

What to do if someone dies

Our commitment

This leaflet explains what to do about a Sentinel Housing Association tenancy when the tenant dies.

The steps that you need to take when someone dies vary depending on the tenancy and whether there is a right of succession, which means someone can inherit the tenancy.

Joint tenancy

Where there is a joint tenancy, when one of the tenants dies, the other tenant will become a sole tenant through the right of succession. The surviving tenant will be asked to complete a succession form and to provide a copy of the death certificate to the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator who will process the request. Please note that if the occupant(s) are tolerated trespassers there is no right of succession. Our Customer Service Centre can provide more advice about this.

Sole tenancy

Where the tenant was living with their partner or other family member at the time of their death, it may be possible for the tenancy to be passed on to one of them through the right of succession. If you wish to make an application for succession, please phone our Customer Service Centre on 0800 195 5515 from a landline or 0300 666 5515 from your mobile. You will be asked to complete a succession form, provide a copy of the death certificate and to provide proof that you have lived with the tenant for at least 12 months (unless you were married to the deceased or had signed the Civil Partnership Register). Please note if the deceased was a tolerated trespasser there is no right of succession.

Where no one is claiming succession to the tenancy and the tenancy needs to be ended, you should notify Sentinel HA as soon as possible. You will be asked to provide 4 weeks notice in writing of the tenancy ending. You can either write to us with a copy of the death certificate or you can complete a tenancy termination form. Tenancies can only be terminated on a Sunday. If you need help working out the notice period please do contact us for assistance.

During this 4 week period, rent will still be due on the property, which should be paid from the estate of the deceased tenant. Where there is no money in the deceased tenant's estate to pay this rent no one else will become liable for the payment. You should use this time to clear the property of the tenant's possessions, to arrange re-direction of any post and to close down any accounts with utility companies.

Who do I need to tell?

- All deaths must be registered within five days with the Registrar of Births and Deaths. You will need to take with you the medical certificate showing the cause of death, the deceased's medical card, any information about any pension or benefits the person was getting, the birth certificate, any marriage certificate and any life assurance policies
- You must notify the Council Tax and Housing Benefit department at the local authority. If the deceased was entitled to Housing Benefit there may be an overpayment that needs to be repaid. This should be repaid from the deceased's estate, not from you personally.
- If the deceased was entitled to any Pensions or State Benefits, then all books should be returned to the Department of Social Security (DSS).
- If the tenancy is being ended, you will also need to contact the utility companies to close down accounts such as ; telephone, water, gas and electricity and take meter readings.

Useful contacts

- Sentinel Housing Association 0800 195 5515
- Cruse Bereavement Helpline 0844 477 9400

Further information is contained within the booklet "What to do after a death in England and Wales" (D49) published by the Department for Work and Pensions.

If you would like

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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.

