchen units or electrical switches.

Water meter

Your water provider can install a water meter for you.

Conditions:

- No permission is needed from us.

Curtain poles

You can fit curtain poles yourself.

Conditions:

- No extra steps needed.

Blinds, nets and curtains

You can install your own window dressings.

Conditions:

- Please remove them when your tenancy ends.

Hanging pictures

You can hang artwork and photos.

Conditions:

- Remove everything at the end of your tenancy.
- Fill any holes so the wall is flush.



Shelves

You can put up shelves.

Conditions:

- Remove them before you leave.
- Fill any holes so the wall is flush.

Phone line or broadband installation

A service provider can usually install a new line.

Conditions:

- In some new builds this isn't possible - we'll let you know when you move in.

Mounting a TV on the wall

You can wall mount a TV.

Conditions:

- Make sure the fixings and wall can safely hold the TV.
- You can't install a TV above a gas or electric fire.
- You can't wall mount a TV in a new build home during the first 12 months.

Basic bathroom fittings

You can add small fittings such as:

- Non heated towel rails
- Mirrors
- Wall mounted soap dishes
- Wall mounted toilet roll holders

Conditions:

- Don't install showers, change major bathroom components or add electrical/heated devices without permission.
- We'll check these items at the end of your tenancy and let you know if anything needs removing.

Smart meters

Your energy supplier can fit a meter, including smart meters.

Conditions:

- Leave the meter in place when you end your tenancy.

Key safe

You can install a key safe if you live in a house or bungalow.

Conditions:

- Flats or shared areas need permission, as key safes in communal areas must be approved.
- At the end of your tenancy, please remove the key safe or provide us with the code.



Minor garden changes

You can make small changes to your garden, such as:

- Planting
- Laying grass or turf
- Creating a vegetable patch (no raised beds)
- Adding children's garden toys

Conditions:

- Permission is needed for patios, path changes, outside electrics, ponds or removing retaining walls.
- Communal gardens can't be altered the code.

Inflatable spa

You can use an inflatable spa.

Conditions:

- If you need electrical work or structural cover, please request permission.

Video doorbells / wireless CCTV

You can install these devices.

Conditions:

- They must not overlook neighbours' homes or invade privacy.
- If concerns are raised, we may ask you to adjust or remove them.
- They must comply with ICO data protection guidance.
- Remove the device and make good any holes at the end of your tenancy.

Laminate flooring (houses only)

You can lay laminate flooring in a house.

Conditions:

- Flats or maisonettes require permission for any hard flooring.
- We'll advise at your pre termination inspection whether the flooring can stay.

Carpet or vinyl flooring

You can install new floor coverings.

Conditions:

- Don't replace kitchen or bathroom flooring without permission - these are provided by Acis.
- Flooring must help reduce noise transfer to neighbours.
- We'll advise at the end of tenancy if flooring can remain.

Sheds and greenhouses (standard size)

You can install a shed or greenhouse up to 6ft x 4ft.

Conditions:

- You must have a suitable hardstanding base - permission is needed to create one.
- Larger sheds or electrics require permission.
- Keep sheds at least 2 metres from any property (fire safety).
- No sheds in communal areas.
- We'll confirm at tenancy end whether it can stay.

Replacing or adding fencing

You can usually replace boundary fencing.

Conditions:

- Check who owns the boundary before starting work.
- Removing hedges or bushes requires permission.
- Taller fencing or new fencing lines need permission and may require planning approval.
- Front fences can't exceed 1m, back fences can't exceed 2m.
- No fencing allowed in open plan areas or land maintained by Acis.

Washing line

You can install a washing line.

Conditions:

- Choose an appropriate location.
- Don't attach washing lines to fencing.
- Communal areas can't be used.

Replacing grass with gravel or artificial turf

You can change your garden surface.

Conditions:

- Ensure good drainage so water doesn't pool.
- You may be asked to restore this at tenancy end.

Outside tap

You can fit an outside tap.

Conditions:

- Must be fitted by a competent, qualified person.
- No taps in communal areas.
- Ensure good drainage.
- A double check valve and service valve are required.
- Any pipework must be sleeved and insulated.

Wireless burglar alarm

You can install a wireless alarm system.

Conditions:

- Installation must be done by someone competent and qualified.
- Remove the system at tenancy end.
- Hard wired alarms need permission.

Wall tiling

You can add tiling in kitchens or bathrooms.

Conditions:

- Work must be carried out by a competent and qualified person.
- Tiling must be finished to a good standard.



10 Improvements you need to request permission for

Some alterations are larger or could affect safety or the structure of your home. For these, you must get permission before starting any work. We'll always consider requests reasonably, and if we ever need to decline, we'll explain why.



Major garden alterations

If you'd like to make bigger changes to your garden - such as installing a water feature, altering ground levels, removing or building retaining walls, or taking out hedges, bushes or trees - you'll need permission first.

Conditions:

- Permission must be granted before work begins.
- We'll confirm at tenancy end whether the change can stay.

Replacing your kitchen or kitchen components

Any replacement or redesign of your kitchen, including units, worktops or layout changes, requires permission.

Conditions:

- We'll confirm at tenancy end whether the kitchen can stay.

Decking or patios

If you want to install decking or a patio, please request permission.

Conditions:

- We'll confirm at tenancy end whether it can remain.

Hardwired CCTV

You must request permission before installing a hardwired CCTV system.

Conditions:

- You must follow ICO guidance.
- The system must be removed at tenancy end.



Conservatories and porches

Adding a conservatory or porch requires permission.

Conditions:

- Work must meet planning requirements.
- We'll confirm at tenancy end if it can stay.

Showers

You'll need permission to install an over bath or standalone shower. (A simple shower tap attachment is fine without permission.)

Conditions:

- Electrical showers require a minor works certificate when completed.
- We'll confirm at tenancy end whether it can stay.

Heating appliances and gas fires

Any changes to fires, stoves, log burners or similar appliances require permission.

Conditions:

- New gas fires or solid fuel appliances aren't permitted where another heating system exists.

Changes to the main heating system

You'll need permission to alter radiators, replace boilers or thermostats, or switch to renewable systems.

Built in cupboards

You must request permission to install or remove built in cupboards.



Main bathroom components

Replacing the toilet, bath or sink requires permission.

External doors

Permission is needed to replace any external door.

Conditions:

- Fire doors cannot be changed.
- Cat flaps in external doors are not allowed.

Electrical sockets

Alterations or new socket installations need permission.

Conditions:

- A minor works electrical certificate is required after completion.

Driveways, hardstandings and dropped kerbs

You'll need permission to install a driveway or hardstanding.

Conditions:

- The highways authority must approve any dropped kerb.
- Vehicles must only cross land at an approved crossing.

Car charging points

Installing a car charging point requires permission.

Conditions:

- An electrical certificate is required on completion.

TV aerials and satellite dishes

You must request permission before installing either.

Conditions:

- This ensures suitability and checks for any covenants.

External decoration

Painting the outside of your home requires permission.

Conditions:

- This ensures appropriate materials and finishes are used.



Fixing items to cladded or rendered exteriors

Any fixings to external cladding or render require permission.

Conditions:

- This prevents damage to the exterior material.

Internal doors

You'll need permission to replace or alter internal doors.

Conditions:

- Any glazing must meet current safety standards.

Light fittings

You'll need permission to change light fittings.

Conditions:

- Work must be done by a competent, qualified person.
- A minor works certificate is required after completion.

Trees or hedges on boundaries

You must request permission before removing any boundary hedge or tree.

Conditions:

- Confirm boundary ownership first.
- Check for any Tree Protection Orders.

Water, gas or electrical services

Any removal or alteration of service pipes, cables or supplies requires permission.

Conditions:

- Work must be carried out by a qualified person.
- Certification may be required once completed.



11 Improvements we usually can't approve



To keep homes safe and consistent, some requests can't be permitted.

These include:

- Gas fires or solid fuel appliances
- Extensions
- Loft conversions
- Structural changes
- Changing fire doors
- Cat or dog flaps in external doors
- Permanent animal lodgings or recessed ponds
- Solar panels
- Creating extra rooms by dividing existing ones

12 Not sure whether something is allowed?



Just ask us. We're always happy to help and we'll never unreasonably refuse a request. If the improvement you're thinking about isn't listed, get in touch and we'll talk it through.



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