

Safety in HMO's during the coronavirus outbreak – avoiding infection

Please note that this document is up to date as of the date shown in the title; please also regularly check your relevant [government sector guide](#) and the [recent and upcoming changes](#) web page.

If you are unsure on how to implement Covid Secure controls in your business or have any questions on the below guidance, please contact your local Environmental Health team at [your local council](#) for advice.

As a Landlords and Letting / Managing Agent of shared living accommodation or a house of multiple occupation (HMO) it is important that you protect yourself, your tenants, your staff (e.g. cleaners) and any other person(s) who may have to visit the property (e.g. health visitors or workmen carrying out essential repairs).

We are keen to assist you as much as we can, we hope by guiding you to some of latest advice and useful links, it will help you be clearer on what is required when providing privately rented accommodation. If you have any questions or require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The key messages regarding reducing health risks and spread of the disease in shared/supported living accommodation and HMOs remains:-

- Follow the latest Government advice. Three simple actions we must all now do to keep on protecting each other:-
 - ✓ *Wash hands - keep washing your hands regularly*
 - ✓ *Cover face - wear a face covering in enclosed spaces*
 - ✓ *Make space - stay at least 2 metres apart or 1 metre with a face covering or other precautions*

- Landlords and Letting / Managing Agents may wish to offer advice to your tenants/service users about any new announcements or changes the Government make to their advice and measures they are using suppress the virus and keep us safe in our homes. Everybody has a duty to help reduce the spread of the disease. New announcements can be found: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
 - ✓ Tenants must be encouraged to inform housemates if they think they have coronavirus symptoms or are self-isolating, as the whole household may need to self-isolate.
 - ✓ Tenants should also be strongly encouraged to download the NHS app, for track and track <https://www.covid19.nhs.uk/>
 - ✓ Tenants should also notify you, as the Landlords and Letting / Managing Agents, they have symptoms or test positive. This will enable you to take appropriate action in managing the property.
 - ✓ Tenants should be advised of the importance of following hygiene practices. Ventilating kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas that are shared as much as possible, the need to clean shared kitchens and bathrooms after each use by wiping surfaces you have come in contact with.

- Landlords and Lettings / Managing Agents should now have included a health and safety risk assessments, with particular regard to Covid-19, and developed and implemented a safe way of working regard their properties as part of their business considerations,
 - ✓ Having an implemented infectious disease (Coronavirus) risk assessment along with a cleaning protocol. This risk assessment would be similar to a fire risk assessment should a tenant have symptoms or test positive.
 - ✓ This might include having soap and/or sanitiser sent to the property with guidance for the tenants use, and providing a deep clean: should this be necessary (the landlord should bear the cost) and the thorough cleaning of properties between tenancies.
 - ✓ Landlords should sign post tenants/residents to be vigilant about keeping their homes disinfected
 - ✓ Cleaning advice : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>
- The government's temporary ban on evictions that was in place through the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown ended on Sunday 20 September. Courts can now grant landlords permission to proceed with evictions, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-sets-out-comprehensive-support-for-renters-this-winter>

If you would like further details, there is lots of information and advice available from the Government and other organisations.

Government Advice

The Government has produced 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Landlords and Tenants', covering matters around notices seeking possession and court action on possession, along with property access and health and safety obligations in rented properties.

This document includes a number of questions and answers covering a range of different topics.

- Guidance for landlords and tenants and technical guidance (updated on 21st September 20), to reflect new regulations, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-and-renting-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities>
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for accommodation providers (updated 7th July 20) - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-advice-for-accommodation-providers>
- working in other people's homes (updated 1 October 20) - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes>
- Should you require further Covid-19 Stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, this can be found <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

National Landlords Associations

The NLA & the RLA have now merged to create the NRLA which is a national landlord association that covers England, Wales & Scotland.

The National Residential Landlords Association provide lots of varied advice and guidance for landlords and managers, this can be found at <https://www.nrla.org.uk/> . For Coronavirus specific advice please visit their campaign page at <https://www.nrla.org.uk/campaigns/coronavirus> .

They also offer provide direction to useful external resources <https://www.nrla.org.uk/advice/external-resources> . Advice includes downloadable posters that you can print off: posters that can put up within your properties to provide advice for tenants.

General Coronavirus advice can be found at the following:

- NHS guidance - https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/?gclid=EAlalQobChMI-6agz_3G6AIVAuDtCh0m8g5xEAAAYASAAEgIht_D_BwE
- Public Health England (PHE) COVID-19 Resource Centre has released some posters which HMO landlords may find helpful to email or post to their tenants - <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/>
- Travel Corridors:- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors#countries-and-territories-with-no-self-isolation-requirement-on-arrival-in-england>
- British Landlords Association : <https://thebla.co.uk/hmo-bedsits-common-areas-coronavirus-infection-guide/>
- Travelling with confidence - <https://www.watford.gov.uk/travel-with-confidence>
- Information on services available from Hertfordshire County Council are located here <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/home.aspx> and for specific coronavirus advice <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/news/news-archive/coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions>

We hope you find this information useful, and that you and your tenants stay safe at this difficult time. You may wish to monitor the links provided as the information on the websites is updated regularly.