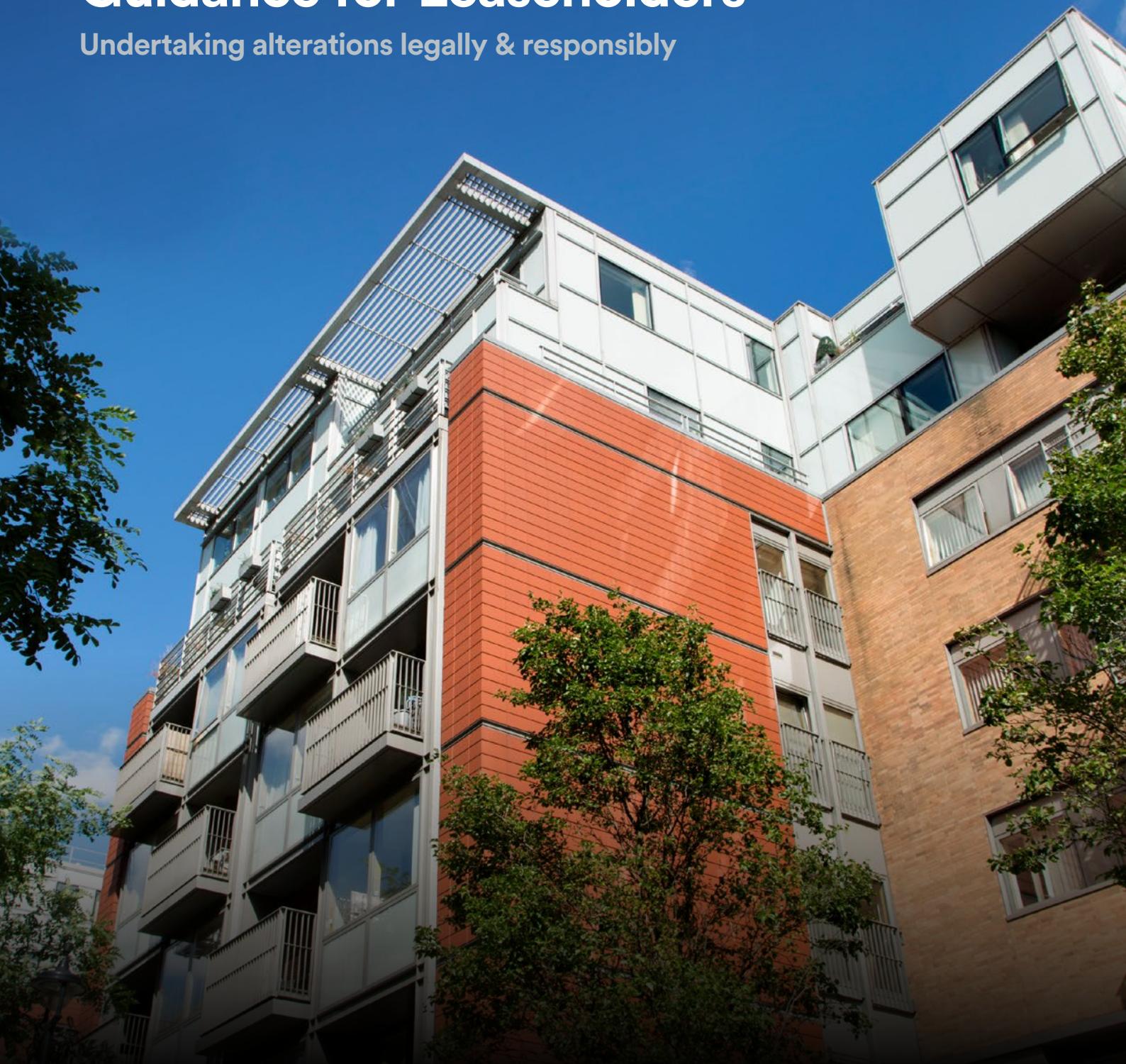


# Licence to Alter Guidance for Leaseholders

Undertaking alterations legally & responsibly



## **There are many ways in which you, a leaseholder, could make alterations to your flat to improve its condition, its size, its value, or to improve your own quality of life.**

It's important to undertake these alterations legally and responsibly, and without breaching the terms of your lease.

Under most leases (though not all), a leaseholder cannot make any significant alterations to their flat without first obtaining consent from their landlord.

The lease will not include detailed instructions about the kinds of alterations that can be undertaken, nor will it specify the unique circumstances.

Enter the type of permission known as a 'licence to alter' which regulates the relationship between the lease, you as the leaseholder, and your landlord. It provides written consent to go ahead with alterations to your home and specifies the terms and conditions under which they can be carried out.

A licence to alter is not a standard document. It can't be pulled out of a drawer and applied to any situation. One should only be granted when the details of the lease and precise circumstances have been carefully considered. As there are few standard leases, so there are few standard residential buildings. The internal layouts of individual flats are likely to have been altered over the years so it is vital to assess the impact of the proposed alterations not only on your flat, but also on neighbouring flats and on the building as a whole before permission is granted for works proceed.

### **How does the process work?**

Granting a licence to alter is the result of a process that begins when you ask the landlord for permission to carry out works. The landlord will ordinarily appoint a building surveyor to review your proposals, assess them in the context of the lease and report on their implications for the building.

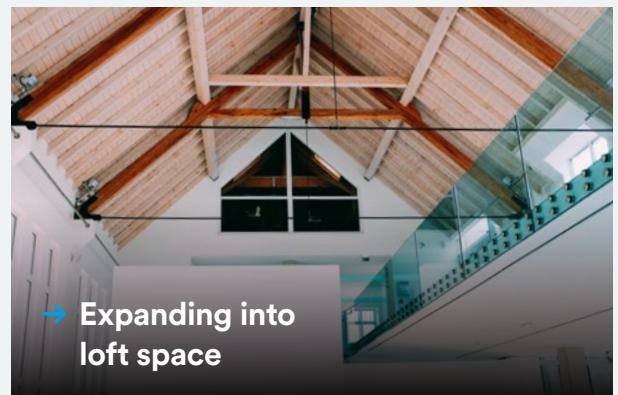
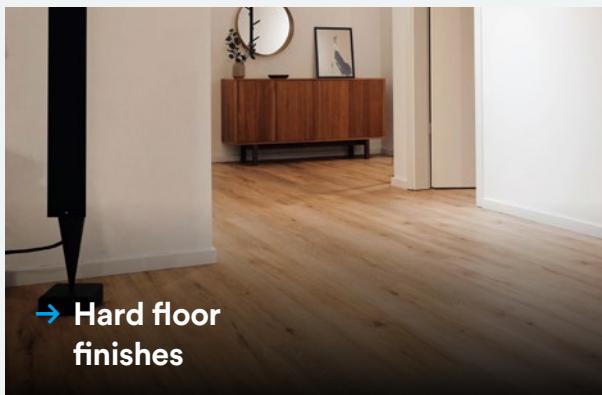
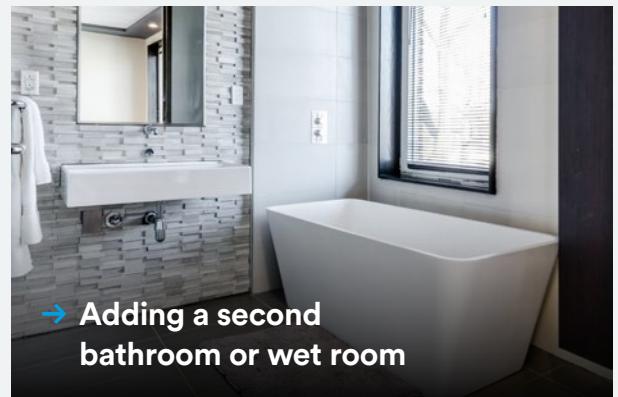
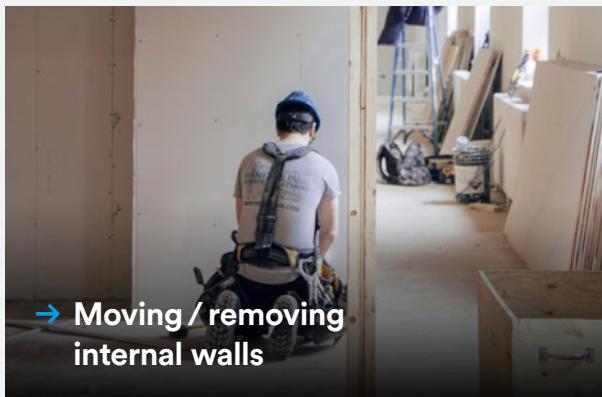
The building surveyor will then give a professional opinion on whether or not the licence should be granted. If not granted, they will explain why. If consent is to be given in principle, the building surveyor will also provide recommendations for the terms and conditions of that consent. At this stage, the landlord will ask its solicitor to draw up the formal licence to alter itself, liaising with you and if necessary, with your solicitor too.

In addition to the lease, the licence to alter must take account of relevant planning law and building regulations. There may be specific guidelines to comply with for your building and perhaps the other leaseholders may need to be consulted.

The end result is permission to go ahead with the requested alterations, with reasonable conditions and timescales attached.

## What type of works will need a licence to alter?

A licence to alter must be based on the terms of the lease, but it will be tailored specifically to the particular alteration. Some of the most common improvements that leaseholders wish to make to their flats include:



## Help with your licence to alter application

Licence to alter is simple in theory but it can be complicated in practice. Leaseholders are recommended to seek professional guidance from a building surveyor in the first instance who will be able to advise you on issues such as:

- Lease interpretation
- Landlord and managing agent liaison
- Appointment of architects, designers and contractors
- What's possible under the Building Regulations
- Listed Building Consent
- Party Walls
- Structural considerations
- Presence of asbestos.

## Ask the experts

Licence to Alter Limited has decades of experience dealing with consents for work, acting for leaseholders and landlords. As a leaseholder seeking consent, navigating the process without an expert could mean your intended works do not proceed or the timescales are elongated significantly. Our advice is to speak to us as early in the process as possible — careful and methodical expert preparation could make all the difference.

## Free Guidance

Our team at Licence to Alter Limited are offering free of charge guidance to leaseholders over the phone who are contemplating works to their flats. To speak to one of our surveyors, please email us at [enquiries@licencetoalter.com](mailto:enquiries@licencetoalter.com) leaving your full name, address and phone number to call you on.

We look forward to hearing from you.