



Please read the notes overleaf before completing this application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone or Contact Number: _____

Details of work you propose to do. You should also include details of how you propose to do it (ie what materials will be used etc.) Your builder should be able to give you a specification (the detailed estimate will often be enough) and drawings where appropriate. If you are not sure what detailed information we will need, please contact your local housing office.

Space is provided overleaf to draw sketches (where applicable)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

For Office Use Only

Application received _____ (date). Objections Y/N Date _____ Initials _____

Comments (eg extra conditions, reason for objections): _____

Application approved Y/N Date: _____ Initials: _____

Tenant advised in writing: Date: _____ Initials: _____

Date permission expires(where applicable) Date: _____ Initials: _____

Inspection of completed work Date: _____ Initials: _____

Formal Approval letter sent Date: _____ Initials: _____

Comments: _____

SKETCH OR PLAN

Your Right to Improve your Home

What type of improvements can I make to my home?

You are allowed to make improvements to your home, providing you have received approval for the work, including:

- Fitting a new door
- Installing new windows
- Structural works, including removing walls
- Replacing your kitchen
- Replacing your bathroom suite
- Replacing your heating system
- Installing a shower
- Installing extra electrical sockets or lights
- Installing a driveway and pavement crossing
- Putting up a shed or greenhouse
- Painting the outside of your home
- Putting up fencing

You should always contact your local Area Housing Office for advice before carrying out any improvement.

Do I need permission to make improvements?

You must obtain written permission from Wansbeck Homes, before starting any work.

Obtaining permission is important as it will ensure you get good advice about the works. Some jobs are complicated and can damage the structure of your home if they are not carried out properly. It is also important if you wish to claim compensation for improvements that you have made, if you leave your home.

You do not need permission for redecorating the inside of your home, but you must not artex the walls or fix polystyrene tiling to the ceiling.

How do I apply for permission?

You should obtain an application form from your local Area Housing Office. Please provide a plan or sketch where applicable.

A member of staff may wish to visit you at home to discuss your plans in more detail and give you advice about the work. If you require planning permission or building regulation approval you will be advised how to make application.

Undertaking the works

You will be informed in writing if you have been granted permission to undertake the improvements. We may attach conditions to this permission, such as:

- The quality of materials to be used.
- Obtaining planning permission or following building regulations or codes of practice.
- Using qualified competent tradesmen, such as a Corgi registered gas engineer or a NICEIC approved electrical contractor.

Please read the letter giving you permission carefully in case there are any conditions attached to your works.

Once the work is complete, you should contact the local Area Housing Office, who will arrange an appointment to have the work inspected. You are advised to keep receipts for the work in case you wish to claim compensation, if you subsequently terminate your tenancy.

Can you refuse permission?

Wansbeck Homes can refuse permission if the proposed works might make the property unsafe, increase Wansbeck Homes' costs or devalue the property. You will be given a full explanation if permission is refused. Wansbeck Homes will not unreasonably refuse permission.

If you feel permission has been unreasonably withheld you have 21 calendar days to ask us to reconsider.

Who is responsible for future maintenance?

You are responsible for the maintenance of any new fittings and fixtures, such as bathroom suites, kitchens, heating etc, for the first 12 months. Normally, if the improvements were completed by a private contractor, they will be covered by a guarantee or manufacturers warranty for that period.

If you have had our permission, and the work has been done correctly, we will maintain any new fixtures and fittings after the first 12 months.

However, if you install any specialist equipment, for which we can not obtain parts, we may remove or replace it, if it needs repair.

Can I remove fixtures and fittings I have added, if I leave the property in the future?

Your letter of permission will say if the fixtures and fittings you have installed can be removed when you move out. If you are allowed, you must put the property back to its original condition. If the fixtures and fittings are not left in a satisfactory condition you will be charged for the full cost of putting the property right.

If I end my tenancy can I get compensation for improvements I have made?

If you are a secure tenant you may be entitled to compensation for improvements, when you leave your property.

You will not get compensation if you are buying your home under the right-to-buy scheme.

What kind of improvements can I get compensation for?

A list of repairs qualifying for the right to compensation is on the final page of this leaflet. The right to compensation applies to improvements that were started on or after 1 April 1994.

Interior decoration does not qualify for compensation.

How do I get compensation?

You have up to 14 days after your tenancy ends to make a claim. However, it is advisable to claim compensation when you hand notice in to leave. You will need to provide enough information to enable us to decide how much compensation you will get. We will need to know:

- Your name and address
- What improvements you have made
- How much each improvement cost (with receipts if possible)
- The date when improvements began and finished
- Proof of planning permission, where appropriate

How is the compensation worked out?

Your compensation is worked out on the basis of when your improvement was completed and how much use you have had from it. Compensation will depend upon how old the improvement is when the claim is made. An example is shown at the end of this leaflet.

You can claim compensation for the cost of materials (but not for appliances such as cookers and fridges) and labour costs (but not your own labour). You can not claim for professional fees or costs associated with planning permission or building regulation approval.

If you received financial assistance (such as a grant) towards the costs, this will be taken off the cost of the improvement. In addition, if you owe Wansbeck Homes any money, this may be deducted from the compensation.

Compensation may be reduced if the cost of the improvement was too much or the quality higher than if Wansbeck Homes had done the work.

You can get up to £3,000 for each improvement, but you will not get any compensation for an improvement worth less than £50 at the time of the claim.

You can ask Wansbeck Homes to reconsider the decision, if you feel that you have not received the correct compensation or your claim refused.

You also have the right to take Wansbeck Homes to court. You should get advice from a solicitor or from your local Citizens Advice Bureau first. You may be entitled to legal aid.

For example:

A tenant installs a bathroom suite costing £480. The life expectancy of the suite is 12 years. (The life expectancy is set by the Government). After 4 years the tenant moves out and claims compensation.

For each year the value of the work is discounted by £40 (£480 divided by 12 years)

After 4 years the value of the work is discounted by £160 (4 years multiplied by £40)

The tenant is entitled to £320 compensation (£480 cost of installation minus the discounted value of £160)

Qualifying Repair	Life Expectancy (years)
Bath or shower	12
Wash-hand basin	12
Toilet	12
Kitchen sink	10
Storage cupboards in bathroom or kitchen	10
Work surfaces for preparing food	10
Space or water heating	12
Thermostatic radiator valves	7
Insulation of pipes, water tank or cylinder	10
Loft insulation	20
Cavity wall insulation	20
Draught proofing of external doors or windows	8
Double glazing or other window replacement or secondary glazing	20
Rewiring, or the provision of power or lighting or other electrical fittings (including smoke detectors)	15
Security measures (excluding burglar alarms)	10

Please return to your nearest Area Housing Office (☎ 0844 800 3800):

Ashington

3 & 4 Dawson House
Poplar Street
Ashington
NE63 0BY

Bedlington

Front Street West
Bedlington
NE22 5TU

Newbiggin

The Bungalow
Woodhorn Road
Newbiggin-by-the-Sea
NE64 6HG

Building Confidence Delivering Quality

A caring organisation committed to quality services, affordable homes and working together to build confident communities