

## Statement of intent

The following policy sets out Saffron Housing Trust's ("Saffron(s)") approach to tenant requests for alterations, home improvements, and the use of their property in accordance with the tenancy agreement.

## 1 Policy Purpose

1.1 Saffron acknowledges that secure tenants and Leaseholders have a legal right to make alterations and improvements to their homes if they obtain written permission before they carry out any works. The objective of this policy is to ensure that all requests for alterations or improvements are treated fairly and consistently.

1.2 The aims of this policy are: -

- Set out our approach to granting permission for tenant and leaseholder alterations and improvements.
- Ensure there are clear guidelines for staff, tenants and leaseholders.
- Ensure alterations and improvements are carried out appropriately, considering environmental impact as well as health and safety requirements.
- Protect Saffron's interest in its property by safeguarding against actions that may cause damage now or in the future or reduce its value.

1.3 This policy has been developed in accordance with our statutory and legal duties and our Tenant Scrutiny Group/Tenant Communication and Audit Group

1.4 Any reference to 'we', 'our', 'us' or 'the Group' refers to Saffron Housing Group. When we use 'you' and 'your' we mean any tenant or customer set out above.

## 2 Definition

Tenants are encouraged to respect their homes and keep them in suitable conditions regardless of the length of their tenancy. Some tenants choose to carry out alterations and improvements in their home over and above the repairs needed. This policy sets out to create a standardised procedure for dealing with tenant and leaseholder requests for alterations both inside and outside of the home.

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## **3 Saffron's responsibilities**

- 3.1 We will acknowledge receipt of a valid application form within five working days.
- 3.2 Where possible, we will provide a decision on permission within 20 working days of reviewing a valid application form and relevant documents. However, this timeframe may be extended depending on the circumstances, any delays will be communicated to the applicant accordingly.
- 3.3 Permission will not be unreasonably withheld or denied, and Saffron will always review the request on a case-by-case basis but may need to investigate a request further to ensure we do not grant consent, where we are unable to by law or any other reason.
- 3.4 Saffron will ensure there are no issues with the rent account or affordability. If fraud or money laundering is suspected, Saffron may refer the case to the relevant authorities.
- 3.5 Saffron will deny or retract permission if an alteration does not meet legislative requirements or whereby non legislative reasons such as subsidence are found, alternative options will be explored by Saffron and support will be given to the tenant. Removal of the installation will be the last resort.
- 3.6 Where tenants have carried out an alteration and not sought permission, they may request retrospective permission, but we reserve the right to enforce tenancy conditions and refuse permission. Where enforcement action is taken, we may include all legal costs, which would be rechargeable to the tenant. Retrospective permission is not guaranteed.
- 3.7 Permission is not granted permanently and may be removed in line with legislation, breach/abuse of the original permission or lack of maintenance of the alteration.
- 3.8 Restrictive covenants may be present on the property which would automatically prevent Saffron from being able to provide consent.

## **4. Tenant responsibilities**

- 4.1 Requesting permission in writing using the Application form Appendix A, and for obtaining consent in writing before beginning any works.

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- 4.2 The tenant must provide details of the Tradesperson carrying out the works when the work requires accreditation (which require certification), such as electrical, gas, windows, doors and conservatories.
- 4.3 Ensuring that any other permissions, approvals, or licenses are obtained before beginning any works Appendix B
- 4.4 Paying any fees or charges that arise from seeking the appropriate permissions.
- 4.5 Changes to the property for mobility or accessibility needs may be covered under Saffron's Aids and Adaptions Policy. A request or supporting evidence from an Occupational Therapist will be required.
- 4.6 Complying with all conditions attached to the written permission; failure to satisfy a reasonable condition will be treated as a breach of tenancy conditions.
- 4.7 With all approved applications, works should be completed in 18 months.
- 4.8 If it is required, tenants are responsible for finding alternative accommodation, at their own expense, if they have to move out of their home during any works that they have permission to carry out at their own expense. Rent will be charged during any period where a tenant is required to move out.
- 4.9 The above requirements are not exhaustive, and tenants will be advised of the specific requirements that are attached to any consent granted when this is confirmed in writing
- 4.10 If Saffron carries out any repairs that relate to, or arise from, alterations or improvements the tenant will be responsible for paying for any and/or all recharges. Please see Saffron's rechargeable repairs.

### **5 Works considered but not limited to:**

- Cat Flaps
- Closed-circuit Television (CCTV) Including CCTV doorbells
- Conservatories
- Electrical Vehicle Charging Points
- Existing Open Flue
- Extension and Lean-to's
- Kitchens & Bathrooms
- Photovoltaic (PV) Panels
- Ponds
- Running a business from home
- Windows and Doors including French doors

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## 6. Works not considered

- New requests for an open flue appliance
- Alterations and permissions that would invalidate existing warranties

## 7. Compensation for improvements

Please refer to Saffron's Good will and compensation Policy.

## 8. Complaints and Compliments

Please refer to Saffron's Complaints and Compliments Policy.

## 9. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Please refer to Saffron's Reasonable Adjustments Policy.

## 10. Confidentiality

All communication with Saffron will be considered confidential between the tenant, Saffron Staff, and partner organisations.

Saffron will respect tenants' confidentiality wherever possible and will advise tenants in cases where this would not be possible.

## 10. Data Protection

Please refer to Saffron's Privacy Policy

## 11. Related Policies and Legislation

- Complaints Policy
- Rechargeable repairs Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Policy

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- Data Protection Act 2018
- Health and Safety Policy
- Automated and Electric Vehicles Act 2018
- Housing Health and Safety Rated System
- Housing Act 1985
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018

## 12. Policy Review

Saffron will review this Policy at least every 3 years.

Saffron recognise that there may be circumstances where it will need and/or wish to take different or alternative action to that outlined in this Policy and it reserves the right to do so.

		Date/Version
Consultation/Content Review	Tenant Group	
Approval body & Date	Service Quality Committee	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2025
Next Review Period & Date	36 months	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2028
Policy Owner & Version	Director of Tenant Services	Ver 1.0

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## Appendix A



## Tenant Alterations Application Form

**Important information** – Please read before completing this form

The attached guidance notes should be read in full before completing the application form.

Guidance notes can be found on the website [www.saffronhousing.co.uk](http://www.saffronhousing.co.uk), alternatively you can request a copy to be sent by post using the details below.

Please ensure you include any supporting documents or photographs with your application.

If you require assistance in completing the application or support with the guidance notes, please contact the Permissions team by email [permissions@saffronhousing.co.uk](mailto:permissions@saffronhousing.co.uk) or telephone **01508 532000**.

**PLEASE DO NOT CARRY OUT ALTERATIONS OR IMPROVEMENTS AT YOUR HOME BEFORE RECEIVING WRITTEN PERMISSION FIRST.**

**Do not financially or contractually commit to works before you've had written permission.**

### **Data Protection**

Saffron Housing Trust registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) as required by the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. Information provided by you on this form will be stored and processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice.

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Main Applicant details	Joint Applicant details
Full Name:	Full Name:
Contact No:	Contact No:
Email Address:	Email Address:
Address:	
Preferred method of contact:   Email <input type="checkbox"/> Phone <input type="checkbox"/> Text Message <input type="checkbox"/> In Writing <input type="checkbox"/>	

**Do you require any of the following adjustments? (please tick as appropriate)**

Sign language ☐   Brail ☐   Large print ☐   Translation ☐   Language for translation.....

What does your request relate to? Please tick one of the options below:	
Bathroom Works	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building works Internal & External	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadband/Fibre	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caravan Permission	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cat Flap	<input type="checkbox"/>
CCTV / Ring Doorbell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conservatory / Lean To	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doors or Windows	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electrical Works	<input type="checkbox"/>
EV Charger	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exterior Painting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fencing & Gates	<input type="checkbox"/>
Garden works Inc. Patios/Gazebos etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heating system	<input type="checkbox"/>
Integrated Appliances	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kitchen Works	<input type="checkbox"/>
Off road parking	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plumbing Works	<input type="checkbox"/>

**For CCTV/Ring doorbell please also complete the additional section at the end of the document.**

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Pond	
Removal of Tress/Hedges	
Shed/Garage	
Other	

If other, please provide details:

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Description of the requested works including size & materials to be used:

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Location of the requested alteration:

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Diagram and any related photographs, (photos can be sent to [permissions@saffronhousing.co.uk](mailto:permissions@saffronhousing.co.uk))



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Please provide details of who will be completing the works below:

Company Name	
Company address	
Contact Name	
Contact No	
Accreditation Number if applicable	
Estimated costs of works	£

Reason for your request:

.....

## CCTV / Ring doorbell

If you request is for CCTV or a ring doorbell, please provide the following additional details:

How and where would you like to you attach the camera?

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What areas will the footage capture?

.....

Will the captured footage be saved?

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What is your lawful reason for requesting to install CCTV/ring doorbell?

.....

## DECLARATION

I confirm I have read the guidance notes and the information supplied is correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand I am responsible for updating Saffron on any proposed changes to my application and failing to do so could result in permission being removed.

Date:	
Main Applicant's Name:	
Main Applicant's Signature:	
Joint Applicant's Name:	
Joint Applicant's Signature:	

**Return the form:** By post: Alterations & Permissions, Saffron Housing Trust, Swan Lane, Long Stratton, Norwich, NR15 2XP or Email: [permissions@saffronhousing.co.uk](mailto:permissions@saffronhousing.co.uk)

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## Appendix B

- Building regulations inc. structural calculations
- Planning inc. conservation areas)
- Listed building permissions
- Utilities Companies

Granting of planning consent does not guarantee that permission will be granted by Saffron.

All electrical work carried out at the premises must be undertaken by a competent electrician and must carry a certificate of compliance as per the applicable Electrical Regulations or any other regulations in force at the time of the request or as amended. Copies of all certification documents must be sent to Saffron for our records.

All works relating to the installation, removal or relocating of a gas appliance must be carried out by Gas Safe registered engineer in accordance with Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (as amended). Copies of all certification documents must be sent to Saffron for our records.

All work on asbestos containing materials must be carried out by a suitably competent person, in accordance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR) 2006 (as amended). Copies of all certification documents must be sent to Saffron for our records.

All plumbing works must be carried out by a suitably qualified and competent plumber.

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## Tenant Guidance

### Cat Flaps

Cat flaps will be allowed in backdoors. Cat flaps cannot be fitted in communal areas or to fire doors. The cut out of the door must not exceed 168mm by 175mm. Tenancy enforcement may take place if a cat flap is installed in a fire door or communal area. Tenants are responsible for the cost of replacing the door at the end of tenancy.

### Ponds

The ponds size and volume must be reasonable and proportionate.

All ponds must be constructed using suitable materials and with safety as a priority. Housing Health and Safety Rating (HHSRS) measures must be in place to prevent trips, falls, and the risk of drowning, even if children do not reside at the address.

Upon termination of the tenancy, the outgoing tenant must remove the pond and restore the garden to its original condition.

### Closed-circuit Television (CCTV) Including CCTV doorbells

Where requests for CCTV (this includes doorbells that record video and/or audio), are received, Saffron will need to understand what the intention behind the request is, where this will be situated and the implications for which we will need to be indemnified against. As such, you would be required to provide full details of this.

As a rule, Saffron will not allow CCTV to be affixed to any wall or boundary structure which it owns. This will be considered when requests are received.

The use of CCTV must comply with the guidelines set by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and any breaches or suspected breaches should be dealt with by them. Saffron will not police the usage of CCTV.

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## **Kitchens and Bathrooms**

All applications must be accompanied by full design plans which meets Decent Homes and Housing Health and Safety Rating System standards. Failure to provide this will result in the permission request being denied.

On completion of works, where permission has been granted, a Saffron employee must be granted access to inspect the work, to ensure it has been completed in line with the proposed plans and that the works meet Decent Homes and Housing Health and Safety Rating System standards.

Where permission is granted, it will then become the tenant's responsibility to maintain and repair the kitchen or bathroom. Where Saffron needs to carry out works, whether occupied or void, there will be a recharge raised, which will be payable by the tenant.

On completion of the works, all certificates must be provided to Saffron.

## **Windows and Doors including French doors**

For all Saffron multi-occupied residential buildings (Flats), in line with the Fire Safety Act 2021, we would not grant permission to alter the existing windows or, the entrance front door which abuts a communal or public space. These will remain the responsibility of Saffron and any unauthorised alterations found, will be recharged.

For single-occupied residential buildings (Houses and Bungalows for example), permission must be sought before any alterations are carried out to the existing windows and doors. This includes painting or repainting windows and doors.

Alongside the application, details of the FENSA accredited installer who will be carrying out the works must be supplied.

Saffron will review any covenants, planning permission, building regulations and carry out internal checks with Asset Management colleagues before considering granting permission.

Where permission is granted, on completion of the works, all certificates must be provided to Saffron.

Upon termination of the tenancy, Saffron will determine the future of the installations, which may include leaving them in place or replacing them with standard materials.

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## Fencing

Where Saffron receives a request to amend the boundary structure, most commonly to install or replace the fencing, a detailed plan of works must be provided.

Saffron will review the request and the plan to ensure the boundary is Saffron's responsibility, whether there are any covenants, charges in the deeds or conservation limitations, which would restrict or set specific criteria around the style and condition of a boundary or whether this would be a Permitted Development in line with planning permission.

## Conservatories, Extension and Lean-to's

The tenant is responsible for providing all necessary drawings, technical information, and planning permissions. The application will only be considered once all documentation has been received by Saffron.

The external door should not be removed (not affecting EPC rating) and the structure should be removed when the tenancy ends.

Home built conservatories etc. from mismatched bought systems will not be supported.

Repairs and maintenance to the requested structure will not be undertaken by Saffron, however, where the structure may cause damage to the main property Saffron will complete the repairs and recharge all costs to the tenant.

If access to the property is obstructed due to the tenant's installation, resulting in increased costs for Saffron to complete works, these additional costs will be re-charged to the tenant.

If work on the property begins but cannot be completed, Saffron will take necessary measures to ensure the property's safety and will pass all associated costs to the tenant.

Tenants must obtain the necessary building control sign off. Where professional certification is normally required this will need to be provided.

**To note; where an extension adds an additional bedroom the rent will be reviewed in line with the number of bedrooms the property has after completion.**

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## Photovoltaic (PV) Panels

Where a tenant requests to install PV panels, this must be accompanied by a structural survey of the roof, along with full design plans. This must also reference ventilation as there may be a requirement to block or move ventilation for the proposed works.

Where the survey confirms the integrity and structure of the roof are sound and able to support PV panels and Saffron are satisfied with the design plans and lifespan of the roof, permission may be granted.

Where permission is granted, the expectation would be that the PV panels are installed by an MCS accredited installer.

On completion of the works, all certificates must be provided to Saffron.

## Open Flue

An open flue is anything that consists of a pipe to carry combustion gases where fresh air will enter the appliance via a casing.

A **solid-fuelled appliance** is a heating device that burns solid fuels, such as wood, coal, or biomass pellets, to generate heat. These appliances include items like wood-burning stoves, pellet stoves, multi-fuel stoves, coal stoves, and open fireplaces

The following legislation underpins Saffron's approach to open flues:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Housing Act 1985
- The Gas Safety (Installations & Use) Regulations 1998
- Building Regulations
- The Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996
- Building Regulations 2010 Combustion appliances and fuel storage systems – Approved Document J

Where an existing open flue is in place and an alternative primary source of heating is present within the property, Saffron will service this secondary system until it is condemned by a qualified engineer or a change in legislation takes place. Any secondary open flued system installed without Saffron's knowledge will not be serviced and the system will be requested to be removed and refusal to do so may result in tenancy action. Any solid fuelled secondary heating, whether functional or not will be removed at the next void stage.

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Where the open flue is the only source of heating, Saffron will service the existing system until a qualified engineer condemns the system. Saffron will not undertake major repairs to these systems and the tenant will have the option to quote and pay themselves for a HETAS qualified engineer to undertake the works to repair the system, where possible.

## **Electrical Vehicle Charging Points**

In some circumstances written permission from the local authority must be provided to Saffron before we will consider your request.

Tenants are responsible for adhering to all regulations and requirements set by Highways authorities and other governing bodies. Automated and Electric Vehicles Act 2018

If permission is granted the EV Charger should be sourced by the tenant and must be installed by a qualified person.

All costs associated with the installation and maintenance of the EV Charge point become the tenant's responsibility.

Any damage caused to the property during installation becomes the tenant's responsibility.

If a customer does not receive consent from Saffron before the EV charger is installed, then Saffron will retrospectively assess. If the tenant lives in a suitable property and is able to provide the relevant evidence, then permission will be given. If not, the tenant will be asked to remove the charger. If they fail to do so, Tenancy Enforcement may be instigated.

If Saffron need to attend to make an EV charger safe, then all costs will be re-charged to the tenant.

Any EV chargers installed by tenants will be tested as part of Saffron's five yearly electrical safety checks (EICR) to ensure they remain safe.

Upon termination of the tenancy, the tenant must remove the EV charger unit and ensure the area is left in a safe condition. Saffron will cap any remaining cabling or wiring for safety.

If a tenant moves into a property with an EV charger installed by the previous tenant, they can make use of this. However, if it is not compatible with their EV, they would be responsible for installing an adapter or a new charger following the above process, Saffron would not be responsible for altering the charger. If an EV charger has previously been installed the tenant will not be permitted to remove it or any associated materials.