

A guide to alterations

This is a quick guide to help you if you are thinking about making an alteration to your leasehold or shared ownership property, giving you an outline of your options to consider with an indication of the costs involved.

The guide also includes the form you will need to begin the process.

Please read this information carefully.

Do I need consent from First Choice Homes Oldham to make alterations?

Your lease will tell you for what you need to ask consent and for what you are responsible as the homeowner. If your lease tells you to get consent from your landlord, you will need to complete and submit an Alteration Request form. You should keep a record of any consent given. If you decide to sell in the future, you will need to show that consent was given, so keep it safe.

Each alteration request is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Please remember that consent is not guaranteed. There is a non-refundable administration charge for assessing your request.

Consent will not be given if you have any outstanding rent or service charge payments.

What is the difference between a minor alteration and a major alteration?

We split alterations into two types: minor and major. The below table is examples of minor and major work. It is always best to check with us whether the work you are thinking of is minor or major.

| Examples of minor alterations | Examples of major alterations |
|--|---|
| Replacing your front door | Building a porch |
| Replacing fencing | Building a conservatory or extension |
| Erecting a shed | Replacing windows (if your lease says you are responsible) |
| Replacing your kitchen or bathroom using the existing layout | Changing the levels of external landscaped areas |
| Re-plumbing | Solar panels |
| Electrical work including things like re-wiring, fitting additional wall sockets | Altering the layout of your home e.g., removal of internal walls or creating a new external opening |
| Installing CCTV | Installing central heating / air conditioning / new boiler |

If you are a shared owner, you might consider increasing the share owned in your property before making alterations. Once you become a 100% owner you are usually free to go ahead with alterations without the need to ask for consent; and you will benefit from the full value of any improvements.

Buying more shares in your property is called 'staircasing', please ask for more information about staircasing if you think this is a better option for you.

How does the alterations process work?

Step 1 – Application

When we look at your request, we need quite a lot of information. It helps to avoid any delays in the assessment if you give us as much information as possible when you submit your application.

This would be things like:

- Scaled drawings with specifications.
- Plans of existing and proposed structure with dimensions shown.
- Details of the contractor you will use and their registration details - they must be a qualified, competent tradesperson.
- Details of how long the work will take, along with the proposed start and end dates.

Please note

Even if you have consent from us at First Choice Homes Oldham, it does not exempt you from getting the local authority permissions. You will need to provide us copies of any local authority permissions including Fire Regulation Compliance, Building Control and Planning Permission (where applicable).

Standard conditions to be met:

- Work cannot start until you have written consent from First Choice Home Oldham.
- You are liable for the cost of repairing any damage caused by your contractors while undertaking the alterations.
- You must make sure that work does not cause annoyance or nuisance to others.
- Work must be carried out in a competent manner, using industry standard materials.
- The work must comply with Health and Safety legislation.
- The Party Wall Act 1996 must be complied with.
- First Choice Home Oldham reserves the right to require any sub-standard work to be rectified or removed entirely at your expense.

Step 2 - Payment

Payment of the administration charge is non-refundable and does not guarantee consent. The charge will need to be paid when you apply for consent.

Minor alteration charge per application £100.00

Major alteration charge per application £150.00

Do not forget if your lease tells you that you must also have consent from your local authority/council and pay any charges associated with that, this is your responsibility.

Step 3 - Information and payment received

Minor alterations - If we can consent to your alteration, we will give you a consent letter and reference any supporting information you have provided.

Major alterations - Can sometimes have more than one stage for consent. We might need to inspect the property before alterations can be considered for consent and we might also need to do another inspection when the work is completed.

If we can consent to your alteration, we will give you a consent letter and reference any supporting information you have given us. This then gives you permission to get started on the works you detailed in your application.

If applicable, once the alterations are finished, you must submit a signed-off Building Control Certificate to First Choice Homes Oldham. We will then issue you with a letter confirming First Choice Homes Oldham gave permission.

When we give consent, it is valid for six months from the date we give it; if the work is not completed within six months, then you will need to re-apply for consent.

Retrospective consent

If you alter your home without having consent when your lease says you needed consent, then you are in breach of your lease. Let us know of this as soon as possible to avoid us taking any action against you.

We might be able to give you retrospective consent once we have assessed the works. If we can consent to your alteration, we will give you a consent letter and reference any supporting information you gave us.

Minor alteration retrospective charge per application £150.00

Major alteration retrospective charge per application £200.00

If it is not possible to give consent, you will have to remove the alteration and return the property to its prior condition. Any costs involved in removing an alteration and returning the property to its original state will need to be paid for by you.

Alterations Request



This form is to be completed if you would like to request an alteration to a leasehold or shared ownership property.

Please return the completed form via email to Homeowners@fcho.co.uk.

Or by post to:

Home Ownership Manager, First Choice Homes Oldham, First Place, 22 Union St, Oldham, OL1 1BE

| Names of all leaseholders | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| Full property address | |
| | |
| Correspondence address (if different from property address) | |
| | |
| Home number: | Mobile number: |
| Email address: | |

Description of alteration/improvement?

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

Details of the contractor to be used

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Builder | |
| Gas Engineer | Gas Safe No. |
| Electrician | NICEIC No. |
| FIRAS Accredited Inspector | |

Have you got all the necessary permissions e.g., planning/building regulations?

Yes (please attach) No None Required

If we give permission, when will you start the work?

When do you expect to finish the work?

Declaration and Signatures

- I/We understand that we must provide copies of any local authority permissions including Fire Regulation Compliance, Building Control and Planning Permission (where applicable).
- I/We understand work cannot start works until we have written consent from First Choice Home Oldham.
- I/We have read and understood the 'Standard conditions' to be met.
- I/We understand the administration charge is non-refundable and does not guarantee consent.

If there are joint leaseholders, all leaseholders must sign this form to confirm the above declarations and that you have read the guidance notes.

| Signature of all leaseholders | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Signature 1. | Signature 2. |
| Date | Date |