

Policy Name	Alterations Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	August 2024
Category	<i>Operational</i>
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Alterations (including Aids & Adaptations) Policy

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Contents

	Page No.
1. Policy purpose & aim	4
2. Objectives	4
3. Scope of policy	5
4. Responsibilities	5
5. Monitoring & review	6
6. Risk Management	6
7. Statement of commitment	7
8. Additional Arrangements	8.1 Overview
	8.2 Requesting Permission
	8.3 Considerations
	8.4 Granting Permission
	8.5 Refusing Permission

Policy Name	Alterations Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	August 2024
Category	<i>Operational</i>
Classification	<i>Public</i>

	8.6 Funding for Aids & Adaptations	12
	8.7 Completing Alterations	12
	8.8 'Making-good' Alterations	12
9. Other relevant ExtraCare policies & documents		13
10. Relevant legislative & regulatory requirements		13

Policy Name	Alterations Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	August 2024
Category	<i>Operational</i>
Classification	<i>Public</i>

Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Updated By	Approved By
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2	08.01.19	ELT approved	Gemma Duggan	ELT
3	15.05.24	Revised Policy - draft	Richard Keeley / Aran Duggan	Executive Director Operations

Policy Name	Alterations Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	August 2024
Category	<i>Operational</i>
Classification	<i>Public</i>

1. Policy Purpose & Aim

The ExtraCare Charitable Trust (ExtraCare) are committed to delivering our vision – ‘Better Lives for Older People’. As part of this, we are committed to ensuring that there is provision for residents to request permission to make *alterations* to their apartment to reflect changes in their needs; and for residents to have *aids & adaptations* fitted where there is a mobility issue or disability.

This policy details the process that residents must follow for us to assess whether to grant permission for an alteration, and to clearly state that residents should not make alterations to their apartment without the express consent of ExtraCare. The policy also identifies that the full cost of any agreed alterations must be met by the resident (although in the case of aids & adaptations some funding may be available). Residents are also responsible for the full costs of reinstating the property back to its original state at the end of the tenancy or lease, unless ExtraCare agree that the alterations can stay in place at the end of the tenancy or lease.

The policy also includes provision for requesting aids & adaptations to be fitted. This is additional equipment to ensure residents can age in place, by enabling independence. ExtraCare may contribute financially towards *minor* aids and adaptations for social renters, but not leaseholders, up to a maximum of £1,000. We will advise all residents of their rights to apply for the cost of aids and adaptations in excess of £1,000, through the Disabled Facilities Grant (through the relevant local authority).

The policy also states that ExtraCare will install and fit one grab rail per apartment at no cost to the resident, subject to an OT assessment, regardless of tenure.

For clarity, the word ‘apartment’ within this policy also applies to other types of ExtraCare properties (for example, bungalow or cottage). The emphasis on ‘apartments’ merely reflects that most of the properties owned / managed by ExtraCare are apartments.

2. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

Policy Name	Alterations Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	August 2024
Category	<i>Operational</i>
Classification	<i>Public</i>

- Meet our duties under the Equality Act 2010 'Duty to make Reasonable Adjustments' which applies to landlords and managers of rented premises or premises available to rent
- Meet our duties under the Regulator for Social Housing 'Home Standard' in having a clear and published policy on aids and adaptations;
- Ensure that residents can request permission for alterations and ensure that such requests are given fair and reasonable consideration;
- Ensure that the apartment, the wider building, and systems within it (water, heating, electric installations, other systems), are protected and that any alteration does not impact negatively on either the resident requesting the alteration or other residents within the building

3. Scope of Policy

This policy applies across all ExtraCare's locations. The only variation to this policy is in locations where ExtraCare do not carry out the landlord function as this is carried out instead by the partner landlord. In these circumstances, the policy of the partner landlord will apply in relation to consideration of an alteration request. ExtraCare will not consider funding of an aid or adaptation in a location where we do not carry out the landlord function.

4. Responsibilities

Executive Director Operations	Responsible for approving this policy and any subsequent updates or reviews.
Head of Property and Environment	Review all breaches of policy that result in alterations being installed incorrectly or without permission, for consideration of enforcement action to remedy the breach. Hear appeals / complaints relating to refusal of permission.
Asset & Maintenance Manager	Assess all applications for alterations (including aids & adaptations) and ensure appropriate investigation of all requests to establish whether permission can be granted, applying reasonable judgement. Update Asset Record where appropriate.

Policy Name	Alterations Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	August 2024
Category	<i>Operational</i>
Classification	<i>Public</i>

Senior Contracts Manager / Cluster Contracts Manager(s)	Ensure the supervision of alterations that have been agreed; agree how any on-going maintenance liability will be met (either by ExtraCare or by the resident / third – party provider).
Location Manager(s)	Advise residents (and applicants for housing) of the requirements laid down in this policy. Receive initial requests for alterations / aids & adaptations and provide initial advise and refer applications to the Asset & Maintenance Manager.
Wellbeing Advisors	Arrange assessments for aids and adaptations through ExtraCare’s student placement Occupational Therapists to ensure that such aids or adaptations are required and are fitted in the appropriate areas of the apartment.

5. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed in three years to consider its effectiveness, or sooner if there are any material regulatory or legal changes. The Asset & Maintenance Manager will monitor the effectiveness of the policy and forward any recommendations for changes to the policy author. Substantive changes to the policy will be subject to consultation with ExtraCare’s Resident Forum.

6. Risk Management

We have an averse to minimalist risk appetite for non-compliance with legal and regulatory requirements and this is reflected in our strategic and corporate risk registers.

Adherence to this policy will ensure that appropriate measures are in place to ensure that ExtraCare protects the integrity and safety of the building, including the services and systems within it; whilst meeting our obligations under the Equality Act to enable residents to make reasonable adjustments to their apartment to meet their needs.

The policy provides a provides the basis for ensuring all requests for alterations are given due consideration, and permission granted if possible or reasons given if the requested alteration is not possible.

Policy Name	Alterations Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	August 2024
Category	<i>Operational</i>
Classification	<i>Public</i>

7. Statement of Commitment

ExtraCare recognises that its aims are at the core of its vision of “Better lives for older people”. This policy aligns with our value of transparency. We will commit to the policy by ensuring that the policy is available as a public document for all residents and potential residents to view; publicising the policy to residents through Resident (‘Street’) Meetings; providing training to relevant staff including location managers; and Regional Operations Managers will ensure that the policy is appropriately implemented within locations.

8. Additional Arrangements

8.1 Overview

Alterations

Our policy is to give due consideration to all requests for alterations from residents to their apartment. By alteration, we mean any changes or additions to the apartment that affect the structure, services / utilities, or living space. (It does not include hanging pictures, shelves, bookcases, and the like). Those residents requesting an alteration within their apartment should be clear that they would be responsible for paying for the alteration and any associated work. They should also be clear that they are also responsible for the costs associated with ‘making good’ the alteration when it is no longer required (returning the property to its original state). This could be during occupation or, most likely, at the end of the tenancy or lease.

Residents should be clear that if they install or proceed with alterations without the express, written consent from ExtraCare they will be liable to remove the alterations within reasonable timeframe specified by ExtraCare, be liable for the full cost of re-instatement and may also be subject to further action by ExtraCare under the terms of their tenancy or lease. Where permission for an alteration is granted by ExtraCare, this will clearly state in writing the conditions by which consent is given. ExtraCare also reserve the right to ensure that we have reasonable supervision / oversight of the installation of the alteration, to ensure that there is no detriment to the apartment or the wider building.

Policy Name	Alterations Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	August 2024
Category	<i>Operational</i>
Classification	<i>Public</i>

We will consider requests for alterations that are associated with faith, religious or cultural needs and assess these accordingly. We may seek independent / specialist advice from a relevant agency in assessing whether to grant the request.

Requests for an alteration should be made in the first instance to the Village Manager, who will provide initial advice, and advise the resident to apply to the Assets & Maintenance Manager for approval / consent.

Aids & Adaptations

We will consider requests for aids & adaptations within apartments, which are those that may be required for mobility or disability reasons to help a resident to age in place; to promote health, independence, and wellbeing. Such items could include for example closomat toilet, hoist, specialist equipment requiring to be hard-wired into the apartment, or specialist kitchen units / equipment.

For minor aids & adaptations, typically being those that cost less than £1,000, for all residents this will require an Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment, to ensure that the adaptation meets the needs of the specific resident. Such an OT assessment can be provided through the Local Authority or – in locations where the service exists – through accessing ExtraCare’s trainee OT’s, via our Wellbeing Advisors.

For major aids & adaptations, typically being those that cost over £1,000, residents can either self-fund such alterations or apply to the local authority for the adaptation to be funded through Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). Residents wishing to self-fund would need to obtain an OT assessment prior to ExtraCare granting consent.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a capital grant contributing to the cost of home adaptations, to enable eligible disabled people to continue living safely and independently. DFG is available to disabled people of all ages in all housing tenures, depending on eligibility.

We will support all residents (regardless of tenure) to apply for DFG. Such applications would be assessed according to the specific policy of the local authority.

ExtraCare recognises that in some circumstances, the local authority may require a contribution towards the cost of installing and adaptation through DFG. ExtraCare will consider whether we are able to contribute towards meeting any such funding gap on a case-by-case basis. *We will produce further guidance on this as applications for DFG may develop.*

Policy Name	Alterations Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	August 2024
Category	<i>Operational</i>
Classification	<i>Public</i>

Residents should note that ExtraCare will need to approve ‘in principle’ the adaptation prior to the resident submitting a DFG application. ExtraCare will also need to approve the adaptation prior to installation. We reserve the right to refuse an adaptation, even where DFG has been approved, in accordance with the criteria laid down in [section 8.3](#) below).

Grab Rails

The most common aids & adaptation request we receive is for a grab rail in an apartment. To assist with this, ExtraCare will commit to providing one grab rail – without charge – within an apartment (regardless of tenure), provided that the grab rail is assessed as being required by an OT.

If further grab rails are required, this should be recommended through the OT assessment. Leaseholders would be expected to cover the cost of additional grab rails; social renters may apply for additional grab rails as part of a minor aids & adaptation request.

Where a grab rail(s) already exists in an apartment (where a new resident is moving in), we will keep the grab rail(s) in place unless the incoming resident specifically requests its removal. The pre-existing grab rail(s) will not ‘count’ towards a new resident’s subsequent request for a grab rail.

Communal Areas

Our locations are designed to be accessible and adaptable, with a range of features appropriate to the needs of older people. However, we recognise that there could be a situation where an aid or adaptation is required to a communal area to meet the needs of a specific resident, or group of residents. Where such an adaptation may be required this would be the responsibility of ExtraCare to assess, install and facilitate within our owned locations. We will consider each requirement on a case-by-case basis and being mindful of our obligations to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act, 2010. Where ExtraCare makes such an adaptation in a communal area we will consider whether such cost could be reasonably and legitimately charged back to residents (e.g., through the Service Charge).

8.2 Requesting permission

Alterations

Policy Name	Alterations Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	August 2024
Category	<i>Operational</i>
Classification	<i>Public</i>

Residents requesting an alteration must submit the request to ExtraCare in writing to the Village Manager. This can be done by letter, or email. We will refer such requests to the Asset & Maintenance Manager for further consideration and assessment.

Where a resident is unable to complete such a request in writing (letter or email), the location staff will assist the resident to submit the written request. The request must advise what is being requested; which room(s) or area it relates to; what the reason is for the request; and the details of who the resident proposes to carry out the work. We reserve the right to request further information from the proposed installer / supplier on the nature of the work that is required. ExtraCare reserve the right to inspect the apartment to assess the request further, prior to any decision on whether the request may proceed.

Consideration for approval, or rejection, for the request will be made in accordance with section 8.3 below.

Aids & Adaptations

As with alterations, requests must be submitted to ExtraCare in writing to the Village Manager. This can be done by letter, or email. We will refer such requests to the Asset & Maintenance Manager for consideration.

Requests for minor adaptations (typically those under £1,000) must be accompanied by a supporting letter from an Occupational Therapist (OT). We will support residents to contact an appropriate OT.

Requests for major adaptations (typically those of £1,000) must also be accompanied by an OT recommendation – these should be obtained by a local authority OT (not ExtraCare's trainee OT's).

8.3 Considerations

ExtraCare will assess the request and will seek further information to assess whether permission will be granted. If any of the items listed below are likely to be an issue, we are likely to refuse permission:

- If what is being requested requires or breaches planning permission (from the local authority);

Policy Name	Alterations Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	August 2024
Category	<i>Operational</i>
Classification	<i>Public</i>

- If what is being requested may affect the structure of the apartment in such a way that it may compromise the integrity / safety of the apartment, including fire compartmentation;
- If what is being requested is likely to breach any of the provisions within the resident's tenancy or lease agreement;
- If what is being requested will have any detrimental impact on the apartment where it is to be installed / changed; or to any neighbouring apartment, or to the wider building;
- If what is being requested is required only in the short-term (less than one year);
- If there is a shortfall in funding for the work that ExtraCare is unwilling or unable to meet due to budgeted cost; and/or
- If what is being requested could incur an unreasonable on-going maintenance liability to ExtraCare.

8.4 Granting permission

If ExtraCare are agreeable to the request proceeding, then we will write to the resident confirming this, and outlining any specific conditions relevant. If the proposed work is to be part or fully funded by the local authority through Disabled Facilities Grant, we will consider any conditions attached to the Grant, or factors required by the local authority as part of the installation / on-going maintenance.

We will require full details of the contractor / person(s) carrying out the work and expect the contractor to liaise directly with our on-site maintenance team (Cluster Contract Manager) prior to commencing work. This is so we can supervise the work if required or have oversight of when the work is taking place to minimise disruption to others and reduce the risk of any adverse impact of the work. See also [section 8.7](#) below.

8.5 Refusing permission

If ExtraCare refuse permission, we will state the reason(s) why, with reference to 8.3 above. If the resident wishes to appeal against our decision to refuse permission, we will advise them of ExtraCare's Complaints Policy and such an appeal would be processed as a complaint.

Policy Name	Alterations Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	August 2024
Category	<i>Operational</i>
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8.6 Funding for aids and adaptations

Social Rent

ExtraCare may offer up to £1,000 in funding for minor aids and adaptations where the request is supported by an OT assessment for social rent tenants.

Leaseholders

ExtraCare would expect outright owners to pay the full cost of minor adaptations.

All Tenures

ExtraCare will supply and fit one grabrail within apartments where these are requested by residents and where this is supported by an OT assessment.

Where alterations cost over £1,000 and the resident is unable to fund this themselves, we will support the resident to make an application through the local authority for Disabled Facilities Grant, and we will consider contributing to any shortfall in funding on a case-by-case basis (this does not apply to residents who are seeking to self-fund aids and adaptations).

8.7 Completing Alterations (including aids & adaptations)

If we grant permission for an alteration to proceed, we will require the resident to provide us with confirmation of the contractor who is to carry out the work on the resident's behalf. We reserve the right to establish the contractors' credentials, including public liability insurance and references, prior to agreeing to any work commencing. We also request that contractors working on behalf of the resident agree with us when work is to commence, so that we can minimise any risk or disturbance to others, and if necessary, supervise the work being carried out.

8.8 'Making-good' Alterations (including aids & adaptations)

The resident is responsible for 'making good' the alteration at the end of tenancy / lease. We will advise from the outset whether we will want to keep the alteration in situ at the end of the tenancy / lease, but – if we do not – then we will expect the cost of reverting the property back to be met by the resident (or through their estate). We reserve the right to invoice the resident (or their estate) for costs of removing alterations and reinstating the apartment back to its original state.

Policy Name	Alterations Policy
Version No.	3
Approval Date	August 2024
Category	<i>Operational</i>
Classification	<i>Public</i>

9. Other Relevant ExtraCare Policies & Documents

General	• ExtraCare Assured Tenancy Agreement • ExtraCare Lease Agreement
Related Policies	• Lettings Policy • Complaints Policy • Ending A Tenancy Policy • Responsive Repairs and Handyperson Policy • Health & Safety Policy • Equality & Diversity Policy

10. Relevant Legislative & Regulatory Requirements

Legislation	Regulation	Guidance
Housing Act, 1996 Landlord & Tenant Act, 1985 Social Housing (Regulation) Act, 2023	Regulator of Social Housing, Consumer Standards	Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) delivery: guidance for local authorities in England Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) delivery: guidance for local authorities in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)