

LEASEHOLDERS

HANDBOOK

Everything you need to know as a leaseholder
of Sentinel Housing Association.

November 2009

Contents

	Page	
Section 1	Introduction	1
Section 2	About this Handbook	2
Section 3	Our Service to You	3
Section 4	Your Responsibilities	4
Section 5	The Landlord's Responsibilities	7
Section 6	Service Charges	9
Section 7	Care and Repair	11
Section 8	Insuring Your Home	14
Section 9	Safety and Security	15
Section 10	Useful Addresses	16
Section 11	Useful Numbers	17

Index

	Page		Page
Access to your home	5	Loan for repair costs	10
Access to personal information	3	Maintenance	7, 11-13
Accounts	7	Sentinel Housing	1
Addresses and telephone numbers	16-18	Redecoration	7, 13
Alterations & Additions to your Home	4	Repair target times	12
Anti-Social Behaviour	4	Repairs	7, 11-13
Breach of Lease Conditions	6	Reporting repairs	3, 12
Complaints	3	Responsibilities, Landlord's	7
Consultation	3, 7	Responsibilities, leaseholders	4-6, 10
Costs to lessee	8-9	Rubbish disposal	5
Customer care	3	Security	15
Emergency repairs	12	Selling your home	5
Equal opportunities	3	Service charges	9-10
External areas	5, 13	Services (gas, electricity etc)	7
Fire precautions	15	Sub-letting	4
Going away	5, 15	Terminology	1
Ground rent	8	TV aerial, communal	13
Harassment	4	Use of home	4
Insurance, building	8, 14		
Insurance, contents	14		
Residents Forum	3		
Lifts	13		

1

Section 1 - Introduction

Welcome to Sentinel Housing Association. Sentinel (Formerly Hart Housing Association and Oakfern Housing Association) now has around 800 leaseholders and we are committed to providing you with a high quality service.

This handbook has been produced so that we can provide clear and concise information that is useful to you. If you need this in large print or on audio CD please contact our Customer Service Team on 0800 195 5515.

About Sentinel

Sentinel Housing Association was formed in April 2000 out of the Hartvale Housing Association, based in Fleet, and Oakfern Housing, based in Basingstoke.

The Association primarily offers affordable homes and associated services to meet the needs of communities in Berkshire, Hampshire and Surrey. Sentinel has a multi-million pound development programme, building new homes and whole communities.

Sentinel Homescope is the newest division of the company - 'making home ownership a reality' through its Homebuy and Shared Ownership schemes.

Sentinel is governed by a Board of 13 members consisting of tenants and independent Board members. The Chairman is currently John Barker.

Sentinel Housing Association currently employs around 200 staff who are mainly based in Basingstoke, with a small satellite office in Fleet for local residents.

What "Leasehold" Means

Unlike tenants of houses or bungalows (who can buy the freehold of their home) tenants of flats or maisonettes purchase the leasehold of their home. Normally the Association will grant a long "lease" of 125 years.

As a leaseholder you do not own the structure or exterior of your home as it forms part of the lock of flats or maisonettes. The ownership of the block remains with the Association and is referred to as the freehold.

To contribute towards the upkeep of the block you have to pay an annual sum to the landlord. This is called a 'service charge' and will vary every year depending on the charges levied. (see Section 6).

For the period of your Lease, the interior of your property is your responsibility. You should not break the conditions that are set out in your Lease, as this could entitle Sentinel to seek possession of your home.

It is important that you make yourself familiar with the Lease, which was given to your solicitor upon completion of your purchase. If you have a mortgage, then your Lease may be held by the mortgage company.

At the bottom of this page we give some common terms you may come across in this Handbook and when dealing with issues regarding your Lease.

Some Common Terms:

Lease	- The contract between you and the Association
Leaseholder or Lessee	- You
Landlord	- Sentinel Housing Association
Block	- The building of which your property is part
Demised Premises	- Your flat or maisonette

2

Section 2 - About this Handbook

What it is

The handbook is intended to explain in simple and clear terms your rights and responsibilities and those of Sentinel as your landlord.

It will remind you, in general terms, what is contained in your Lease and can be used if you need to check a particular condition or responsibility.

What it isn't

The information in this Handbook is not intended to be a legal document.

In the event of a dispute between yourself and Sentinel, the matter would have to be resolved with reference to the terms of the Lease only, rather than any other information or advice that you may receive (i.e this Handbook).

Further Queries

At the end of this Handbook you will find some useful numbers, to follow up any further queries you may have.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any points to raise. Details of who you should contact about specific issues are contained throughout the Handbook.

As dealing with leases and service charges can be complex it would be appreciated if queries could be made in writing. The subject of Leases and service charges is complex and queries may require investigation before an answer can be given.

Sentinel is committed to maintaining a high level of service. We hope that you will enjoy your home and the services we provide.

3

Section 3 - Our Service to You

Customer Care

Our aim is to provide you with an efficient, caring and courteous service. Sentinel welcomes your views and comments on how to improve our service.

Reporting Repairs

To request a repair, telephone Sentinel and speak to one of our Customer Advisors on 0800 195 5515 free from a landline or 0300 666 5515 from your mobile (see page 12 for more details).

Please note that Sentinel will carry out repairs only on items for which we are responsible (see under 'The Landlords's Responsibilities' and, 'Care and Repair' pages 7 and 12).

Complaints

We operate a complaints procedure which is designed to safeguard your interests.

A leaflet about the complaints procedure is available on request by contacting the Customer Service Centre or by downloading a copy from the Sentinel website.

Consultation

We are committed to full and open consultation with you and all users of the services we provide and we will consult you individually on any matter which affects you personally.

If you and your neighbours are affected by a scheme repair, modernisation or environmental improvement then we will discuss the proposals with Sentinel's Tenants and Residents Association (STARA) and seek their views.

Getting Involved

There are active Neighbourhood Panels in each area that work with STARA to represent the views of tenants and leaseholders alike. These groups are supported by Sentinel and are encouraged to get involved in neighbourhood planning and consultation.

Regular meetings are held during the year which are open to all residents.

There are many other ways you can get involved depending how much, or how little, time you have. The Resident Involvement Statement sets out how residents (tenants and leaseholders) could be involved in the housing service setting out how Sentinel and residents can work together to improve services.

If you would like to find out more, just contact our Customer and Community Involvement Co-ordinator on 0800 195 5515 free from a landline or 0300 666 5515 from your mobile.

Equal Opportunities

We recognise that various groups in society can be subject to discrimination on a range of grounds, including race, ethnic or national origin, sexuality, marital status, age, religion, mental and physical disability.

As a landlord and an employer, the Association is committed to providing equal treatment to everyone in respect of the letting and management of its homes, services provided, and in the employment of staff, consultants and contractors.

A leaflet covering the Association's Equal Opportunities Policy is available from the Customer Service Centre or by downloading a copy from the Sentinel website.

Access to Personal Information

We treat all information held about you as confidential. Under our Data Protection registration we are able to disclose this information to other specific organisations such as the local authorities. We will only do this when appropriate and never for commercial gain.

Under the Data Protection 1998 Act you have the right (with certain exceptions) to check details held on computer about yourself. Within reason, Sentinel will allow you to see other personal information that may be held about you except, for example, letters or references sent to us in confidence. If for any reason you wish to see such information you should contact the Information Systems Manager.

4

Section 4 - Your Responsibilities

You have an obligation under common law to use the property in a responsible manner and to take care of it. This is reinforced by conditions in your Lease.

Your Lease places responsibilities on you as the leaseholder, regarding the use of your home. The main responsibilities are set out in this section. The other general conditions that you must comply with are stated in detail in your Lease.

Sentinel has attempted to make these conditions the same as those applied to tenants under the terms of their tenancy agreements. This is to ensure consistency for residents living in the same block, be they Association tenants or lessees.

The Use of Your Home

The property must be used only as a private residence occupied by one family and must not be used for any illegal or immoral purpose.

Dealing with Anti-social Behaviour

You must not do anything or permit anything to be done to cause nuisance, annoyance or inconvenience to your neighbours.

Sentinel will take very seriously complaints of anti-social behaviour. We will thoroughly investigate complaints and take appropriate action; which could include legal action against you if you or a visitor to your home is responsible for the problem. We will also help you if you are the victim of anti-social behaviour.

Anti-social Behaviour can include such matters as physical assault, damage to property, graffiti, arson and verbal abuse. It includes harassment because of race, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation or marital status.

Conduct amounting to harassment is now a criminal offence under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and penalties include imprisonment.

Sentinel has a clearly defined policy and set of

procedures for dealing with harassment when it is reported. For more information about how Sentinel deals with anti-social behaviour please contact our Customer Service Centre or visit the Sentinel website.

Sub-letting

You must not assign or sub-let your home, wholly or in part, until five years have passed from the date the Lease was completed. If you break this condition it may result in repayment of part of the discount given when you purchased your property.

You should seek the advice and consent of Sentinel before assigning or subletting the lease. If your property is mortgaged the consent of your bank or building society or lender will also be required.

If you do sub-let you will still remain responsible for the payment of service charges and ground rent. If you no longer live at the premises, it is recommended that you inform Sentinel of your new address so that letters regarding the premises can then be sent to you directly. You should notify the Accountancy Assistant, Service Charges and Home Ownership on 0800 195 5515 from a landline or 0300 666 5515 from your mobile.

Alterations and Additions to Your Home

Under the terms of your Lease, no additions or alterations can be made to your property unless you have the written permission of Sentinel before any work is carried out. This includes aerials and satellite dishes. Such permission will not be withheld unreasonably but may be subject to conditions.

Prior permission given for alterations will be free of charge. However, if you have failed to gain permission and any retrospective consent is required (for example when a property is being sold) then a charge will be made to cover the Association's costs. This fee is currently £60.00 plus VAT and is reviewed each year.

It is most important that you do not carry out

5

Your Responsibilities continued.

any alterations without first obtaining permission as you would be breaching a condition of the Lease. This could result in the loss of your Lease and/or your being required to reinstate the property at your cost.

If you are thinking about making an addition or alteration to your property, please contact the Customer Service Centre to discuss the matter in detail.

Any major alterations and additions may need planning permission and/or building regulations consent from your local authority.

Disposal of Rubbish

You are asked to co-operate in helping to keep the estates clean and to make proper use of facilities provided for the disposal of refuse.

Household Refuse

Please take care to dispose of your rubbish sensibly. Only cold ashes and dry household refuse should be deposited in wheelie bins.

Refuse chutes should be used only for small items which should be wrapped before disposal. Large items such as cartons, bundles of newspapers etc, should be taken to the refuse chamber at the bottom of the chute.

Chutes should only be used at reasonable times i.e. not before 7.30am or after 10.30pm.

Larger Items

Your council will remove items such as old furniture or washing machines. You will need to phone them to arrange a collection.

Contact Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council on 01256 844844 or Hart District Council on 01252 774442 respectively.

Going Away

You have a duty to take proper care of the property and to take steps to avoid damage, either to your own or neighbouring properties. With this in mind please turn off the water supply to avoid any risks from burst pipes etc. if you go away.

You should check your washing machine hoses on a regular basis as these are vulnerable to leaking even during daily absence. This is particularly important as any damage to an adjoining property, caused by a leak from one of your appliances, can result in a claim against you from your neighbours.

Condition of the Property

You are required to keep the inside of the property in good decorative condition and to keep the windows clean.

If damage is evident due to problems from an adjoining property, you should contact Sentinel immediately so that the cause of the damage can be traced and the appropriate action taken.

See also page 11 for items of repair that are the lessees responsibility.

Access to Your Home

The Lease states that the Landlord and its agents are allowed access at reasonable times provided that 24 hours written notice is given (except in an emergency) to allow an inspection of the property to be carried out.

Sentinel is unlikely to exercise this right unless:

- it has reason to believe that the property is not being kept in good decorative condition; or,
- in the case of an emergency (such as a leaking pipe causing flooding) when you cannot be contacted.

External Areas

You are required to keep any garden, balcony or other external areas attached to your home in a clean and tidy condition.

Selling Your Home

If the Lease is sold or assigned within five years from when it was first purchased, under the Right to Buy Scheme, then all or part of the original discount is repayable. The amount repayable is reduced by one third for each

6

Your Responsibilities continued.

complete year that has passed since the date of purchase.

All costs, charges and expenses including ground rent, building insurance and service charge must be paid up to date before the assignment (sale) is completed.

You will also be required to pay any costs incurred by Sentinel if it is necessary to remedy a breach of the Lease (this includes any relevant legal costs).

All these matters should be dealt with by your solicitor and you should ensure that he or she covers these points when dealing with the sale of the property.

You or your solicitor must tell Sentinel of any assignment within 21 days, by means of a certified copy of the relevant documents. Your lease will determine whether a fee is payable in this instance.

To notify Sentinel of an assignment or sale you should contact the Accountancy Assistant,

Service Charges and Home Ownership, on 0800 195 5515.

Breach of Lease Conditions

Breach of any of the Lease conditions would entitle Sentinel to seek possession of your home. However, you cannot be evicted from your home for a contravention of a Lease condition without a Court Order. To obtain this Sentinel would need to satisfy the Court that a condition of the Lease had been broken and that it is reasonable to give possession of the Lease to Sentinel.

If this did happen the property would return to Sentinel. Any costs incurred by Sentinel in connection with such proceedings are payable by the leaseholder.

Court action will only be taken when a leaseholder fails to keep to the terms of the Lease despite formal requests by Sentinel to do so.

Section 5 - The Landlords Responsibilities

General Responsibilities

Sentinel is required to allow you the enjoyment of your home without any unnecessary interference.

Repairs, Maintenance and Redecoration

The Lease places a responsibility on the landlord to keep the structure of the building in good condition and pay all charges related to the general running and upkeep of the common parts of the building. Such work will be subject to the payment of a service charge by you.

Sentinel will sometimes carry out major repairs programmes which will have an impact on leasehold property. These works may be the replacement of windows, fascias etc designed to reduce responsive maintenance and future expenditure on repairs.

Consultation

Sentinel has a duty to consult you about major repair and improvement works. (qualifying works) under the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002. This applies where the costs of the works exceeds £250.00 for any one Leaseholder.

Consultation must take place before the works are due to start. Normally we will send you a Notice of Intention to Carry out Qualifying Works. This notice will state our reasons for the works and invite written observations, where they can be sent, and over what period. (30 days from the Notice) and the end date. Further, the notice must contain an invitation for nominations of Contractors with whom we can obtain estimates/quotations along with our own Contractors chosen from Sentinel's approved list.

We will obtain estimates/ quotations from the Contractors, which may include any nominated by you. Please note any nominated Contractor would need to fulfil Sentinel's Approved List criteria if they were successful in their estimate/quotation. When the estimates have been received we will send you a statement of

the estimates/quotations together with a further notice inviting written observations on any of the estimates/quotations, where to send them, the consultation period (30days from the notice) and the end date.

Sentinel must have regard to comments received from you and we will not begin work until after the end date stated.

Once the works have been completed you will be sent a final inspection letter, informing you that the work has been inspected by our surveyor, inviting any comments that you may have, and informing you that an invoice will be sent for your contribution to the cost.

If you are unclear about your rights as a Leaseholder please seek independent legal advice either through a solicitor or the Citizens Advise Bureau.

Sentinel's Tenants & Residents Association (STARA) will also be consulted about any proposed works.

If the repair is an emergency then Sentinel is not required to consult before the works take place.

The consultations are usually handled by the Maintenance & Asset Management Department.

Leaseholders have a right to refer any dispute to a Leasehold Valuation Tribunal to determine issues of reasonableness, quality of work and insurance under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (see last section for details of how to contact the regional tribunal).

Accounts

Sentinel is obliged to keep proper accounts, in relation to service charges, which will be made available for inspection on request. Contact the Accountancy Assistant, Service Charges and Home Ownership on 0800 195 5515 from a landline or 0300 666 5515 from your mobile.

In the event of any dispute, the matter will be referred by Sentinel to an independent arbitrator who will be a qualified accountant.

8

The Landlords Responsibilities continued.

Insurance Of The Building

Sentinel will keep the building insured (excluding the internal parts and contents) for the full replacement value. Contact the Accountancy Assistant, Service Charges and Home Ownership on 0800 195 5515 from a landline or 0300 666 5515 from your mobile.

The premiums paid by the Association are recovered through the service charge (see Section 6 on page 9).

Services

Sentinel is responsible for maintaining the services to the building, such as gas and electricity, in working order. However services within your property are your own responsibility.

9

Section 6 - Service Charges

What Charges Are Payable?

Apart from any possible monthly mortgage payments, you have to pay

- Council Tax
- Water Rates
- Electricity and/or Gas charges
- Ground Rent, and
- Service Charges.

Service Charges and Ground Rent

When you buy your flat or maisonette you acquire a Lease to your home, which in addition to the responsibilities already mentioned under the heading 'Your Responsibilities', requires you to pay a service charge to Sentinel.

The service charge is made up of a number of different elements which are based on the cost to the Sentinel of insuring, managing and maintaining the building and its surroundings.

A ground rent is payable to Sentinel. It and will not vary throughout the term of the lease.

Calculating the Service Charge

The charge for services is based on

- The total costs of works to the building in which your flat or maisonette is situated. This includes repairs to communal parts and the fabric of the building, e.g.
 - external maintenance costs such as repair and maintenance of roofs, stairs, hallways, entrance door frames and window frames;
 - Communal water tanks and pipes and electrical circuits.
- Other communal services provided e.g.
 - window cleaning
 - electricity for communal lighting.
- Insurance premiums which are based on the reinstatement value of the block (they vary with inflation and building costs).

- An amount to cover the costs of managing the building and estate (including a proportion of staff costs) accounting advice and collection of income. This is calculated as a percentage of the actual costs of services as specified within your lease.

As the owner of a flat or maisonette you are required to pay a fair and reasonable proportion of these costs which will be calculated using the rateable value of your property, flat or maisonette, as a proportion of the rateable value of the whole building. How these costs are apportioned is set out on the next page.

Paying the Service Charge

Service charge invoices are prepared on the basis of estimates for the coming year and you are required to pay the account submitted to you. You may pay the account in full by cheque payable to (Sentinel Housing Association Ltd) or by instalments over 10 months using direct debit.

After the end of each financial year you will be sent a statement which will show the actual costs for that year. If the actual cost is lower than the estimated charge, any overpayment you have made will be credited to your account or you can ask for a refund by contacting the Accountancy Assistant, Service Charges and Home Ownership on 0800 195 5515 from a landline or 0300 666 5515 from your mobile. If the actual cost is greater than the estimate, you will be asked to make up the shortfall.

If you are unhappy with a charge on the statement you are entitled to reasonable access to inspect the accounts, receipts and documents relied on by Sentinel in compiling the service charge. Sentinel must allow such access within one month of your written request (addressed to the Accountancy Assistant, Service Charges and Home Ownership).

Ultimately, you have the right to take Sentinel to the County Court which would decide whether a cost was reasonable and therefore payable.

Service Charges continued.

How Charges are Apportioned to Leaseholders

The percentage a leaseholder has to pay towards the service charge is calculated in the following way

$$\frac{\text{Rateable value of flat} \times 100}{\text{Rateable value for the whole block}}$$

Example

A block of six flats consists of four 2 bedroom flats and two 3 bedroom flats. The rateable value (RV) for the 2 bed flats is £188 and for the 3 bed flats £206 so the total RV for the block of six is £1,164.

No of flats	No of bedrooms	Rateable value per flat			
4	2	£188	4 x 188	=	£752
2	3	£206	2 x 206	=	£412
			Total Rateable Value for Block	=	£1,164

So, if Mr S lives in a 2 bedroom flat, his percentage of services would be calculated as

$$\frac{188 \times 100}{1164} = 16\%$$

Mr and Mrs D who live in a 3 bedroom flat would pay 18% towards block services.

The example shows how two leaseholders in the same block can have different service charges. If the roof of this block is repaired at a cost of £2,000 the following charges would appear on the service charges for the flats.

Mr S £2,000 x 16% = £320.00

Mr & Mrs D £2,000 x 18% = £360.00

These figures are for guidance only.

Limits to Charges for Repairs

There are some circumstances in which the Association cannot charge leaseholders for repairs or major works.

During the first five years of a Right to Buy purchase, charges for repairs and improvements are limited to the amounts set out in a five year estimate drawn up at the time of purchase, plus an allowance for inflation.

Tenants who have been advised of a structural defect in the building before the purchase, cannot be required to bear part of the cost to rectify that defect. This applies only during the first ten years of the lease. After this time you will be required to pay the appropriate proportion of the cost, even major works of a structural nature.

Loans to Help Meet Repair Costs

Leaseholders who have purchased their home under the Right to Buy provisions for secure tenants, may be able to obtain a loan from the

Tenant Services Authority (TSA) for major repairs, repayable over a 10 year period. This does not apply to leaseholders who did not buy the property as a tenant. Contact the TSA's Finance Department for more details - address at the end of the Handbook. In certain circumstances Sentinel would make arrangements for leaseholders, faced with charges for major works, to pay over a number of years. In such circumstances, interest would be payable. For further information contact the Accountancy Assistant, Service Charges and Home Ownership on 0800 195 5515 from a landline or 0300 666 5515 from your mobile.

Section 7 - Care and Repair

Care and Repair of Properties and Estates

It is in your interest, and your landlords, to ensure that your home is maintained properly and that any communal areas to the block are cleaned and well looked after.

The following guidance is to help you to live comfortably in your home and to guarantee a responsive repair service from Sentinel. Any general queries about repair matters are dealt with by the Responsive Maintenance Manager.

Parts Maintained by Sentinel

The Estate: Sentinel is responsible for maintaining common roads, access ways and paths within the estate which are not adopted highways (ie the responsibility of the local authority).

The Buildings: Sentinel is responsible for all structural parts of the building where your flat or maisonette is situated. This includes the walls, but not the finished surfaces, roof, foundations, floor joists and roof timbers. Also service ducts that serve more than one property, external parts of the flat or maisonette (except for the items listed in the next column as your responsibility), gutters, rainwater pipes and electricity supply to your property.

Repairs are undertaken by contractors employed by the Sentinel.

Sentinel will decide who should carry out the repair work and arrange for the repairs to be undertaken. This will normally be within the time specified against each type of work as set out on page 12 of this Handbook.

Items You Must Maintain

All internal items i.e.repairs in your flat or maisonette.

These include:

- the windows (please check your Lease as in some cases these are Sentinel's responsibility);
- the ceilings (but not the joists, beams or concrete floors);
- all internal doors;
- all plaster and other surfaces to all floors, walls and ceilings in your home;
- any water tank serving just your home (if the water tank serves other flats as well as yours then Sentinel will repair it);
- all plumbing and electrical services in your home;
- all fixtures and fittings (except where provided for communal use by Sentinel e.g. an entryphone system);
- heating system serving your home alone (if it serves other flats as well as yours then Sentinel will repair it);
- all internal decoration.

Please check your own lease to confirm your own responsibility.

You should not attempt to work on any part of the property or the building which is not your responsibility. As the building is owned by Sentinel Housing Association you could be held liable for any additional costs incurred by Sentinel as a result.

Care and Repair continued.

How to Report a Repair to Sentinel

Please report any repair for which Sentinel is responsible as soon as possible. The simplest way to report a repair is to telephone our Customer Service Centre on 0800 195 5515 from a landline or 0300 666 5515 from your mobile. The lines are open Mon-Thur 8.30am to 5.30pm and Fri 8.30am to 4.30pm. Outside of these hours call this number for emergencies only.

All calls to our repairs line are recorded as a quality control measure in the best interests of our customers. A limited number of staff have access to these recordings.

When reporting the repair, it would be helpful if you could provide the following information:

- Your name, full address and telephone number.
- As much detail as you can about the repair.
- When you are normally at home, if access is required to carry out the repair.
- Whether you have reported the repair before.

You will be told:

- the priority given to the work (as below)
- the contractor's name and telephone number.

Alternatively you may be notified that an inspection is necessary before an order can be issued. If so, you will be given the name of the

Maintenance Surveyor who will contact you to arrange a visit.

Repairs Outside the Target Time

If a repair takes longer to complete than you were originally told by Sentinel, first contact the repairs staff about any delay in attending to your repair.

If you are still not satisfied Sentinel operates a Complaints Procedure. If you need to make a complaint please telephone our Customer Service Centre.

Emergency Repairs

Sentinel provides a 24 hour emergency service 365 days of the year. So, if you have a real emergency that is Sentinel's responsibility, telephone 0800 195 5515 from a landline or 0300 666 5515 from your mobile. Please telephone only if there is an immediate danger to yourself, other people, or the property.

Emergency repairs are more expensive than routine repairs and therefore your service charge could be significantly higher if emergency services are called.

If a callout is found not to be an emergency you will be charged for abuse of the system. There is a flat rate charge of £35. However, if there is a genuine emergency it is in the interest of both you and Sentinel for a repair to be made quickly.

How Long Does it Take to Attend to a Repair?

We suggest you make a note of the job number quoted by the member of staff.

Category	Target Times	Examples of Work
Emergency	24 hours	Burst pipes (making safe only), failed heating (electric), power failures, blocked drains. The gas contractor will respond within 2 hours in the case of major water leaks and gas leaks or unsafe appliances.
Urgent	7 calendar days	Minor leaks, minor repairs to roofs, failed water heaters .
Non-Urgent	21 calendar days	Routine plumbing, glazing, carpentry, brickwork and electrical.

Care and Repair continued.

Decorating

Sentinel will decorate the external woodwork and metal work to the block and clean all PVCu surfaces on a regular basis. This will include your property unless you are responsible for your own doors and windows. Your Lease will have these details and specify how regularly the work will be carried out (usually every five years).

Any communal staircases, landings and halls are redecorated every 10 years for Oakfern Housing and five years for Hart Housing.

The decorating contracts are handled by the Planned Maintenance Manager.

Communal Television Aerials

If the communal TV aerial is not working please telephone our Customer Service Centre, but first check that your TV is not at fault.

Lifts

If a lift is out of order, please telephone our Customer Service Centre.

Planned Maintenance

Sentinel carries out major works each year (such as renewing fascias or windows) to replace items that have become obsolete or are repeatedly failing and needing repair.

Before we start any work we will consult you about the work and how it will affect your home. This is handled by the Maintenance & Asset Manager.

See page 7 for more details about consultation and page 8-9 for how leaseholders are charged for these items.

Care of the Block and its Surrounds

Sentinel employs two mobile caretakers who are responsible for a number of flats and maisonettes. Their duties include:

- Ensuring the cleanliness of the shared areas of the estate
- Checking refuse chutes and refuse chambers
- Reporting repairs concerning the communal areas of the estate.

Reporting lift breakdowns.

Replacing light bulbs to staircases, landings and lobbies.

Although the mobile caretakers are responsible for the overall cleanliness of the estate, you should keep the areas outside your front door clean and tidy. Communal windows will be cleaned on a regular basis, but you are responsible for your own windows.

Replacement Windows and Doors

If you wish to fit your own windows and doors to your property you should contact the Planned Maintenance Manager for permission on 0800 195 5515 from a landline or 0300 666 5515 from your mobile. In general the windows should match the rest of the windows in the block. While a number of properties are installed with PVCu windows and the cost of external decorating for the property is lower, you remain responsible to pay your proportion of the costs of work to the remainder of the building.

Section 8 - Insuring Your Home

The Buildings

Under the terms of the Lease, the Landlord is responsible for insuring the building for the full reinstatement value. You have the right to request a Certificate from the Insurers confirming the sum insured. Contact our Finance Department with your request.

The policy is fully comprehensive and a statement of cover is provided to everyone when they first enter into the Lease.

If damage is sustained to the structure which is the Association's responsibility to repair, in a storm for example, please report this to the Customer Service Centre. You should make it clear that the repair needed is, in your opinion, covered by our insurance.

Contents Insurance

You are strongly recommended to insure the contents in your home against comprehensive risks, (including fire, flooding and theft) as under the terms of the lease these are your responsibility and they will not be covered by the landlords's insurance.

In the event of such a disaster, Sentinel Housing Association has no obligation to give you financial assistance or compensation.

A list of reputable insurance companies can be obtained from the Association of British Insurers (ABI). See Section 10 for address details.

Section 9 - Safety and Security

Fire Precautions

Listed below are some "do's" and "don'ts" to help keep your home safe from fire.

- ✓ Do not put guards round gas or electric fires especially at night.
- ✓ Do not keep keys to doors and windows, that are locked from the inside, nearby to allow you to unlock them in case of fire.
- ✓ Do not shut all doors and windows if possible in the event of fire.
- ✗ Do not move or fill oil heaters if they are alight.
- ✗ Do not plug too many electrical appliances into one electrical point, consider buying a "multiplug".
- ✗ Do not wedge open or block fire doors or emergency escape routes.
- ✗ Do not use Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) heaters in flats - they can be dangerous.
- ✗ Do not use the lift in the event of a fire unless instructed by a Fire Brigade Officer.

Security

Identification

If you do not recognise a caller do not allow the person in without checking their identification. Sentinel staff, contractors, gas and electricity staff should be able to show you an identification card with the holder's photograph on it. If you are still unsure do not let the caller into your home and contact the police.

Going on Holiday

If you are going on holiday, take sensible precautions, especially against burst pipes in winter. Cancel the milk and newspapers and check locks to windows and doors. You could leave your address with the police or neighbours in case anything happens while you are away and you need to be contacted.

Locks

A standard night latch does not provide the degree of strength required to stand up to a determined forced entry. You are recommended to consider fitting a mortice-type lock of British Institute Standards, available from ironmongers and security specialists. These locks can be fitted by any reasonably capable do-it-yourself enthusiast and although the more reliable brands tend to be quite expensive, the level of increased security which can be enjoyed from such an investment is considerable.

Ground floor windows and those sited near a balcony or drainpipe are also particularly vulnerable. Police statistics show that often burglars gain access to a home by breaking a small pane of glass close to the window catch. There are a large number of inexpensive and easy to fit devices available which give a high level of security. Further help about home security can be obtained from the Crime Reduction Officer at your local police station (see Section 10 for contact details).

Section 10 - Useful Addresses

Sentinel Housing Association

56 Kingsclere Road
Basingstoke
Hampshire
RG21 6XG

Telephone 0800 195 5515 free from a landline
or 0300 666 5515 from your mobile.

info@sentinelha.org.uk
www.sentinelha.org.uk

Sentinel Tenants' and Residents' Association (STARA)

Contact c/o Sentinel Housing Association

Other Address and Telephone Numbers:

Association of British Insurers

Aldermay House
10-15 Queen Street
London EC4 N1T
Telephone: 0171 248 4477

The Housing Association Ombudsman

Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych
London
WC2B 4HN
Telephone
020 7421 3800
084 5712 5973
020 7404 7092 (Minicom)
Fax 020 7831 1942
Email info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

The Tenant Services Authority

Customer Services Team
2nd Floor
Lateral
8 City Walk
Leeds
LS11 9AT
All telephone enquiries: 0845 230 7000
www.tenantservicesauthority.org

London Headquarters
Maple House
149 Tottenham Court Road
London W1P 0BN

Telephone: 0171 393 2000

LEASE (Leaseholders' Advisory Service)

<http://www.lease-advice.org/>
LEASE Registered Office
31 Worship Street
London
EC2A 2DX

Tel: 020 7374 5380

Leasehold Valuation Tribunal

Southern Area
1st Floor
1 Market Avenue
Chichester PO19 1JU
Tel: 0845 100 2617 or 01243 779394
Fax: 01243 779389

Email: southern.rap@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Section 11 - Useful Numbers

- **Police**

Police Station 0845 0454545

- **Children & Families**

Social Services - Aldershot 01252 314221

Social Services - Alton 01420 544255

Social Services - Basingstoke 01256 362000

Childline 0800 1111

NSPCC 0800 800500

- **Mental Health Problems**

Conifers Mental Health Team 01252 378253

Ridgewood Centre (24 hours telephone support)
01276 692919

Samaritans (24 hours telephone support)
08457 909090

Sunshine & Showers (Depression Support Group)
01252 815652

Frimley Park Hospital 01276 604604

Parklands Hospital (24 hours telephone support)
01256 817718

Basingstoke Hospital
01256 473202

- **Utility Emergencies**

Gas Emergencies 0800 111999

Electricity Emergencies 08457 708090

Water Board Emergencies 0845 602 1724

Housing Repairs Emergencies 0800 195 5515

- **Animals**

RSPCA 09000 555999

- **Health**

Alzheimer Society 01276 504630

Emergency Dental Services 01256 355095
(Sat, Sun, Bank Holidays 9am-12pm)

- **Pharmacies**

Yateley Lloyds 01252 873518

Yateley Moss 01252 874577

Fleet Lloyds 01252 614226

Fleet Boots 01252 613698

Hartley Wintney Lloyds 01252 842449

Hook Moss
01256 762497

Kingsclere Pharmacy
01635 298419

Hills Pharmacy
Abbey Road 01256 322319

Lloyds Chemist:
Chineham 01256 356590
Oakridge 01256 464340

Fox Pharmacy Tadley
01189813572

Winklebury Pharmacy
01256 328328

Tesco Pharmacy
(open until late weekdays and Weekends)
01276 895482

Other useful Numbers (not 24 Hours)

Age Concern
01256 479285

Al Anon
0207 4030888

Alcoholics Anonymous
08457 7697555

Basingstoke Council
01256 844844

Basingstoke Counselling Service
01256 843125

Basingstoke Pregnancy Crisis Centre
08457 304030

Basingstoke Victim Support
01256 462333

Bereaved by Suicide (Support Group)
01252 661002

Cango Travel 01252 811841

Citizens Advice Bureau - Basingstoke
01256 322814

Citizens Advice Bureau - Farnborough

Useful numbers continued.

0845 1203752

Citizens Advice Bureau - Fleet
01252 617922

Citizens Advice Bureau - Yateley
01252 878410

Civic Society - Fleet & Crookhem
01252 616183

Consumer Services Advice 08457 603 0081

Dial-a-Ride (Basingstoke) 01256 462101

Drug Advice Centre (DNA Project)
01276 62566

Hart Access Group 01252 872975

Hart Council 01252 622122

Hart Victim Support 01252 342777

Lions Community Store 01252 616998

Neighbourcare 01252 371199

Railway Enquiries 08457 484950

Relate - Fleet/Farnborough/Aldershot
01252 324679

Rethink (Hartley Wintney Area) 01252 815652

Saneline 0845 7678000

Benefits Agency 01256 365500

Social Security 01256 726400

Staying Put 01276 608950

Traveline 0870 6082608

UB40 01276 38080
