

Making improvements to your home

This information is to help you decide whether you are eligible under your tenancy agreement to carry out improvements. It also gives guidance about how to identify improvements, which may be subject to certain conditions, local authority planning permission or other regulatory standards.

You must complete an application form and receive written permission from WDH before you make any arrangements for work to begin. As your landlord our decision is final.

This document is for guidance only and does not give a legal interpretation or a summary of all the rules and regulations, which may apply to improvements you wish to carry out in your home.

Tenancy Agreements

You may request permission to carry out improvements if you have an Assured Tenancy or an Assured Non-Shorthold Tenancy.

If you have an Assured Shorthold (Starter) Tenancy, permission will not be granted.

Carrying out improvements

We are carrying out major improvements to our homes to meet the Government's 'Decent Homes Standard' by 2010 and the 'Wakefield Standard' by 2012. So before you go ahead with any improvements of your own, it is worth considering those we may be carrying out.

You need written permission to carry out **all** improvements and alterations to your home, except internal decorations such as painting and wallpapering.

We will not unreasonably refuse permission for improvements, but we may impose conditions, which will apply to granting permission. Any conditions will be clearly identified in the letter you will receive and they **must** be adhered to. Failure to do so will be considered a breach of your Tenancy Agreement.

This list gives you an idea of the improvements that our tenants request permission for.

- Install a water meter
- Fence off open-plan areas
- Create a parking space for a car
- Decorate any part of the outside of your home

- Make any structural changes or additions to the property
- Remove, add or alter any part of a fence or garden wall
- Erect a shed, single garage, conservatory or any other external construction
- Add to, change or replace any fixtures and fittings provided by us
- Put up a satellite dish, radio or amateur radio aerial such as a Citizens Band aerial
- Apply artex to a ceiling (we do not allow artex to walls)
- Fit tiles to walls or floors, including laminates
- Alter the electrical, gas, heating or water installations
- Erect or construct patio and / or decking

Installing a water meter

Installing a water meter affects the way you pay your water charge. When you have received our permission to have one installed, you must contact Yorkshire Water to request a survey. Any cost for this survey will be your responsibility.

You must inform us once the meter has been fitted and is fully operational. The charge that is collected through your rent account will not stop until Yorkshire Water inform us that your meter has been installed and is working. This is taken into account with any arrears query.

Improvements involving gas and electrical work

For your own safety, work of this nature must be done in line with current regulations.

Gas work - With effect from 1 April 2009 only engineers who are registered on the Gas Safe Register can carry out gas work. (This replaces CORGI and it is your responsibility to ensure your engineer is correctly registered.)

Electrical wiring - The work must be completed by a tradesperson who is qualified to the 17th Edition.

The tradesperson, in both instances, will provide you with the appropriate certificates for the work. The original certificates **must** be sent to us so a copy can be taken. We will return the original certificates back to you. If you do not submit the certificates, we will send out an engineer to inspect the work carried out and issue the appropriate certification. The full cost of this service and any payment for associated repairs / alterations will be your responsibility.

Improvements requiring planning permission and / or building control approval

The following list gives you a general idea of the type of improvements, which need planning or building permission from the council.

	CA	WDH Permission	Planning Permission	Building Regulations
Parking space for a car		✓	✓	X
Building a single garage		✓	✓	✓
Building a porch / conservatory		✓	✓	✓
Building a garden shed / greenhouse	✓	✓	X	X
Replacing or erecting a new fence	✓	✓	X	X
Making a through lounge	✓	✓	X	✓
Removal of internal walls	✓	✓	X	✓
Renewing banisters		✓	X	✓
Putting in central heating		✓	X	✓
Fitting new kitchen units		✓	X	✓
External painting of woodwork	✓	✓	X	X
External painting of render / pebbledash	✓	✓	X	X
Fitting new windows	✓	✓	X	✓
New external door	✓	✓	X	✓
Storm doors / patio doors	✓	✓	X	✓
Rewiring		✓	X	✓
Citizens Band aerial		✓	✓	X
Fitting double glazing		✓	X	✓
Cavity wall insulation	✓	✓	X	✓
Additional electric sockets / cooker panel		✓	X	✓
Wall lights / external lighting / intruder alarm	✓	✓	X	✓
Extractor fan	✓	✓	X	✓
Fitting a new bathroom suite		✓	X	✓ 1
New sockets / wall lights		✓	X	✓ 2
Plumbing in a washing machine		✓	X	✓ 3

Key

CA If in a conservation area contact with Wakefield Council's Planning Department required.

Building regulations not required if:-

1. like for like with same drainage. If any alterations contact required.
2. like for like. If completely new and new locations contact required.
3. like for like with same drainage. If new drainage contact required.

Important

WDH will not be responsible for any temporary or permanent structures such as conservatories / porches which adjoin your home or any other property. If you are considering this type of structure, make sure you have adequate buildings and contents insurance to cover any claim relating to it.

Once you receive our permission letter, **you** are responsible for getting formal planning permission / building regulations approval from Wakefield Council or any other permission you may need before work can start.

We advise you to keep a record of all documents for approval, plans, dates the work was carried out and the original receipts for work. You may need them at a later date when your tenancy ends if you wish to make a claim for compensation for the improvements.

The application and decision process

The WDH Programming Team will assess your application once it has been received. We will try to let you know our decision within ten working days. If we need further information or have to visit your home to check the work you want to do, this may cause a delay. We will contact you to arrange a time to visit, if necessary.

You will receive a letter telling you if your application has been approved. The permission letter is **only valid for a period of three months**. Failure to carry out the work and return the 'Notification of Completion' form (contained within the permission letter) within three months, will cancel the permission and you will have to re-apply.

Any work carried out before permission is granted will not be classed as authorised and a charge may be incurred if authorisation has to be obtained at a later date.

After you have completed your improvement

When the work you have received permission for is completed, you must return the 'Notification of Completion' form, along with any gas or electrical certificates. On receipt of this, the surveyor will come to your home to inspect the work carried out and make sure it complies with any conditions stipulated in the granting of permission.

If everything is satisfactory you will receive a 'Certificate of Acceptance', which acknowledges that all the work has been carried out to our satisfaction. The surveyor will send this out to you within five working days of the final inspection.

If the final inspection reveals faults or the work has not been carried out in accordance with the conditions stipulated by us, you will receive a letter detailing the work which you are still required to do. This work must be completed within two weeks from the date of the letter.

If the work is not completed, this would put you in breach of your tenancy agreement and we may carry out the work and recharge you.

Improvements carried out without written permission

If you make unauthorised alterations to your home, you are breaking your tenancy agreement. We may insist that you remove the improvement and put your home back to its original condition, at your own cost. If you do not do this, we may do the work and recharge you.

If you have carried out any other improvements to your home without permission, you will need to contact WDH immediately and apply for approval for the unauthorised work.

If your tenancy ends and you wish to apply for compensation for the improvements you have made, you will not qualify if you don't have written permission.

Appeal Rights

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your application, you have the right to appeal within 28 days of the date of the letter. In the first instance contact the surveyor who dealt with your application.

If the refusal is due to improvements contravening building, planning, safety or other legislative regulations, our decision will be final. If the refusal is not related to the above and an alternative course of action cannot be agreed, your application will be processed following the appeals procedure.

Where to send your completed application form

To the Team responsible for the area you live in. Remember to attach any plans or drawings so your application can be processed without delay.

Area Programming Team (East)

Crown Buildings, Westfield Road, Hemsworth, Pontefract, WF9 4ND
Phone: 01977 788246

Areas covered: Ackton, Ackworth, Airedale, Altofts, Badsworth, Castleford, Crofton, Darrington, Featherstone, Ferrybridge, Ferry Fryston, Fitzwilliam, Havercroft, Hemsworth, Kinsley, Kirkthorpe, Knottingley, Normanton, Nostell, Pontefract, Ryhill, Sharlston, South Elmsall, South Hiendley, South Kirkby, Streethouse, Thorpe Audlin, Upton, Winterset, and Wragby.

Area Programming Team (West)

2/4 George-a-Green Road, Lupset, Wakefield, WF2 8HN
Phone: 01924 247736

Areas covered: Alverthorpe, Belle Vue, Bretton, Crigglestone, Darnley, Eastmoor, Flanshaw, Hall Green, Horbury, Kettlethorpe, Kirkhamgate, Lupset, Middlestown, Netherton, Notton, Ossett, Outwood, Overton, Peacock, Portobello, Thornes, Sandal, Stanley, Walton, Wakefield City Centre, Wrenthorpe.