

Access to your home

You will need to allow our staff or contractors into your home to:

- Service gas appliances
- Inspect your property
- Carry out repairs
- Carry out tenancy audits

We will usually give you at least 48 hours notice. However, there may be times when we need to gain access to your property in an emergency. If we are unable to contact you in an emergency, we may have to gain access to your home without you, we will always make sure your home is left secure. However, you may be responsible for repairs if we had to get into your home due to the negligence of anyone living at the property.

Charter for Housing Association Tenants

The Housing Corporation has published a document called 'A Charter for Housing Association Applicants and Residents'. This contains a statement of principles and minimum standards which registered housing associations are expected to achieve. For a copy of this Charter please contact our Customer Service Centre on 0800 195 5515.

Your starter tenancy

What is a Starter Tenancy?

A Starter Tenancy is an Assured Shorthold Tenancy that offers you extra support and advice to help you manage your new tenancy. It will normally run for 12 months and unless you have any problems during the first year such as rent arrears or any reports of anti-social behaviour, you will become an Assured Tenant.

What is the difference between a Starter and an Assured Tenancy?

When you sign your tenancy agreement, you will be given a copy of the leaflet 'A Charter For Housing Association Applicants and Residents' which explains what your rights are and what you can expect from Sentinel. As a Starter Tenant, you will have similar rights to an Assured Tenant, but you will not have the right to;

- Make alterations to your property.
- Right to acquire.
- Right to succeed, other than by a spouse.
- Assign the property.
- Mutual exchange.
- Sub-let or take in lodgers.

As your landlord we will offer advice and support to help you meet the terms of your tenancy agreement. If you have any questions about the type of tenancy you are being offered, then we advise you to seek independent legal advice.

What will happen during the Starter Tenancy?

We will arrange to meet you to view your new home and discuss the terms of your tenancy agreement. At this meeting, we will ask you a few questions about your circumstances - it is important that you are honest so we can see whether there is anything you may need help with. If you do need support in some areas, we can help by providing you with guidance leaflets or refer you to a support agency for assistance.

We will visit you a few weeks after you move into your new home, to see how you are settling in. Your tenancy will be reviewed regularly during the year and we may visit you again to discuss any problems you are having that may affect your tenancy agreement. You can speak to your Neighbourhood Co-ordinator at any time, if you have any questions or there is something you need advice about.

If you would like

Your starter tenancy

in large print, braille or translated please contact the Customer Service Centre on 0800 195 5515 from a landline or 0300 666 5515 from your mobile.



Your responsibilities

Starter Tenants and Assured Tenants have the same responsibilities. These will be explained to you when you sign your Tenancy Agreement and are detailed in the 'Customer Information Sheet: 'Your Tenancy Agreement'. You will also be able to meet with your Neighbourhood Co-ordinator to discuss any issues that may stop you keeping to the terms of your tenancy agreement and they will offer advice and support to help you manage your tenancy.

As a tenant you are expected to:

- Move into your home when your tenancy starts
- Pay your rent and other charges on time, as set out in the tenancy conditions
- Pay for all services supplied to the property
- Live in the property as your main or only home
- Not run a business from the property without our prior permission
- Not display any business or trade signs in or around the property
- Not use the property for illegal or immoral purposes
- Not sub-let the whole property
- Not cause (or allow members of your family or friends to cause) nuisance or annoyance to neighbours
- Not commit (or allow members of your family or friends to commit) any kind of harassment to neighbours
- Obtain our written permission to keep pets
- Keep all pets under control and not allow them to cause nuisance
- Get our permission in writing to carry out any alterations or improvements to your home
- Not store highly flammable materials in your property, shed, garage or store
- Sweep chimneys at least once a year, where applicable
- Keep your garden tidy
- Repair any damage to the property or our fixtures and fittings in shared areas caused by you, members of your family or visitors
- Keep your property clean and free from vermin and clear drains, toilets and waste pipes
- Report any repair or problem promptly unless it is your responsibility to carry out the repair yourself

What will happen at the end of the Starter Tenancy?

As long as there have been no problems during the first 12 months of your tenancy, you will become an Assured Tenant. We will write to you to tell you the date that you will become an assured tenant and explain the additional rights you will have. We'll send you a new payment card and if you pay by Direct Debit, you will need to set a new Direct Debit.

If you do not meet the terms of your tenancy agreement and there are serious problems, such as rent arrears or anti-social behaviour we will offer you support and advice to help get you back on track, we may also extend your starter tenancy agreement for up to 12 months. If we start legal action against you, we will not make your tenancy an assured tenancy until all the issues have been resolved.

If you do not accept our support and you continue to have problems with your tenancy we can end your tenancy, meaning you will lose your home.

Your Right To Appeal If We Have To End Your Tenancy

In some cases Sentinel will serve a Section 21 Notice to end your tenancy on mandatory grounds. This means that Sentinel will not have to prove a case in court and the Judge will have to evict you. If you are served with a Section 21 Notice, you have the right to appeal. You will be given a copy of the appeals process and a form for you to complete when you are served with the Section 21 Notice.

You need to return your Appeal Form within 10 working days of receiving your Section 21 Notice. We will advise you of the date of the appeal no less than 5 days before the appeal.

You will be invited to attend the Appeal Hearing and will have an opportunity to speak to the panel members. The Appeals Panel is made up of 2 Board Members and 1 senior member of Sentinel.

You can take a friend or representative along if you wish.

We will notify you of the decision of the Appeals Panel within 5 working days. The Appeals Panel can decide to terminate your tenancy, extend it or convert it to an Assured Tenancy.

Please note that you do not have the right to an appeal if you are served a Notice of Seeking Possession, rather than a Section 21 Notice. In these circumstances, we will need to prove the case in Court and the Judge will decide whether to evict you or not.