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## Master Key and Access to your Home

### What is a master key?

It is a key, belonging to Hanover, which is intended to give access to all residents' homes and the communal areas on an estate. The key is held securely in a key safe at the estate and only Hanover staff and Hanover on Call (our emergency response service) can access the safe. In an emergency, Hanover on Call can grant access to the master key to the Emergency Services.

The estate manager does not carry the master key around and daily checks are carried out to ensure the safety and security of the key.

### Can I fit my own lock or chain?

You can choose to fit additional locks or chains to your front door but **Estate Managers will not hold any keys in addition to the master key.** You should consider that additional locks may delay access in an emergency and that if entry needs to be forced, you would be asked to pay for the cost of repairing any damage.

**No-one should ever enter your home uninvited unless it is in response to an emergency.**

### When can the master key be used?

1. In an emergency situation, for example:
  - flooding, fire, explosion or other emergency causing damage to the property
  - if access is required by the Emergency Services or other statutory authority e.g. National Grid for a gas escape
  - if a resident pulls the emergency cord following an accident or sudden illness and is unable to open the door independently
  - If a resident pulls the emergency cord but there is no answer

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- If a resident fails to respond to an agreed daily alarm call or if there is genuine concern for the wellbeing of the resident and all other attempts to contact the resident have failed
  - if you repeatedly fail to provide us with access for the annual gas safety check

**2. In exceptional circumstances:**

- If a resident has locked themselves out
- If access is required by court order
- Following the death of a resident, if access is required by an Executor or Administrator upon proof of status and identity
- Other exceptional circumstances with the agreement of your Housing Manager

**3. Non emergency resident agreed use – confirmed in a Master Key Access Agreement**

**Whilst Hanover would normally expect residents to make their own arrangements for contractors to carry out work or servicing in their homes, we recognise that there may be times when it might be impossible for residents to arrange access e.g. holidays; work commitments; hospitalisation or medical commitments.**

On all estates with master keys, Estate Managers will normally be able to offer most residents an Access Agreement with a menu of options to choose from relating to non-emergency access to their property.

It may not be possible to offer some residents a full range of access options if the Estate Manager believes that there may be some risks associated with accessing a resident's property using the master key. Examples of such risks might include:

- Residents with mental capacity or mental health issues
- Residents with unmanageable pet/s

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- Condition of the property
  - Unresolved complaints or previous complaint
  - Breakdown of communications
  - Threat or incident of violence or abuse

Some options might not be available on certain estates, particularly those where there is no Estate Manager or a restricted Estate Manager Service. In these cases, certain options will be crossed out. (The section relating to tenancy termination will only be discussed when a tenancy termination has been notified.)

There may be times when it will not be possible for the Estate Manager to provide the access option described in the Access Agreement. Estate Managers will try and assist with access arrangements but only when they are on the estate and are able to do so. You should always discuss specific access requirements with your Estate Manager. Please do not assume that just because you have signed an Access Agreement the Estate Manager will automatically be in a position to assist you.

**A copy of the Access Agreement is attached to this help sheet. Conditions of Access are detailed on the reverse of the Access Agreement.**

### **Frail residents who are unable to open their front doors**

Estate staff are not permitted to use the master key when routinely visiting frail or disabled residents who are unable to open their front doors.

If you have difficulty answering your door to carers or other visitors (including your Estate Manager), you might want to consider installing an individual key safe by your front door. Alternatively there may be aids and adaptations e.g. remote door openers, which could help you. Please speak to your Estate Manager.

**Please note that the master key can never be used to provide access for family members.**

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## Master Key – Access Agreement

Property Address: .....

Hanover has the right to gain access to your home to undertake statutory and legal obligations. These are referred to in your tenancy agreement or lease and relate to emergency situations which need immediate action e.g. fire, explosion, flooding, major accidents/incidents etc. It will also be considered as an emergency if you repeatedly fail to provide us with access for the annual gas safety check.

However, Hanover holds a master key to your property and with your agreement Hanover staff may also be able to provide access to your home in certain other specific circumstances e.g. personal accident or illness, essential servicing or non-emergency repairs; alternatively you may not want Hanover staff to access your home at all.

Please consider the following menu of options and indicate your choice/s with a tick  in the appropriate box/s.

1. No non-emergency access whatsoever

**OR**

2. Access for personal wellbeing concerns if all other Reasonable attempts to contact you have failed

3. Access for essential servicing e.g. gas safety check, warden call alarm check

4. Access for non-emergency repairs and major works e.g. day to day repairs, major works etc.

5. **Pre-termination – applies to rented properties only:**

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## Access for accompanied viewings and tenancy checks

For conditions of access, please see details overleaf.

Signed: .....

Name: .....

Date: .....

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## Conditions of Access

Estate Managers will try to implement this Agreement as long as there are no assessed risks. Assessed risks might include: residents with capacity issues or other mental health issues; residents with unmanageable pet/s; condition of property; unresolved complaints or previous complaint; breakdown of communications, etc. If this is the case, your Estate Manager will explain why an Access Agreement or certain sections of the Agreement would not be appropriate.

Please be aware that there may be times when it will not be possible for Estate Managers to provide the access options described in the Access Agreement. Estate Managers will try to assist with access arrangements but only when they are on the estate and able to do so.

- 1. No non-emergency access** – we would only access your home in an emergency situation which needed immediate action e.g. fire, explosion, flooding, major accidents/incidents etc., or if you repeatedly fail to provide us with access for the annual gas safety check.
- 2. Access for personal wellbeing concerns if all other reasonable attempts to contact you have failed** – we would enter your property, if possible with a witness, to ensure that you are well. If you are not there, we will always leave a note in the property advising that we have used the master key to access your property.
- 3. Access for essential servicing** e.g. gas safety check, warden call alarm check etc. Please be aware that:
  - Hanover staff will not remain present in the home for the whole visit
  - Estate staff will unlock and relock the property but there may be times when the property is left unlocked and unoccupied
  - The master key will not be given to the contractor
  - Servicing contractors are not routinely CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checked.
- 4. Access for non-emergency repairs and major works** e.g. Day to day repairs and also major works e.g. decorating contracts where doors

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or windows need to be left open; electrical rewiring; installation of new warden call system etc. Please be aware that:

- Hanover staff will not remain present in the home for the whole visit
- Estate staff will unlock and relock the property but there may be times when the property is left unlocked and unoccupied
- The master key will not be given to the contractor
- Repairs contractors are not routinely CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checked

**5. Pre-termination only: Access for accompanied viewings and tenancy checks**

Residents, Attorneys or Executors should be advised that:

- If the property contains personal possessions and/or furniture – estate staff will **always** accompany prospective new tenants at viewing and contractors during property checks and ensure that the property is securely locked on completion.

If the property is empty of personal possessions and furniture – estate staff will accompany prospective new tenants at viewings but for property checks, estate staff will only unlock and relock the property on completion of the check.