

## Access to your home

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

- Service gas appliances
- Inspect your property
- Carry our 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 will ask the Police to come with us. We will ensure 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 tenancy agreement

### What does the agreement cover?

By signing your tenancy agreement you have agreed to become a tenant of Sentinel Housing Association. The tenancy agreement is a legal document that includes your rights and responsibilities, and ours. If you or someone who lives with you, or a visitor to your home, breaks the tenancy conditions, we can take legal steps to evict you from your home. In all cases we prefer to deal with problems before going to court. If we do take you to court you will have a right to ask a legal or other representative to present your case. The court will make a decision on the evidence given.

A tenancy can either be sole or joint. A sole tenancy is one you hold by yourself. A joint tenancy is one you hold or share with someone else. If you hold a joint tenancy you are both equally responsible for keeping to the conditions of the tenancy. For example you are both responsible for paying all the rent. Should Sentinel take action to repossess your home this action will be taken against both joint tenants.

In some circumstances you can change your tenancy from sole to joint or joint to sole. For more information please refer to the 'Changes to your tenancy' Leaflet.

### Your rights

As a tenant you have the following rights:

- To live in the property without interference from us as long as you keep to your tenancy conditions.
- If you were a tenant of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council before March 1995, and have continued to live in our property since then, you will have the right to buy. You will also have the right to buy if you transfer to a Kingfisher Housing Association property. If you were a tenant of Hart District Council before March 1994, and have continued to live in our property since then, you will have the right to buy.
- You have 'security of tenure'. This means that you are allowed to stay as a tenant unless we end your tenancy by getting a court order for possession. We would only apply for a possession order if you or a member of your household or visitor break the conditions of your tenancy as laid out under Your Responsibilities.

### Lodgers and sub-tenants

If you take in a lodger or sub-tenant you must continue to live in the property as your only or main home. If you are in receipt of Housing Benefit you must tell the Housing Benefit Department that your circumstances have changed.

A 'lodger' is someone who lives closely with you and you probably share meals.

A 'sub-tenant' is someone who pays you rent for a room but does not have much to do with you each day. You can sub-let part of your home but cannot part with possession of your entire home. If you do so you will lose your 'security of tenure' and we will take action to repossess your home.

If you would like

## Your tenancy agreement

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.



## Mutual Exchange and Transfer

There are only certain circumstances under which you are allowed to transfer your tenancy to someone else or undertake a mutual exchange. For more information please refer to the 'What to do if you want to move home' leaflet.

## Inheriting a tenancy (succession)

If you die there are some circumstances by which your tenancy can be passed to another person. This will be either a husband, wife or partner if they live with you and it is their only or main home. Another member of your family may be able to inherit your tenancy if they have lived with you for at least 12 months before your death and the home is their only or main home. For more information please refer to the 'What to do if Someone Dies' leaflet.

## Compensation for improvements

When your tenancy ends you may qualify for compensation, less an allowance for wear and tear, for an improvement or alteration you carried out after 1 April 2004. You must have had our written permission before you carry out any work. For more information please phone our Customer Service Centre.

## Consultation and Information

We will consult you on any proposed changes to the way we manage and maintain your home. We will give you information on our policies and procedures and will consult you on proposed changes, including changes to your rent.

## Right to Repair

Some repairs come under the category of 'right to repair'. If you report a repair in this category and we don't complete it within the timescale that you are given at the time that you report it (unless you have failed to provide access) you should contact us.

We will speak to the original contractor and if they are not able to complete the repair, we will appoint another contractor to complete the work. If the work is still not completed within the new agreed timescale you may be entitled to claim for compensation.

The Government leaflet entitled 'a better deal for tenants' explains what 'right to repair' means and details what compensation you may be entitled to.

If you wish to make a claim or would like more information on what a 'right to repair' job is please contact the Customer Service Centre.

## Your responsibilities

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