

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.

If a tenant has symptoms of coronavirus, then all 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. 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>

Persons who have to self-isolate 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 has brought in emergency legislation to prevent private tenants from being evicted if they are unable to pay rent, and Landlords are not able to commence eviction proceedings for three months.

I am sure that we do not need to remind landlords that eviction by any other means, other than through a court order is not lawful & will end in prosecution.

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 home isolation period. For vulnerable individuals

that do not have anywhere else to go whilst they self-isolate the local authority may be able to assist with temporary accommodation for these individuals only. Please contact your Local Authority HMO licensing team or DASH Landlord Accreditation if you require further information.

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 your Local Authority HMO licensing webpages or contact DASH Landlord Accreditation on 01332 64111

We have also prepared a leaflet for your tenants which can be downloaded and printed from this site.

Please display this information in your HMO in a prominent place as a matter of urgency.