



Coronavirus (Covid 19) – Guidance for HMO Landlords

The purpose of this information leaflet is to provide information and guidance to all landlords of multi-occupied properties so that if necessary they can provide advice to tenants in line with government guidance, on what to do if they believe they or other occupiers, have possible coronavirus (Covid 19) infection.

A tenant must self isolate for at least 10 days if they have symptoms of coronavirus, (high temperature, a new or continuous cough or loss or change to sense of smell or taste. They must stay at home and make arrangements to have a test. All persons must isolate if they have tested positive for coronavirus or live with someone who has tested positive. Or if a person in their support bubble has symptoms or has tested positive. After 10 days if a person still has a fever they must continue to self-isolate. Any persons testing positive with no symptoms must self isolate for 10 days, if they develop symptoms during the 10 day period they must restart their 10 day isolation period from that point.

All other household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill (person self isolating for 10 days.) It is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.

All household members who remain well may end household-isolation after 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day illness began in the first person to become ill. Fourteen days is the incubation period for coronavirus; people who remain well after 14 days are unlikely to be infectious.

Further information is available from the Public Health England website, which will be updated as more information becomes available.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

During lockdown persons are being encouraged to work from home but you should be aware that for many occupiers engaged in manual labour this will not be possible and depending on their contractual arrangements they may also be at risk of losing income during this period which will affect their ability to pay rent.

Because of this you need to be aware that the government are bringing in emergency legislation to prevent private tenants from being evicted if they are unable to pay rent, and Landlords will not be able to commence eviction proceedings for three months. I am sure that the council do not need to remind landlords that eviction by any other means, other than through a court order is not lawful. The council will not hesitate to prosecute landlords who attempt to evict or harass tenants illegally.

If you are a mortgagor and your tenants are unable to pay rent during this time landlords are advised to contact their mortgage lender. Mortgage lenders have agreed to offer payment holidays of up to three months where required, this includes buy to let mortgages.

If you are renting to any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) they should be moved temporarily to stay with friends or family for the **duration of the Coronavirus lockdown period**. For vulnerable individuals that do not have anywhere else to go during this period the local authority may be able to assist with temporary accommodation **for these individuals only**. Please contact the licensing team if you require further information.

Tenants may continue to report disrepair to their landlords or agents in the first instance. Landlords still have an obligation to keep properties in good repair free from hazards. For the purposes of inspection or remedying urgent health and safety issues, landlords and contractors should work together with tenants to arrange access to the property in accord with government guidance on social distancing, and working safely. This could include (but not limited to) leaking roofs, boiler break downs (no heating or hot water) plumbing (affecting washing and toilet facilities) broken windows or damage to external doors. Electrical break downs, broken fridges or washing machines or breakdown or repairs required to equipment relied upon by a disabled person.

If you are not able to gain access to the property due to COVID-19 restrictions or are unable to engage a contractor to carry out the necessary work, we recommend that you document to do so and all correspondence with your tenants.

If the work is non-urgent where possible any repairs should be delayed until the end of the lockdown period.

If your tenants have to self-isolate, this will obviously be a difficult and stressful time so you should encourage them to plan ahead to help make it easier, this should include:

- Considering what they are going to need in order to be able to stay at home for the full 14 days
- talking to their employer, friends and family to ask for their help to access the things they will need to make their stay at home a success
- think about and plan how to get access to food and other supplies such as medications required during this period
- create a contact list with phone numbers of neighbours, schools, employer, chemist, NHS 111
- set up online shopping accounts if possible
- ask friends or family to drop off anything needed or order supplies online, but make sure these are left outside the home for them to collect
- make sure that they keep in touch with friends and family over the phone or through social media
- think about things they can do during your time at home. People who have successfully completed a period of staying at home have kept themselves busy with activities such as cooking, reading, online learning and watching films
- many people find it helpful to plan out the full 14 days, such as on a make-shift calendar. This could be useful for tenants to create cleaning or cooking rotas. (see below section on use of shared spaces)

Occupiers should be encouraged to plan in advance what they will do if, for example, someone in the household were to feel much worse, such as having difficulties breathing.

Please ensure that tenant information is updated to advise them that if anyone needs clinical advice, they should go online to NHS 111 (or call 111 if they don't have internet access). In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Advise them that they must not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

Use of shared spaces when individuals who live with others in HMO's are required to stay in their room

If someone is unwell, they should minimise visiting shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas as much as possible, and keep shared spaces well ventilated if possible. They should aim to keep 2 metres from other people and not share a bed with another person.

If toilet or bathroom facilities are shared, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected using regular cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

If a separate bathroom is not available, consideration should be given to drawing up a rota for washing or bathing, with the person who is unwell using the facilities last, before thoroughly cleaning the bathroom themselves (if they are able or it is appropriate).

A person who is unwell should use separate body and hand towels from other people. They should avoid using shared kitchens whilst others are present. They should take their meals back to their room to eat and use a dishwasher (if available) to clean and dry crockery and cutlery.

If you require any further advice or information please visit our website or contact the Property Licensing Team.

We have prepared a leaflet for your tenant's information that can also be down loaded and printed from this site

A NOTICE IS ENCLOSED FOR YOUR TENANT'S INFORMATION. PLEASE DISPLAY THIS IN YOUR HMO IN A PROMINENT PLACE AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.

Find out more:

Website https://www.havering.gov.uk/info/20060/information_for_landlords

Email landlordlicensing@havering.gov.uk

Telephone +441708 432006

Yours sincerely

Property Licensing Team
Private Housing & Environmental Health