

Absence from your property

May 2015

Introduction

If you are planning to be away from your property this guide explains how that might affect your tenancy.

This guide explains the Group policy that applies to all rented tenants with:

- Southern Housing Group Ltd and
- Southern Housing Home Ownership Ltd.

However tenancy agreements can vary so you should always refer to your tenancy agreement as well.

Why do I need to let you know if I'm going to be absent from my home?

It's a term of your tenancy that you occupy the property as your only or 'principle' home and that if you are absent more than a certain number of weeks you must tell us.

So, if you go away for a long time without telling us we might think that you:

- have abandoned your property and don't intend to return
- have breached your tenancy by not using it as your only home
- could be unlawfully subletting your property to other people

In any of these cases we will take steps to recover possession of the property.

When should I let you know?

It's always a good idea to let us know if intend to be away for more than a normal holiday period of two or three weeks. But under the terms of your tenancy you must let us know if you plan to be away from your home for more

than six weeks (some tenancies may specify a shorter period) and you should give us the names of any people that might be living at or looking after the property while you are away.

How long can I stay away?

The Group has a responsibility to ensure that its properties are occupied and in use where possible. But if your reasons are genuine then we will consider approving an absence for up to 12 months. However we reserve the right to refuse or limit the approval to a shorter period.

What do I need to let you know?

You will need to contact us by phone, email or in writing to let us know that you are planning on going away. We will need to know:

- your reasons for going away
- how long you plan to be away for
- how we can contact you directly whilst you are away in case there is a problem
- if anyone will be looking after the property whilst you are away
- how the rent will be paid whilst you are away (your right to claim housing benefit may be affected)
- that you will continue to treat it as your main home and that you intend to return.

We will then review these details and let you know in writing if we are approving or refusing your request.

can be found on our webpage, on our Information Card or in Open Door- your residents' newsletter.

Can you stop me from leaving the property?

If we feel we should refuse your request then we will write to you to tell you why. If possible we will try to agree alternative, acceptable arrangements with you.

But if you still go away against our advice then we certainly can't stop you leaving. But your actions might cause a breach of your tenancy (and also affect your security of tenure) and then we would consider taking action to recover possession.

Reasons for absence

We treat each request on a case-by-case basis but the kinds of requests we are likely to approve are where residents need to visit family for long periods or where the absence is required for work or study.

What if I don't let you know?

If you don't let us know that you will be absent from your property then we will investigate. In the absence of any other information we may conclude that you have abandoned the property and will therefore take appropriate action to end your tenancy and dispose of any items in the property.

If you can't tell us in advance, perhaps you fall ill and need to be away from the property for

treatment or to recover, then try get family, friends or the medical organisation to let us know within the first six weeks. We will make a note on our system and keep in touch with them until you return or we feel the arrangement needs to be reviewed.

Detained in prison or on remand

If you have been detained or are serving a prison sentence then you need to let us know the details – just the same as for any other absence. Your probation officer may assist you to do this.

However the Group may decide that the reasons for your detention or prison sentence mean that you are in serious breach of your tenancy and we will seek a Court Order for possession if you do not terminate your tenancy first.

You must seek independent legal advice if you are at all unsure of your rights in this situation.

Further information

If you would like any more information on this or any of our policies or services please contact our customer service centre or go to our website www.shgroup.org.uk. If you live in a supported housing scheme on the Isle of Wight you can also speak to your local Housing Officer. Contact details can be found on our web pages, on your Information Card or in Open Door - your residents' newsletter.

For help with translations, or if a large type, Braille or taped summary would be useful, contact the Service Centre.

Arabic	لتلقي المساعدة في الحصول على نسخ مترجمة أو إذا كان من المفيد بالنسبة لكم تلقي نسخة مطبوعة بطباعة مكبرة، أو بطريقة برايل للمكفوفين، أو مسجلة كملخصات على شريط تسجيل صوتي، فيرجى الاتصال بمركز الخدمة .Service Centre
Bengali	অনুবাদে সাহায্য পেতে হলে অথবা বড় অক্ষর, ব্রেইল অথবা টেপে রেকর্ডকৃত সারসংক্ষেপ শুনতে চাইলে সার্ভিস সেন্টারকে 0300 303 1682 নাম্বারে ফোন করুন।
French	Contactez le Centre de services pour obtenir de l'aide sur les traductions, ou si un résumé en gros caractères, en Braille ou enregistré s'avère nécessaire.
Somali	Si lagaaga caawiyo turjumista ama haddii aad jeclaan lahayd farta waaweyn, farta indhoolayaasha (Braille) ama warbixin kooban oo cajilad ku duuban, la xiriir Xarunta Adeegga.
Spanish	Si necesita traducciones o resúmenes en letra grande, Braille o casete, póngase en contacto con el Centro de Servicios.
Turkish	Tercüme konusunda yardım için, veya iri puntolu, Braille körler alfabesi ile yazılmış ya da ses kaydı olarak bir özet isterseniz, 0300 303 1683'ten Hizmet Merkezi'ni arayın.