

Hard Flooring Policy

Document Owner	Responsive Repairs Manager
Approved by	Operations Director
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Prepared By	Policy Officer Responsive Repairs Manager
Date of Next Review	January 2028
Lines of Defence/how is the document audited?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approval by Operations Director 2. Responsive Repairs Manager to review Hard Flooring requests quarterly for trends, issues and impact of this policy.

1.0 Scope and aims

- 1.1. In this document, the term hard flooring should be taken to include laminate flooring, wooden floor, bare flooring, ceramic tiles, and carpet with no or inadequate underlay.
- 1.2. Hard flooring surfaces such as laminate and wood have become popular. This has led to an increasing number of concerns with regard to noise and disturbance to neighbours, especially in flats. Research has shown that when a carpet is removed and replaced with wood or laminate flooring the noise the neighbour below experiences will increase significantly. Even everyday household noises such as walking around, moving furniture, or children playing can cause a disturbance, especially to residents in the flat below.
- 1.3. It is clear that some types of home are less suitable to have hard flooring than others. In particular, flats in converted houses are not normally suitable. Even in houses, there can be a problem caused by the absence of carpet, especially where the sound insulation between the houses is not to a high standard.
- 1.4. This policy applies to all Hexagon Housing Association (Hexagon) tenants and leaseholders.

2.0 Equality and Diversity

- 2.1. Where a tenant requests permission to lay hard flooring due to medical conditions (such as severe asthma) or disability, and provides medical evidence, this will be approved conditional to the terms outlined below in section 4.7.
- 2.2. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and no negative impact to a protected characteristic group has been identified.

3.0 Consultation

- 3.1. The Resident Advisory Group was consulted on this policy in June 2022 and their advice was used in finalising this policy.

4.0 Policy Statement

- 4.1. The laying of laminate, ceramic tiles, or wood flooring is considered to be a home improvement. As such, the permission of the Landlord, Hexagon, is required. This is set out in the Tenancy Agreement.
- 4.2. All requests for permission for hard flooring will be considered on their own merits, but the following general principles will be followed:
- 4.3. In upper flats in converted properties, or upper purpose-built flats with wooden floors, permission will normally **not** be given.

4.4. In upper flats with solid floors, permission will normally be given, provided:

- 4.4.1. There is no history of poor sound insulation in the building.
- 4.4.2. There is no history of complaints of noise nuisance concerning the flat in question.
- 4.4.3. Other characteristics of the building, such as under-floor heating, do not make the proposed floor covering unsuitable.

4.5. In ground floor flats, permission will normally be given provided:

- 4.5.1. There is no history of poor lateral (from the sides) sound insulation in the building.
- 4.5.2. There is no history of complaints of noise nuisance concerning the flat in question.
- 4.5.3. Other characteristics of the building, such as under-floor heating, do not make the proposed floor covering unsuitable.

4.6. In houses, permission will normally be given provided:

- 4.6.1. There is no history of poor sound insulation between the house and neighbouring houses.
- 4.6.2. There is no history of complaints of noise nuisance.
- 4.6.3. Other characteristics of the building, such as under-floor heating, do not make the proposed floor covering unsuitable.

4.7. Whenever permission is granted it will always be conditional on:

- 4.7.1. The standard of workmanship must be to the satisfaction of Hexagon and carried out by a qualified and competent trade person.
- 4.7.2. The Asbestos reports must be checked to ensure Asbestos Containing Materials are not being removed or encapsulated.
- 4.7.3. Suitable underlay being used. Details of the underlay must be submitted to the Area Surveyor before any work starts, and an inspection may be required once the underlay has been laid but before the wood flooring has been laid.
- 4.7.4. Felt pads being fitted to the bottom of legs of chairs, tables and other furniture.
- 4.7.5. Agreement that if the flooring has to be lifted to allow access for repairs or inspections, Hexagon will not be liable for relaying the flooring, or for any damage that may be caused. Residents are advised to ensure that any contents insurance will cover the cost of replacing flooring damaged in this way.
- 4.7.6. Agreement from the resident that they will ensure there is easy access to any stopcocks, or other equipment, located under the floor.
- 4.7.7. Agreement from the resident that they will be liable for any damage, and the cost of any repairs, caused by the laying of the flooring (putting a nail through a pipe, for example).
- 4.7.8. Any doors that require to be adjusted to close as a result of the increased flooring height will be the resident's responsibility. Any required levelling of

the existing floor to allow the installation to be carried out will be the resident's responsibility.

- 4.8. To request hard flooring, residents must submit an Alteration to Property form. The Hexagon Area Surveyor will make a decision on the request and may require a site visit pre and post works.
- 4.9. Permission may be withdrawn at any time if hard flooring is found to contribute to noise transference problems after it has been installed. In these circumstances, residents will be required to remove the hard flooring or cover it with underlay and carpet. Where residents have lain hard flooring without Hexagon's permission, and it is found to contribute to noise nuisance problems, residents will be required to remove the hard flooring or cover it with adequate underlay and carpet.
- 4.10. Where permission is withdrawn due to noise problems and the affected resident is experiencing financial hardship, Hexagon will refer the resident to the Community Investment Team for assistance.
- 4.11. Where hard flooring is installed, residents are advised to minimise the amount of noise generated by not wearing heavy or hard-soled shoes indoors.
- 4.12. Where hard flooring is left behind in vacant properties and is in good condition, a joint decision between the Void Surveyor and Neighbourhood Services will be taken on whether to leave it in situ or remove it. This will be based on the criteria used for giving permission (above) and after consultation with immediate neighbours.

5.0 Related Hexagon Policies, Strategies and Procedures

- 5.1. Pre and Post Inspection Policy
- 5.2. Adaptations Policy
- 5.3. Void to Let Policy
- 5.4. Rechargeable Repairs Policy

6.0 Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment

Hexagon Housing Association Equality Impact Assessment

Part one: Initial Screening

Name of policy, service or function	Hard Flooring Policy
Current or Proposed	Proposed
Persons completing Initial screening (It is best to include multiple colleagues with specialist knowledge)	Policy Officer
Please provide a brief description of the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy or Service which is being assessed; • Its aim; • Who will benefit or be affected 	
<p>The Hard Flooring policy applies to all Hexagon tenants and leaseholders and is relevant to Hexagon's Property Services and Housing Services departments. The aim is to ensure a fair and consistent approach to giving permission for the laying of hard flooring that takes into account the noise impact on neighbouring properties.</p>	

Resident Involvement

Method	Data
RAG	This policy was assessed by RAG in June 2022 and no concerns were raised as to the equality impact.

Screening

On the basis of the evidence available and considering the questions above, what level of impact if any is the delivery of this policy/service going to have on the different equality groups set out below.				
Protected Characteristic	Say if impact is positive, negative, or none			Reason (include description of any data or research used)
	Positive	Negative	No Impact	

Age			X	
Disability	X			This policy makes provision for those with disabilities who may require hard flooring due to mobility needs or conditions such as severe asthma
Sex			X	
Gender reassignment			X	
Race			X	
Religion or belief			X	
Sexual orientation			X	
Socio-economic status			X	Requirements in this policy to remove hard flooring and/or install underlay and carpet where there are noise issues may impact negatively on those in financial hardship, this has been addressed and referral to Community Investment Team built in to process to redress this.
Literacy			X	Customer Services are able to relay the contents of this policy by telephone or face-to-face to residents where literacy is an issue.

What are the arrangements for monitoring the policy and its impact on customers?

Hard flooring requests and reports of household noise (as well as any complaints relating to this policy) will be reviewed by Hexagon on a quarterly basis to assess trends, issues, and impact.
This policy will be reviewed in 3 years time.