

Mailshot date (13/05/2020)

Dear All,

You may well be aware that Government advice to landlords and letting agents has changed overnight and new guidelines on travel restrictions have been introduced. In particular acceptable reasons for travel now include

(v) for sub-paragraph (l), substitute— “(l) to undertake any of the following activities in connection with the purchase, sale, letting or rental of a residential property— (i) visiting estate or letting agents, developer sales offices or show homes; (ii) viewing residential properties to look for a property to buy or rent; (iii) preparing a residential property to move in; (iv) moving home; (v) visiting a residential property to undertake any activities required for the rental or sale of that property;”;

(vi) after sub-paragraph (m), insert— “(n) to use a waste or recycling centre.”;

However there is a recognition that this does not constitute 'business as normal' and that guidelines to ensure safe practices in relation to viewings have also been issued to minimise risks to you, your staff, your current and prospective tenants. In particular:

- Landlords and agents should make contact with any current occupant and ask whether anyone in the property is showing symptoms, is shielding or has been asked to self-isolate before going ahead with any viewing. Viewings should not be conducted in properties where tenants are symptomatic or self-isolating, or where it has been determined that they are clinically extremely vulnerable and are shielding. *(LSH would strongly advise that where a sitting tenant expresses anxiety at the prospect of a viewing in their property then the landlord or agent should respect their concerns and not proceed in these circumstances)*
- Landlords and agents should clarify with any prospective tenant whether they are showing symptoms, shielding or have been asked to self-isolate before going ahead with any viewing, or visits to offices. *(LSH would strongly advise that no viewing should proceed in these circumstances)*
- Landlords and agents should not carry out any open house viewings. *(LSH would strongly advise that the number of prospective tenants attending any viewing should be severely restricted - preferably to one - or that one prospective tenant be allowed to enter the property in turn)*
- Landlords and agents should strongly encourage prospective tenants to view properties virtually in the first instance and then only physically inspect properties which they have a strong interest in. *(LSH would strongly advise that landlords and agents develop clear and transparent safe viewing guidelines and which are provided to each prospective tenant before a viewing takes place)*
- Landlords and agents can accompany physical viewings and seek to maintain a minimum of 2 metres distance from others wherever possible. Where social distancing is not possible and the visit is within an enclosed space, they should utilise the wearing of a face covering in line with government guidance. *(LSH would strongly advise that you should wear a face mask when conducting a viewing. You should also advise any prospective tenant to bring and wear a face mask during the viewing)*

- Landlords and agents should not drive prospective tenants to viewings
- All parties viewing a property should wash their hands with soap and water (or hand sanitiser if not available) immediately after entering the properties, with internal doors opened and surfaces having been wiped down before they enter. Separate towels or paper towels should be used if possible and washed or disposed of safely after use
- Any visits to a property by you, your representatives or contractors must be made in accordance with government's guidelines on working in other people's homes and social distancing. (LSH would strongly advise that you obtain the permission of any sitting tenant before instructing cleaners to attend a property)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes>

	<p>Other people's homes - Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) - Guidance - GOV.UK</p> <p>www.gov.uk</p> <p>Guidance to help employers, employees and the self-employed understand how to work safely during the coronavirus pandemic.</p>
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Over the coming days and weeks we expect Government guidance to develop and we will continue to try and keep you informed. We will shortly be circulating guidance on end of current tenancy and start of new tenancy procedures.

Kind Regards & Keep Safe

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