

# BRIEFING NOTE

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This guidance will contain advice that is subject to national and local restrictions as well as best practice information that shows the commitment of LSH registered landlords and letting agents to protecting the safety of their tenants, their prospective tenants, the local community, themselves and their staff.

Liverpool Student Homes has prepared this guidance to support student landlords and agents in minimising the risk of spreading the Covid-19 virus during a period of national lockdown and any subsequent significant local restrictions.

The over-riding purpose of this guidance is to minimise contact which is the primary cause of the spreading of the virus.

This guidance is subject to change with limited warning and would be superseded by tightening changes to national and local restrictions.

**The guidance will set out most appropriate actions and then safety measures that can be introduced to reduce risk on processes that are less appropriate.**

- All landlords and letting agents should have a Covid-19 Risk Assessment. In terms of viewings this will include the reasonable steps you are taking to protect you, your staff and others from coronavirus.
- The preferred method of viewing, at least initially, should be virtual and all prospective tenants should be encouraged to use this facility. Landlords and letting agents should try to ensure they have virtual tours of each of their properties available to show to prospective tenants.
- If a physical viewing is insisted upon then the following measures should be put in place if:

**The property is unoccupied:**

1. No open house viewings should take place.
2. Assurance should be received from the prospective tenants that no one has symptoms or is self-isolating.
3. Only one prospective tenant should attend the viewing

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4. Where prospective tenants already form a household then more than one attending is permitted but should be discouraged.
5. Provide the prospective tenant with the details of your viewing risk assessment and advise them it cannot proceed or will be stopped without their compliance - this should include but is not limited to wearing a face covering, maintaining social distancing at all times, bringing hand sanitiser.
6. Lifts should not be given to prospective tenants under any circumstances.
7. Arrive at the property early to ensure all doors (internal and external) and windows are opened. Spray and wipe all handles after closing.
8. Vacate the property to answer any questions.

## **The property is occupied:**

1. Current tenants are offered the opportunity to re-sign a tenancy agreement for next Academic Year (unless there have been breaches of the tenancy agreement).
2. Obtain confirmation from the occupants whether anyone is classified as extremely clinically vulnerable or clinically vulnerable. No physical viewings should take place in a property where an occupant is extremely clinically vulnerable. Physical viewings should be discouraged in properties which are occupied by someone who is clinically vulnerable.
3. A copy of the risk assessment is provided to each current tenant with an opportunity provided for them to advise you of any reason why a physical viewing of the property is not appropriate. We trust the vast majority of responses will be respected but where a landlord or agent believes it is appropriate for a physical viewing to attend then a mutually respectful dialogue should be opened and a mutually acceptable resolution sought.
4. Sitting tenants should ensure that all valuables are kept safe during any viewing.
5. Prior to each viewing assurance should be received from the sitting tenants that no one has symptoms or is self-isolating.
6. As sitting tenants are required to vacate the property during any physical viewing recognise there will be more occasions and circumstances under which a proposed time is not suitable (for instance if one of the sitting tenants has an online lecture).

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Where you are advised the proposed physical viewing is unable to proceed liaise with the sitting tenants to find mutually convenient times.

7. Assurance should be received from the prospective tenants that no one has symptoms or is self-isolating
8. Only one prospective tenant should attend the viewing.
9. Provide the prospective tenant with the details of your viewing risk assessment and advise them it cannot proceed or will be stopped without their compliance - this should include but is not limited to wearing a face covering, maintaining social distancing at all times, bringing hand sanitiser.
10. Lifts should not be given to prospective tenants under any circumstances.
11. Request that the sitting tenants ensure all doors (internal and external) and windows are opened.
12. All sitting tenants should vacate the property during the viewing.
13. Clean down all surfaces touched during the viewing, preferably with disinfectant wipes
14. Vacate the property to answer any questions
  - Encourage all tenancy applications, contract signings and the provision of documentation to be online.

## **Government guidance on moving house and viewings**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/government-advice-on-home-moving-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

## **Government guidance for Landlords and Tenants**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-and-renting-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-landlords-and-tenants#repairs-maintenance-and-health-and-safety>