



**SENTINEL**  
LETTINGS

## Tu Nguyen Management Limited

### Access, Locked Out and Key Policy

#### Agency Details

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| STATUS:                  | Final          |
| DATE CREATED:            | 19/06/2025     |
| VERSION:                 | 2              |
| LAST UPDATED:            | 14/08/2026     |
| SECURITY CLASSIFICATION: | Low            |



# SENTINEL

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## Revision History

| VERSION | REVISION DATE | SECTION REVISED | REASON FOR REVISION | DESCRIPTION OF REVISION |
|---------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1       | 19/06/25      | N/A             | First version       | N/A                     |
| 2       | 14/08/26      | All             | RRA                 | Access notice and entry |
|         |               |                 |                     |                         |
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## SENTINEL LETTINGS

### ACCESS POLICY

#### PURPOSE

This policy sets the standards for access to tenanted properties managed by Tu Nguyen Management Limited, trading as Sentinel Lettings. It balances the landlord's repair, safety, management and inspection duties with the tenant's rights to exclusive possession, privacy and quiet enjoyment.

It is designed to prevent two common errors: treating a properly served notice as automatic permission to enter, and treating a tenant's silence as authority to use a management key.

#### Core rule

Service of an Access Notice does not, by itself, create permission to use a management key. Where standing permission already exists under a signed tenancy agreement or signed access addendum, the permission was granted earlier and the Access Notice activates the agreed access process. Where standing permission does not exist, silence is not key authority.

#### SCOPE AND HIERARCHY

This policy applies to all directors, employees, agents, landlords, inventory clerks, contractors and third parties acting through the Agency.

- It applies to whole-property single lets, joint tenancies, room-only HMO tenancies, shared facilities, retained common parts, external areas and check-in/check-out attendance.
- The exact tenancy agreement, addendum, property licence and any court order or statutory notice must be checked in each case.
- Law and property-specific licence conditions take priority. The tenancy agreement is then applied, followed by this policy.

A landlord's instruction does not authorise the Agency to disregard the tenancy, quiet enjoyment, data protection, licence conditions or the law



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### IMPORTANT – CHECK ACCESS AUTHORITY BEFORE USING MANAGEMENT KEYS

Not all Sentinel tenants have granted continuing permission for the Landlord or Agent to enter their private accommodation following an Access Notice.

Before arranging or attending any visit requiring entry into a tenant's room, whole dwelling or other area over which the tenant has exclusive possession, the Agent **\*\*must** check the tenancy record and confirm the tenant's access-authority status\*\*.

Continuing permission may only be relied upon where it is clearly evidenced by:

- the current Sentinel Assured Periodic Tenancy Agreement containing the standing-permission provisions at clause 18; or
- a separate access addendum or other written agreement signed by the tenant which expressly grants continuing permission.

Where continuing permission is confirmed and has **not been withdrawn or varied**, the **Standing Permission Access Notice template** must be used. Following valid notice, separate acknowledgement or confirmation from the tenant is not required before management keys or authorised access codes are used, subject to the tenant's right to reasonably refuse, rearrange, vary or withdraw that permission.

If continuing permission cannot be verified, has not been granted, or has been withdrawn or varied, Agents must **not** use the Standing Permission Access Notice template. The alternative access-request template must be used and specific authority to enter using management keys or access codes must be obtained before entering private accommodation while the tenant is absent. It does **not** prevent an agent from attending and knocking to seek access.

**Do not assume that silence means consent. Do not assume that an older tenancy contains the same access rights as the current APT.**

If the tenancy documentation or access status is unclear, treat the tenant as not having granted continuing permission until the position has been checked and confirmed.

This warning does not affect:

- genuine emergency access;
- any independent statutory or court-authorised right of entry; or
- reasonable access to landlord-retained Shared Areas of a room-only HMO where the tenancy does not grant the tenant exclusive possession of those areas.

**Where in doubt: STOP, check the tenancy record and use the more restrictive access procedure.**



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### GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

| Principle                           | Required approach                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Legitimate purpose                  | Access must be connected with a genuine repair, inspection, safety, compliance, valuation, viewing, handover or other lawful management purpose.                                                                                            |
| Correct entry basis                 | Before private entry, agents must identify the basis: active standing permission, specific permission, genuine emergency, or another independently lawful right.                                                                            |
| Least intrusive approach            | Limit the area, duration, attendees, photography and activity to what is reasonably required.                                                                                                                                               |
| Notice and permission kept separate | Record the notice, standing-permission status, any Tenant response and what happened on attendance as separate facts. A final notice to be sent the day before to act as reminder and capture any new tenants in HMO who recently moved in. |
| No forced self-help                 | Management keys may only be used where the policy permits. Keys must not be used to override an express refusal, chain, bolt or physical objection unless a genuine emergency or specific lawful authority applies.                         |
| Proportionate escalation            | Where access is withheld, document reasonable attempts and use lawful escalation rather than confrontation or repeated intrusive attendance.                                                                                                |

### LEGAL AND CONTRACTUAL FRAMEWORK

| Source                                  | Operational effect                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, s.11(6)   | Implies a tenant covenant allowing the landlord or an authorised person to enter at reasonable times, after at least 24 hours' written notice, to view the condition and state of repair. It is the source of the statutory 24-hour repair-inspection notice rule. |
| Protection from Eviction Act 1977       | Protects residential occupiers against unlawful eviction and certain harassment. It is not the source of the 24-hour notice rule, but repeated or intimidating access conduct can create serious legal risk.                                                       |
| HMO Management Regulations 2006, reg.10 | Requires an HMO occupier not to hinder or frustrate the manager and to allow the manager, at reasonable times, to enter living accommodation for purposes connected with the manager's regulatory duties. It does not create a power to force entry.               |



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|                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gas and electrical safety duties               | The landlord must take all reasonable steps to secure access and keep evidence of attempts. Safety duties do not themselves create a general power for the landlord or agent to force entry.                                                                           |
| NRL APT, clauses 2.46–2.50                     | Requires at least 24 hours' written notice for entry to the tenant's room for stated purposes, allows immediate emergency entry, provides for viewings on notice, permits management key holding for emergencies, and restricts tenant lock changes or duplicate keys. |
| NRLA APT, clauses 3.1 and 7.1–7.3              | Protects quiet enjoyment and sets the permitted notice methods and deemed-service timings.                                                                                                                                                                             |
| NRLA APT, addendum B7 and B17                  | B7 applies missed-access consequences where the tenant agreed to provide access. B17 allows CoHo to be used for routine access arrangements and inspection notifications while preserving formal service methods.                                                      |
| Propertymark APT, clause 18                    | Sets permitted purposes, minimum notice, COHO/electronic Access Notices, continuing standing permission, Tenant rights to refuse/rearrange or withdraw standing permission, emergency entry, HMO shared-area access and management-key controls.                       |
| Propertymark APT, clause 21 and Schedule 1 B17 | Sets contractual communication/service routes and the use of COHO or a replacement property-management platform.                                                                                                                                                       |
| Signed legacy access addendum                  | Where a Tenant has signed an addendum granting continuing permission on equivalent terms, agents may rely on that permission only within its actual scope and while it remains in force.                                                                               |

The Renters' Rights Act 2025 changed the assured tenancy and possession framework from 1 May 2026. It did not make an Access Notice a power of forced entry. Sentinel's current operational model instead relies on a clearly recorded contractual entry basis and proportionate notice, with escalation where access is expressly refused.

## DEFINITIONS

| Term                        | Meaning                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Private accommodation       | A whole dwelling let to a Tenant or joint Tenants, or a bedroom, ensuite, locked cupboard or other space let for one Tenant's exclusive use.                                                       |
| Common parts / Shared Areas | Areas retained by the Landlord and shared by HMO occupiers, such as shared halls, kitchens, bathrooms, lounges, landings, bin stores and gardens, where exclusive possession has not been granted. |



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|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Access Notice            | Written notification of proposed entry stating the required information. It does not create permission by silence.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Standing permission      | Continuing permission already granted in a signed tenancy agreement or signed access addendum for the Landlord, Agent and/or authorised persons to use management keys or other authorised means of access after a valid Access Notice, subject to the agreed limits and the Tenant's right to object, rearrange, vary or withdraw it. |
| Specific permission      | One-off express authority from the Tenant for a particular visit, scope and/or use of management keys.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Acknowledgement          | Confirmation that a message was received. In a standing-permission tenancy it is not required to activate access; in a non-standing-permission tenancy it is not, by itself, key authority.                                                                                                                                            |
| Appointment confirmation | Agreement that the proposed date/time is suitable. It may or may not include specific key authority depending on the wording and standing-permission status.                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Withdrawal               | A Tenant's communication that standing permission is withdrawn or varied. A clear verbal withdrawal at attendance must be respected immediately and recorded, even if written confirmation is requested afterwards.                                                                                                                    |
| Genuine emergency        | A situation where there are reasonable grounds to believe immediate entry is necessary to protect life, health or safety, prevent serious damage, stop gas or water escape, respond to fire, serious electrical or structural danger, loss of security or a comparable material risk.                                                  |

## MANDATORY ACCESS AUTHORITY STATUS

Before arranging private access, the tenancy record must show one of the following statuses. If the status is unclear, agents must treat it as NO STANDING PERMISSION until verified.

| Status      | When to use                                                                                  | Operational effect                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SP-APT      | Current Sentinel Propertymark APT signed and clause 18 standing permission remains in force. | Valid Access Notice + no reasonable objection/withdrawal = no separate acknowledgement required; management key may be used within the notice and clause 18. |
| SP-ADDENDUM | A signed legacy access addendum expressly grants continuing permission and remains in force. | Follow the exact addendum scope. Valid notice + no reasonable objection/withdrawal may permit                                                                |



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|                    |                                                                                             |                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                    |                                                                                             | management-key entry without a fresh acknowledgement.                                                                       |
| SPECIFIC ONLY      | No standing permission exists, or tenancy predates the addendum and it has not been signed. | A valid notice may be served, but specific permission is required before management-key entry if the Tenant will be absent. |
| WITHDRAWN / VARIED | The Tenant has withdrawn or restricted standing permission.                                 | Follow the restriction. Specific permission is required unless emergency or another lawful right applies.                   |
| UNKNOWN            | Document or signature cannot be verified.                                                   | Treat as SPECIFIC ONLY and escalate any urgent compliance risk.                                                             |

- For a room-only HMO tenancy, standing permission status is recorded separately for each room tenancy.
- For a joint whole-property tenancy, verify that the relevant agreement/addendum has been signed by the required parties. If joint tenants give conflicting access instructions, do not use the management key and escalate to a Director unless a genuine emergency applies.
- A history of previous access, previous silence, prior key use or a Tenant once allowing a contractor in does not create standing permission.
- If a Tenant says “not today” or proposes another time, record a specific objection/rearrangement. If they say “do not use the management key again” or equivalent, update the status to WITHDRAWN / VARIED immediately.

### IDENTIFY THE ACCESS AREA BEFORE ACTING

- Whole-property single or joint tenancy: treat the whole interior, including internal halls and rooms, as private accommodation unless the agreement clearly provides otherwise.
- Room-only HMO tenancy: distinguish the Tenant’s private room/ensuite from landlord-retained Shared Areas.
- External areas: check whether the area is exclusively demised, shared or retained. A private garden must be treated as private accommodation.
- Passing through Shared Areas to reach a private room does not authorise entry to that room.
- If the requested scope changes after notice is served, obtain specific permission for the extra private area or serve a fresh Access Notice, unless a genuine emergency or another lawful basis applies.





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### NOTICE REQUIREMENTS AND SERVICE

#### Private accommodation

- Give at least 24 hours' written notice before routine entry unless the Tenant expressly agrees to shorter notice or a genuine emergency applies.
- The visit must be at a reasonable time and use a reasonable arrival window rather than an unnecessarily broad all-day appointment.
- Allow a practical buffer beyond the minimum notice period where possible.
- The Access Notice must be served by a method permitted by the applicable tenancy/addendum. Do not assume that a communication method used for routine messages is automatically valid for every formal notice.
- Operationally, regardless of whether Access Notice has been previously served, it will be sent again the day before the visit. This is to serve both as a reminder to tenants but also to capture any new tenants who have since moved in and missed the first Access Notice.

#### Current Sentinel APT

Under clause 18.4 of the current Sentinel APT, an Access Notice may be given through COHO or a replacement property-management platform, by email, or another written electronic communication method permitted by the Agreement. Clause 21 also deals with contractual service methods.

#### Sentinel standard

For the current APT, the Agency should normally send the Access Notice through COHO and by email at the same time. COHO provides the tenancy-management audit trail and email provides an additional clear service record. Where email is unavailable, use another method permitted by the applicable agreement and record why.

For older tenancy agreements and signed legacy addenda, use the service methods in those documents. Where there is uncertainty, escalate before relying on platform-only service.

#### Common parts of a room-only HMO

Under the current Sentinel APT, Shared Areas do not form part of the accommodation over which a room Tenant has exclusive possession. The Landlord, Agent and authorised persons may enter Shared Areas at reasonable times for lawful management, inspection, cleaning, repair, maintenance, safety or compliance without the individual Tenant's consent.

- Give reasonable courtesy notification where practicable for planned works, lengthy attendance, intrusive works or unfamiliar contractors.
- Courtesy notification is not a request for each occupier's consent and does not require acknowledgement.



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- Do not represent shared-area access as authority to enter any private room.

### REQUIRED ACCESS NOTICE CONTENT

Every private-area Access Notice must, so far as reasonably practicable, identify:

- the Property address and, for an HMO, the affected room where private-room access is required;
- the date of the proposed visit;
- the approximate time or reasonable time window;
- the purpose of the visit;
- whether entry may be made by Sentinel Lettings, the Landlord, an authorised contractor or another authorised person;
- the relevant scope where this is not obvious from the purpose;
- any planned photography, video, testing, meter reading or inventory activity where relevant; and
- how the Tenant can object, request a reasonable alternative or notify the Agency of a withdrawal/variation of standing permission.

### WHICH MESSAGE TEMPLATE TO USE

| Situation                              | Template / action                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SP-APT or SP-ADDENDUM confirmed active | Use Template A – Standing Permission Access Notice. No separate acknowledgement is required unless the Tenant objects, rearranges or withdraws/varies permission. |
| SPECIFIC ONLY / UNKNOWN / WITHDRAWN    | Use Template B – Specific Permission Required. Do not say that silence permits key entry.                                                                         |
| Shared Areas only in a room-only HMO   | Courtesy notification where reasonably practicable. No individual consent required for reasonable lawful management access.                                       |
| Genuine emergency                      | Emergency procedure. No prior notice or further consent required where immediate entry is reasonably necessary.                                                   |



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### CLASSIFYING THE TENANT'S RESPONSE

| Tenant response            | If standing permission ACTIVE                                                                                                                                                      | If no standing permission / withdrawn                                                                                          |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| No response                | If notice is valid and no objection/rearrangement/withdrawal is recorded, the visit may proceed and a management key may be used within the agreed scope after knock/announcement. | Notice may still be validly served, but key access is unconfirmed. Attend and knock only; do not unlock private accommodation. |
| "Received" / "noted"       | Acknowledgement only; no further confirmation is required because standing permission already exists.                                                                              | Acknowledgement only; ask whether the Tenant will admit the attendee or specifically authorises key use.                       |
| "I will be there"          | Proceed. If the Tenant is unexpectedly absent, key use may still take place if the Access Notice stated that this may occur and standing permission remains active.                | Attend and seek admission. This message alone does not authorise key use if the Tenant is absent.                              |
| "Use the management key"   | Specific permission confirms the standing position. Record it.                                                                                                                     | Specific key authority for that visit, provided date/time/purpose/scope are clear.                                             |
| Alternative time requested | Consider whether reasonable. Do not proceed with the original appointment if the Tenant has reasonably objected/rearranged.                                                        | Same. Agree access and issue an updated notice/confirmation where necessary.                                                   |
| "Do not enter"             | Do not enter private accommodation. Treat as a specific refusal and assess whether it also withdraws standing permission.                                                          | Do not enter. Record and follow escalation.                                                                                    |
| "Do not use a key again"   | Treat as withdrawal/variation. Update the tenancy record immediately.                                                                                                              | Record the instruction.                                                                                                        |
| Tenant opens the door      | Actual admission. Briefly confirm purpose/scope before proceeding.                                                                                                                 | Actual admission. Briefly confirm purpose/scope before proceeding.                                                             |

#### Wording agents must understand

Do not say "24 hours' notice itself gives us permission." The correct standing-permission explanation is: "Your signed tenancy/addendum already gives continuing permission on the agreed terms. This Access Notice tells you when, why and by whom that permission is proposed to be exercised. You may reasonably object, rearrange or withdraw/limit that permission."

**Important:** There may be tenants not signed up to the new APT or addendum with the standing



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permission clause. Never assume and check the APT or addendum the tenant has signed up to.

### ATTENDANCE AND ENTRY PROCEDURE

#### Before travelling

- Confirm the exact private/common area and purpose.
- Confirm Access Authority Status in COHO and verify the supporting signed APT or addendum where relevant.
- Confirm the notice method, date/time sent and that the minimum notice period has been met.
- Check all Tenant responses, including any objection, rearrangement, withdrawal or accessibility requirement.
- Confirm attendee identity and tell any contractor the permitted scope and entry basis.
- Check vulnerability, safeguarding, pet, alarm, lone-working or reasonable-adjustment information.
- Do not issue a management key to a contractor unless the job record states the lawful/contractual entry basis.

#### On arrival

- Attend within the notified/agreed window, carry identification and behave discreetly.
- Knock or ring, announce Sentinel/contractor and the purpose, wait a reasonable period and repeat once where appropriate.
- If the Tenant answers, confirm the purpose and scope before entering.
- If nobody answers and standing permission is active, confirm there is no objection/withdrawal recorded, knock/announce again, then use the management key only within the notified scope.
- If nobody answers and standing permission is not active, do not unlock private accommodation. Leave an attendance message and record failed access.
- If a chain, bolt, obstruction or occupier's express objection indicates entry is not presently permitted, stop. Do not bypass it unless a genuine emergency or specific lawful authority applies.
- Carry out only the notified work, secure the Property on leaving and record arrival, entry basis, attendees, areas entered, work done, photographs taken and departure.

#### Withdrawal at or before attendance

A Tenant may withdraw or vary standing permission before or at attendance. A clear written withdrawal must be actioned immediately. A clear verbal instruction at the door must also be respected for that attendance and recorded; agents should ask the Tenant to confirm it in writing afterwards so the tenancy record can be updated.



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Withdrawal does not remove any contractual or statutory obligation on the Tenant to allow reasonable access. Where access is being unreasonably withheld, use the escalation process rather than self-help entry.

### PROHIBITED CONDUCT

- forcing, pushing past or intimidating an occupier;
- bypassing or breaking a chain, bolt, lock or security device merely to complete a routine visit;
- entering through an unlocked door or window merely because it is open;
- using a management key where the only basis is that notice was sent and no standing/specific permission exists;
- entering an additional private room not covered by the notice or permission;
- remaining after permission is withdrawn or the occupier asks the attendee to leave, except so far as reasonably necessary in a genuine emergency or under specific lawful authority;
- repeated attendance designed to pressure the Tenant rather than secure lawful access;
- telling a Tenant that “silence equals consent”.

### PROCEDURES BY TYPE OF ACCESS

#### REMEMBER!

Operationally, regardless of whether Access Notice has been previously served, it will be sent again the day before the visit. This is to serve both as a reminder to tenants but also to capture any new tenants who have since moved in and missed the first Access Notice.

#### Routine inspections

- Serve at least 24 hours' written notice for a whole dwelling or private HMO room.
- Where standing permission is active, no separate acknowledgement is required. If there is no response, the agent may proceed and use the management key after knocking/announcing, provided no objection/withdrawal is recorded.
- Where standing permission is not active, specific permission is required for management-key use if the Tenant will be absent.
- A reminder may be sent but does not replace valid notice.
- Inspections must be visual and proportionate unless invasive investigation has been separately explained and agreed or is otherwise lawfully justified.

#### Repairs and maintenance



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- A repair report does not itself create permission. Apply the standing-permission status and notice rules.
- For non-emergency visits with less than 24 hours' notice, obtain express agreement to the shorter notice period.
- Tell the contractor exactly which area is authorised and whether standing or specific key authority exists.
- If another private room becomes necessary, stop and contact the Agency. Obtain specific permission or serve a fresh Access Notice unless a genuine emergency applies.
- Do not book a chargeable visit on assumed key access where the entry basis is not recorded.

### **Gas, electrical, fire and other statutory safety checks**

- Give clear written notice stating the safety/compliance purpose and plan access early where a certificate or licence deadline applies.
- Standing permission may be used in accordance with the signed APT/addendum, but an express refusal or withdrawal must not be overridden by routine self-help entry.
- Keep evidence of notices, messages, attendance, alternatives offered and any refusal.
- Where access is prevented and a deadline is at risk, notify the Landlord and a Director promptly and follow regulator guidance / legal advice.
- For gas safety, retain evidence of reasonable attempts and give the Tenant reasonable opportunities to arrange access.

### **Viewings, valuations, sale and mortgage visits**

- These are not emergencies.
- For the current APT, check that the purpose falls within clause 18.1. Prospective-tenant viewings are linked to notice intended to bring the Tenancy to an end; purchaser/valuer/surveyor visits are separately covered at reasonable times.
- Where standing permission is active and the purpose is within its scope, the Access Notice process may be used without separate acknowledgement.
- Where no standing permission exists, obtain specific key authority if the Tenant will be absent.
- Group viewings where reasonable and minimise disruption.
- If the Tenant expressly refuses or reasonably rearranges, do not force entry. Record and escalate if the refusal is unreasonable or persistent.

### **Check-in, check-out and inventory access**

- Arrange check-in and check-out appointments in writing and state the areas involved, attendees, photography, meter readings and key handover/reconciliation where relevant.
- For a room-only HMO, where a planned check-in, check-out or inventory attendance requires access only to Shared Areas and/or a room which is already vacant and no



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longer in an outgoing Tenant's possession, give the current occupiers a **house-wide courtesy notification** where reasonably practicable.

- For planned check-ins and check-outs, the Agency should normally give the house-wide courtesy notification at least 24 hours before attendance where reasonably practicable. This is an Agency courtesy standard and does not convert Shared-Area access into a request for Tenant consent.
- The house-wide courtesy notification is for information only. **Individual Tenant consent, confirmation or acknowledgement is not required**, and the attendance may proceed if no occupier replies.
- The courtesy notification should state the date, approximate time or reasonable time window, purpose of the attendance, who will attend and whether photography, inventory activity or meter readings will take place in the Shared Areas.
- A house-wide courtesy notification does not authorise entry into any Tenant's private room, ensuite or other exclusive-use area.
- Before an outgoing tenancy has legally ended or possession of the room has clearly been returned, entry into the outgoing Tenant's private room remains private entry. Apply the applicable standing-permission / specific-permission rules. A house-wide courtesy notification is not a substitute for the required private-room access process.
- Where the outgoing Tenant is present at an agreed check-out appointment and provides access to their room, separate management-key authority is not required for that attendance.
- After the tenancy has legally ended and possession has clearly been returned, the Agency may enter the former Tenant's room for check-out, inventory, cleaning, repairs and turnaround without obtaining further permission or acknowledgement from the former Tenant. If occupation appears to continue or there is reasonable doubt that possession has been returned, stop and obtain advice.
- An incoming Tenant must not be allowed into the room or whole Property before their right to occupy begins where doing so would interfere with an outgoing occupier's rights.

### Planned access to HMO Shared Areas

- Shared Areas may be accessed at reasonable times for genuine lawful management purposes without individual Tenant consent where those areas are retained by the Landlord and are not included within a Tenant's exclusive possession.
- Genuine management purposes include planned check-ins, check-outs, inventories, cleaning, maintenance, repairs, inspections, meter readings, safety and compliance activity and other reasonable property-management attendance.
- Give a house-wide courtesy notification where reasonably practicable for planned check-ins, check-outs, inventories, works, prolonged attendance or attendance by unfamiliar contractors or third parties.



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- **A house-wide courtesy notification is not an Access Notice for private accommodation, is not a request for permission and does not require acknowledgement.**
- Where the attendance is limited to Shared Areas, the Agency does not need to wait for occupiers to reply before attending.
- Do not enter a private room, ensuite or other exclusive-use area unless the applicable private-access rules are satisfied.
- Attendance must remain reasonable in its timing, frequency, noise, duration and conduct.





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| Access situation                                                               | Access Notice required?                         | Tenant acknowledgement required?    | Can Sentinel proceed without a reply?                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>HMO Shared Areas only</b> – kitchen, hallway, lounge, shared bathroom, etc. | <b>No</b> – courtesy notification recommended   | <b>No</b>                           | <b>Yes</b>                                                               |
| <b>HMO check-in/check-out</b> – Shared Areas only                              | <b>No</b> – courtesy notification recommended   | <b>No</b>                           | <b>Yes</b>                                                               |
| <b>Vacant HMO room after previous tenancy has ended</b>                        | <b>No</b> – courtesy notification recommended   | <b>No</b>                           | <b>Yes</b>                                                               |
| <b>Current APT with active Standing Permission</b>                             | <b>Yes</b> – normally minimum 24 hours          | <b>No</b>                           | <b>Yes</b> , provided there is no objection, rearrangement or withdrawal |
| <b>Signed Access Addendum giving Standing Permission</b>                       | <b>Yes</b> – normally minimum 24 hours          | <b>No</b>                           | <b>Yes</b> , within the scope of the addendum                            |
| <b>Private room – old NRLA APT / no Standing Permission</b>                    | <b>Yes</b> – minimum 24 hours for routine entry | <b>Yes</b>                          | <b>No</b>                                                                |
| <b>Private room – access status unknown</b>                                    | <b>Yes</b>                                      | <b>Yes</b>                          | <b>No</b>                                                                |
| <b>Tenant has withdrawn/limited Standing Permission</b>                        | <b>Yes</b>                                      | <b>Specific permission required</b> | <b>No</b>                                                                |
| <b>Less than 24 hours' notice for routine private access</b>                   | Shorter notice can only be used by agreement    | <b>Yes</b>                          | <b>No</b>                                                                |
| <b>Genuine emergency</b>                                                       | <b>No</b>                                       | <b>No</b>                           | <b>Yes</b>                                                               |



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### **SHORT-NOTICE ACCESS**

Where less than 24 hours' notice is proposed and there is no genuine emergency, obtain the affected Tenant's express agreement to the shorter notice period. Standing permission does not, by itself, waive the 24-hour notice requirement. If standing permission is not active and the Tenant will be absent, also obtain specific management-key authority. Record the agreement.

### **EMERGENCY ACCESS**

Immediate entry without notice or further consent may be made where there are reasonable grounds to believe it is necessary to deal with a genuine emergency, including suspected gas escape, active fire or smoke, major uncontrolled escape of water, serious electrical danger, structural danger, serious loss of security or a credible welfare emergency involving immediate risk.

- Knock and announce first where safe and practicable.
- Limit entry and any forced action to what is reasonably necessary to investigate, make safe or assist emergency services.
- Where practicable use two attendees or an independent witness. Any body-worn or other recording must comply with the Agency's privacy/data-protection controls.
- Notify the Tenant as soon as reasonably practicable afterwards and record why entry was necessary, who entered, what was done and any damage/securing work.
- Convenience, contractor availability, an expiring appointment or a compliance deadline does not by itself create an emergency.

### **LOCAL AUTHORITY, EMERGENCY-SERVICE AND OTHER STATUTORY ACCESS**

- Verify identification, written notice, warrant, order or other authority and record its scope.
- A statutory officer's power belongs to that officer and must not be treated as a general Agency power to force entry.
- Where a court order or statutory notice is relied upon, follow its exact wording. Obtain legal advice before assuming it authorises Agency key entry, locksmith use or force where the Tenant objects.

### **LIMITED PURPOSE, PRIVACY AND PHOTOGRAPHY**

- Entry must be limited to the notified/authorised purpose, area and attendees.



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- Photographs/video must be necessary, proportionate and relevant to condition, repair, safety, compliance, inventory, meter, key or evidence requirements.
- Avoid capturing people, identity documents, medication, financial information, personal correspondence or unrelated belongings where reasonably possible.
- Do not comment on lifestyle or personal arrangements unless directly relevant to a tenancy, legal, safety, fire, pest, repair, damage, safeguarding or nuisance concern.
- A maintenance visit must not be turned into a general inspection unless the inspection was also properly notified/authorised or an immediate safety issue reasonably requires action.

### FAILED OR REFUSED ACCESS

A Tenant may have a contractual or regulatory duty to provide reasonable access. Refusal can be serious, particularly for repairs and safety checks, but must be managed through evidence and lawful escalation. Never pass the threshold, even with one foot if access is declined.

| Stage                                 | Action                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. First failed access                | Record notice, standing-permission status, response, attendance, reason and evidence. Send a neutral follow-up and offer reasonable alternatives where practicable.      |
| 2. Repeat failure/refusal             | Explain why access is required, identify the relevant tenancy/safety obligation, ask about barriers or reasonable adjustments, and set a clear response deadline.        |
| 3. Safety/compliance deadline at risk | Notify the Landlord and a Director immediately. Follow relevant regulator guidance, keep evidence of reasonable steps and obtain legal advice where required.            |
| 4. Persistent refusal                 | The Landlord may be advised to consider available possession ground or another lawful remedy on case-specific legal advice.                                              |
| 5. Costs                              | Only reasonable, evidenced direct loss should be considered, and only to the extent recoverable under the tenancy and law. Do not impose a fixed access-refusal penalty. |
| 6. No forced entry                    | A breach warning or access obligation does not itself authorise agents to force entry. A court order must be followed exactly.                                           |



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### CONTRACTOR AND MANAGEMENT-KEY CONTROLS

- Management keys, codes and key-safe information are controlled Agency assets and may only be released where the job record identifies the entry basis.
- The job/task must state one of: Shared Areas; SP-APT; SP-ADDENDUM; Specific Permission; Emergency; or Other Lawful Authority.
- Contractors must be told to knock/announce, remain within the notified scope, stop if an occupier objects, and contact the Agency if unexpected private access is required.
- Possession of a key does not itself authorise entry.
- Keys must be returned promptly and must not be tagged externally with the full Property address.

### RECORD KEEPING

For every private-access visit, record in COHO or the relevant tenancy record:

- tenancy type and Access Authority Status;
- supporting APT/addendum and date/signature status where relevant;
- purpose and exact scope of access;
- notice wording, method, date/time sent and any service calculation used;
- Tenant responses, objections, rearrangements, accessibility issues and any withdrawal/variation;
- attendee identity and whether a management key/code was issued;
- arrival, entry basis, areas entered, work done, photographs/video taken, departure and securing of the Property;
- failed-access costs or legal escalation, where applicable.

### STANDARD MESSAGE TEMPLATES

#### Template A – Standing Permission Access Notice

**Use only where SP-APT or SP-ADDENDUM is verified active**

This is the standard Sentinel wording where the Tenant has already granted continuing permission and has not withdrawn or varied it. It must not be used for SPECIFIC ONLY, WITHDRAWN or UNKNOWN status.

Subject: ACCESS NOTICE – [PROPERTY ADDRESS / ROOM NUMBER]



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Dear [Tenant Name],

This is formal notice that we require access to [Property address / Room number] on [date] between approximately [start time] and [end time].

Purpose of visit: [routine inspection / repair / maintenance / gas safety inspection / EICR / fire risk assessment / fire-safety inspection / council inspection / valuation / viewing / other – specify].

Attending: [Sentinel Lettings / contractor name / engineer / local authority officer / other authorised person].

This notice is being given in accordance with the access provisions of your Tenancy Agreement and provides at least the required notice before entry.

You do not need to be present for the appointment.

Unless we hear from you before the appointment, Sentinel Lettings and/or the authorised person attending will proceed with the visit and may use our management keys or access codes to enter the Property or your room if you are not present.

You do not need to separately confirm the appointment.

If the proposed date or time is not suitable, you may reasonably refuse access on that occasion or request an alternative date or time.

Please notify us as soon as possible through COHO and suggest a reasonable alternative.

Please note that access must not be unreasonably refused, obstructed or repeatedly delayed where it is required for repairs, maintenance, inspection, safety or statutory compliance.

Where the visit relates to a compliance deadline or safety requirement, any alternative appointment must allow sufficient time for the Landlord or Agent to meet that obligation.

If you have previously withdrawn the standing access permission contained in your Tenancy Agreement, please notify us immediately so that specific access arrangements can be agreed.



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Kind regards,

Sentinel Lettings



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### Template B – Specific Permission Required

**Use where there is no active standing permission**

This applies to SPECIFIC ONLY, WITHDRAWN or UNKNOWN status. The Tenant's silence does not authorise management-key entry.

Subject: ACCESS NOTICE – [PROPERTY ADDRESS / ROOM NUMBER]

Dear [Tenant Name],

This is formal notice that we require access to [Property address / Room number] on [date] between approximately [start time] and [end time].

Purpose of visit: [routine inspection / repair / maintenance / gas safety inspection / EICR / fire risk assessment / fire-safety inspection / council inspection / valuation / viewing / other – specify].

Attending: [Sentinel Lettings / contractor name / engineer / local authority officer / other authorised person].

This notice provides at least the required notice before the proposed visit.

Please reply through COHO to confirm one of the following:

1. you will be present and will provide access;
2. you give Sentinel Lettings and/or the authorised person permission to use our management key or access code if you are not present; or
3. the proposed date or time is not suitable, in which case please suggest a reasonable alternative.

If we do not receive specific permission to use a management key and you are not present, we may attend and knock at the notified time, but we will not use a management key to enter your private accommodation unless a genuine emergency or another lawful authority applies.

Access must not be unreasonably refused, obstructed or repeatedly delayed where it is required for repairs, maintenance, inspection, safety or statutory compliance.

Where the visit relates to a compliance deadline or safety requirement, any



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alternative appointment should allow sufficient time for the Landlord or Agent to meet that obligation.

Kind regards,

Sentinel Lettings





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### LANDLORD AND CONTRACTOR ACCESS REQUEST WORDING

When a Landlord or contractor requests attendance and the scope is not clear, agents should ask:

#### Internal message

“Can you please confirm whether access is required to communal/shared areas only, or whether access to any private rooms is required? If private-room access is required, please confirm which room or rooms, the reason for access, the preferred date/time window, and who will attend.”

This confirmation must be recorded before the Access Notice is issued.

### CHANGING LOCKS IN CONNECTION WITH ACCESS

- Do not disable, alter or remove a lock as a means of overcoming a Tenant's refusal of routine access.
- Legitimate repair or security-related lock changes may be arranged where lawful and reasonably necessary, provided the Tenant's continued access and security are protected and replacement keys/access devices are provided as appropriate.
- Any unusual or disputed lock change must be escalated to a Director before work is authorised.

### POLICY REVIEW AND ESCALATION

This Access Policy is reviewed at least annually and whenever there is a material change in legislation, regulation, the Sentinel APT/addendum, licence conditions or relevant legal advice.

Where there is uncertainty about a court order, express Tenant refusal, alleged harassment, forced entry, safeguarding, a vulnerable Tenant, or a safety deadline that cannot be met because access is withheld, agents must escalate to a Director and obtain legal advice where appropriate.



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## **LOCKED OUT AND KEY POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

This section outlines procedures and responsibilities where Tenants lose keys, compromise access devices or become locked out of a Property managed by Sentinel Lettings. It is intended to protect Tenant safety, Property security and clear financial/operational responsibilities.

### **TENANT RESPONSIBILITY**

Tenants are responsible for the safe keeping and return of all keys and access devices provided at the start of the tenancy, including front/back door keys, room keys, communal entry fobs, mailbox keys, window keys, alarm fobs, gate remotes and garage remotes.

### **PROVISION OF KEYS AT CHECK-IN**

- One set of keys/access fobs will normally be provided per tenancy unless otherwise agreed or the Agency decides more are appropriate to the tenancy arrangement.
- Where there is more than one named Tenant, additional copies may be requested through COHO. No additional key/access device may be cut, copied, programmed or ordered without prior written consent.
- Where an additional key is authorised, the default position is that the Tenant arranges and pays the upfront cost unless another arrangement is confirmed in writing.
- The Landlord may reimburse the reasonable like-for-like cost of authorised additional keys for named Tenants, up to the number of named Tenants, where approval was given in advance and a valid receipt is supplied.
- Permitted Occupiers are not Tenants and are not automatically entitled to reimbursement for additional keys, although reasonable permission requests will be considered.
- The Agency will retain one management set where available for emergencies, maintenance, inspections, compliance and lawful access arrangements. Use of that set is governed by the Access Policy above.



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- The check-in record/inventory must record the number/type of keys and access devices issued and any authorised duplicates.

### KEYSAFE

- For a single let, Tenant keys should be left inside the Property in the agreed secure location at handover; Agency keys should be retained in the Property key safe where available or at the Agency's secure key storage.
- For an HMO, Tenant room keys should be left inside the bedroom at handover and the room secured (unless otherwise agreed); Agency management keys should be retained in the Property key safe or other authorised secure storage.
- Keys must be tagged with the Agency's unique key code, not the full Property address.
- Key-safe codes are for authorised Agency, contractor and emergency use only unless the Agency expressly agrees otherwise.

### COPYING OF KEYS

- Tenants must not cut, duplicate, program, replace, lend or allow copies of keys/access devices without prior written consent.
- This applies to copies for named Tenants, Permitted Occupiers, guests, family, cleaners, carers or contractors.
- Unauthorised copying or distribution may be treated as a tenancy breach where appropriate.
- Where unauthorised copying/distribution causes a genuine security risk or actual loss, the Landlord/Agency may seek the reasonable evidenced cost actually incurred for replacement, reprogramming or lock changes to the extent permitted by the tenancy and law.
- Keys/access devices must not be given to third parties in a way that compromises Property security or another occupier's quiet enjoyment.



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### KEY RECORDS AND AUDIT

- Maintain a log of keys/access devices issued, with dates and Tenant acknowledgement where practicable.
- Update records where authorised additional copies are made during the tenancy.
- At check-out, reconcile all keys/fobs/remotes/access devices against the check-in record and record missing items.
- Any claim for missing keys, reprogramming or lock changes must reflect reasonable evidenced loss actually incurred and must not be recovered twice.

### LOST OR MISPLACED KEYS — WORKING HOURS

- The Tenant may contact the Agency to ask whether an agent is nearby and able to assist. Assistance is not guaranteed.
- If the Tenant requests Agency key collection/delivery, any charge must be communicated and must be permitted by the tenancy, applicable law and listed on the [Tenant Fee Schedule](#).
- Where the Tenant needs a replacement key, the Tenant should normally arrange and pay the reasonable replacement cost and return/replace any Agency spare as required.
- If no spare key is held, the Tenant will normally be advised to contact a reputable locksmith directly.
- If a lock is changed because of the Tenant's lost/compromised key, the Agency must be provided with the required management copy promptly, subject to the tenancy and security arrangements.

### LOCKOUTS OUTSIDE OFFICE HOURS

- The Agency does not guarantee emergency attendance for lockouts.
- The Tenant is normally responsible for arranging access through a professional locksmith.
- If avoidable damage is caused by forced entry or misuse, the Tenant may be responsible for reasonable evidenced repair/security costs to the extent permitted by law.



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### REPEATED LOSS OR COMPROMISED KEYS

- Repeated loss may be treated as a tenancy-management or security issue where it creates genuine risk or disruption.
- Where a full lock change is reasonably necessary because of Tenant default, the reasonable evidenced cost may be sought from the Tenant to the extent permitted by law.

### AGENCY ASSISTANCE CHARGES

Where the Agency provides an optional key-delivery or attendance service and a charge is lawfully recoverable, the current Agency charge is £50 per hour subject to a minimum of one hour, excluding replacement-key/locksmith costs. Travelling time may be included where this has been clearly communicated and is lawfully chargeable. The default position remains for the Tenant to arrange a locksmith who invoices the Tenant directly.

### VULNERABLE TENANTS

- Prioritise communication and do what is reasonably practicable to assist within working hours.
- If a Tenant appears to be at immediate risk, consider whether emergency services, safeguarding support or an urgent locksmith is more appropriate than routine Agency assistance.
- Any costs must be handled fairly, transparently and only where lawfully recoverable.

### FOLLOW-UP AND END OF TENANCY

- Record the outcome of any lockout/key incident on COHO.
- All keys, fobs, remotes and access items issued at the start of the tenancy, together with authorised duplicates known to the Agency, must be returned by the end of the tenancy unless otherwise agreed.
- End-of-tenancy claims for missing keys/access devices must be assessed under the tenancy, any deposit/deposit-alternative process, and the requirement for reasonable evidenced loss.
- Fair wear and tear does not apply to a missing key, but every monetary claim must still be reasonable, evidenced and not duplicated.



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- Where keys are lost or compromised through a reported break-in/crime, request the crime reference where available and assess the outcome fairly with the Landlord.

### REVIEW

The Locked Out and Key Policy is reviewed annually or on a material change in legislation, tenancy terms, fee rules, security arrangements or Agency procedure.

#### Legal review note

This is an operational policy. It must be read with the signed tenancy/addendum and any property-specific licence conditions. Where the contractual position or legal authority for disputed entry is unclear, the default is to stop private entry and escalate rather than infer a power that is not recorded.