

Alterations and Improvements Policy

September 2024

Version Control:

Version	Date	Author	Owner	Approver	Approved on	Next review	Comments
1.0	July 2019			CEO			
2.0	26 September 2024	Dir of Property Management	Dir of Property Management	Resi Customer Committee		26 September 2026	



1. **Introduction**

Heylo Housing Group Limited (HHGL) is the parent company of the Group, which includes Heylo Housing Registered Provider Limited (HHRP) and a number of property owning investment vehicles (Pods) (collectively referred to in this policy as 'Heylo'). Heylo currently provides two different Shared Ownership products – Home Reach and Your Home.

All customer facing services to Heylo customers are provided by employees of ResiManagement, a separate, but commonly controlled company.

2. **Purpose**

This policy sets out how Heylo will consider applications from customers to carry out alterations and improvement to their Shared Ownership home.

3. **Regulatory framework**

The Regulator of Social Housing's Safety and Quality Standard sets out the required outcomes Registered Providers must achieve and includes a specific requirement in relation to adaptations. This is referenced separately in Heylo's Aids and Adaptations Policy.

Any consideration of alterations and improvements to a customer's home must be taken in the context of the Shared Ownership lease, and the specific terms contained therein.

4. **Policy Statement**

Shared owners are required to contact heylo for permission for alterations and/or improvements to their property. Each proposed alteration/improvement should be assessed on a case-by-case basis in line with the following principles:

- Has approval been provided by the developer (for new build properties), building control, planning authority and management company (where relevant for flats/apartments)
- Does the intended alteration return the property to an original condition or improve the property and its value.

Responsibilities

Heylo does not have an obligation to provide financial support for improvements.

Replacing items on a like for like basis does not require consent but Heylo should still be informed of any major works undertaken at the property, prior to the works commencing.

Heylo cannot withhold consent for improvements by shared owners unreasonably. In practical terms, this means that where the shared owner has obtained the appropriate consent from statutory bodies and other freeholders and the works are to be completed professionally, then the landlord should agree to improvements.

Applications

Any shared owner wishing to carry out alterations or additions to their property must submit full details of the proposed works to heylo for approval and permission. Each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and with a decision on the approval within 10 working days of the request being submitted (provided no further information is required to be submitted). An acknowledgement letter confirming permission from heylo for the shared owner to proceed with the proposed works will be provided. Details of the works proposed should be outlined in the letter. Sign off from building control and pictures should be submitted to Heylo (where relevant) once the works have been completed.

If a visit by a surveyor is required then the shared owner will be advised accordingly. On completion of the works, a surveyor may visit on behalf of Heylo to ensure that the improvements accord with initial proposals and approvals. Alternatively, with the agreement of Heylo in advance, the customer can arrange a survey by an independent, suitably qualified surveyor to confirm the works have been completed to standard.

Confirmation that the works have been completed to a satisfactory standard should be sent to the shared owner.

Alterations - without consent

If a shared owner does not obtain consent from heylo for alterations/improvements, then heylo can request that the improvement is removed. This will be as a last resort and a practical solution will be sought if improvements are made without consent. The shared owner will first be asked to obtain the appropriate consents and approvals from Heylo and the relevant statutory bodies. The first consideration will be for the safety of the shared owner and the structural soundness of the property (e.g. removal of internal/external walls, or loft conversion).

A surveyor, instructed by Heylo, can be used to assess the alterations to ensure they are appropriate and meet all requirements.

In exceptional circumstances, the lease allows the landlord to enter a property and complete remedial works and then re-charge the shared owner.

Before taking any action, the lease will be consulted and legal advice sought.

Refusals

If Heylo refuses any proposed alterations, a full written explanation with reasoning will be provided to the shared owner.

Specific examples of improvements and alterations

Garden Sheds

Customers do not usually require permission to add a garden shed however they should contact the local council in the first instance for details of any size restrictions and also contact the original builder to confirm if there any restrictions or covenants.

If there are no restrictions from either party then there is need to request permission from Heylo.

For further information on planning permission please refer to the Planning Portal website - <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/>

Solar PV Panels

Solar PV panels are considered 'permitted developments' and often don't require planning permission. However exceptions apply so it is best for the customer to check with the local planning office for guidance.

Fixing Solar Panels to the roof

If the installation requires alterations to the roof and the property is under 10 years old then permission/confirmation must be obtained from the developer/building warranty provider that the installation will not void any warranty.

All costs associated with the installation, maintenance and replacement of any solar PV panels and system are the responsibility of the shared owner. Heylo will not cover any associated costs.

Leased solar PV panels

Shared Owners are not permitted to enter into any power purchase agreements (or similar) which add any additional liabilities on to the property under the terms of the lease and are therefore not permitted to enter into any contracts which impacts the ownership or saleability of the property.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

There are no restrictions from Heylo for customer to install electric vehicle charging point in properties that are houses provided any work is carried out by a certified and suitably qualified electrician and the customer covers all costs of the installation. The customer will be responsible for any ongoing maintenance of the charging point.

This is however a building insurance notification requirement so customers should inform Heylo of when, where and how an electric vehicle charging point has been installed so Heylo can inform the buildings insurance provider.

If the property is a flat, permission will be required from the managing agent for the building for any alterations to take place i.e installation of an electric charging point.

5. Review

We will review this Policy every two years, unless there is a significant development that would require a more urgent review e.g. new legislation or regulation.

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