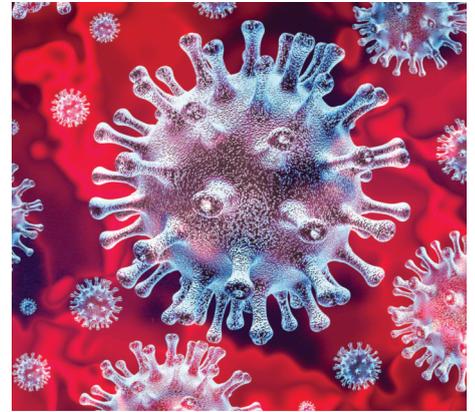


Our services during the coronavirus pandemic

We are following the latest government advice, to help keep our residents, staff and contractors safe.

What this means

- Our staff are mostly working from home.
- We are limiting face-to-face contact.
- **If you need to contact us, please phone 020 8524 6987 and leave a message and we will call you back as soon as we can.**
- There are changes to our repairs service.
- There are changes to the way you can use communal facilities.



Important:

Please tell us if anyone in your household has tested positive for coronavirus, so we can offer support and keep others safe.

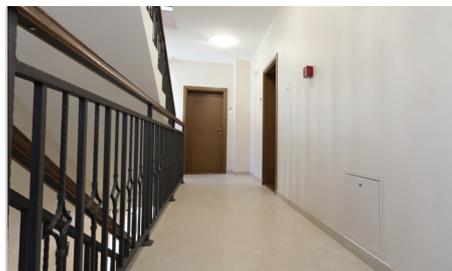
Repairs and maintenance

For the time being, we can only carry out essential repairs and work relating to health and safety.

Our gas contractors are still carrying out annual gas safety checks. If you order a repair or have a gas check due, you must let the contractor have access.

Our new gas contractors are:
Swale Heating, 01795 503365.

All our contractors will take care not to put you at risk. They may ask you to wait in another room while they work. In return, they need to know in advance if anyone in your home has coronavirus symptoms. Please make sure you tell us in advance.



Communal areas

For safety reasons, we have closed the communal lounges and toilets at our sheltered schemes.

You can still use the lifts and laundries, but you need to do so carefully.

- **Don't get into a lift with anyone who doesn't live with you.**
- **Only one person at a time in laundry rooms.**

When you are using shared corridors or stairways at any of our properties, you must keep your distance.

Keep at least 6ft (2 metres) between you and anyone who is not part of your household.

Cleaning and other services

Our cleaners will clean communal areas and do extra **sanitising work**. This means they will carefully clean door handles, hand rails, lift buttons, light switches – all the areas that people tend to touch.

Once a fortnight, our cleaners will carry out a **deep clean** – which includes steam cleaning walls and skirting boards. We will also call them in for a deep clean if we hear that someone has the virus.

Our grounds maintenance and window cleaners are still working normally. WFHA staff will also carry out fire alarm and other essential health and safety checks.



Coronavirus: Information about your finances

If you're on a low income, we know this is a worrying time.

There may be further changes to the information below, as the situation develops. There is more information on the gov.uk website.

1 If your job is at risk

If your employer joins the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, you will get 80% of your wages up to £2,500 each month as a furloughed employee. You may be able to claim benefits as well if your income is reduced.

2 Sick pay if you're working and not claiming benefits



If you can't work because you or someone in your household is sick:

If you qualify, you can get £94.25 a week in Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from your employer, for up to 28 weeks. If you have several jobs you may get it from each employer.

You can apply from day one and self-certify for the first seven days. After that, you need an isolation note from the NHS 111 website at <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note> or via the NHS mobile phone app.

To be eligible for sick pay, you need to:

- be an employee with a contract or an agency worker – this may include some gig and zero hours workers
- earn an average of at least £118 per week, and
- claim on time.

3 If you don't qualify for sick pay

You can apply online for:

- Universal Credit, or
- Employment and Support Allowance.

Ask your employer for an SSP1 form to support your application. You don't need a fit note.

4 If you're making a new claim

Don't delay. You can get a month of Universal Credit upfront, without a visit to the Jobcentre.

You will get Employment Support Allowance straight away too.

You can claim New Style Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) if you have paid enough National Insurance in the past two to three years. Your savings and your partner's savings and income are not counted. You can also claim Universal Credit on top.

5 If you already get benefits

You will get £20 more each week from 6 April, if you get Universal Credit or Working Tax Credits.

All JobCentre appointments are suspended for three months from 19 March 2020.

All DWP health assessments are suspended too.



6 If you are self-employed



You can now claim Universal Credit to make up for having no sick pay.

If you already claim Universal Credit, the Minimum Income Floor is suspended from 6 April.

Your July tax payment is deferred until January 2021.

You will be able to apply for a taxable grant worth up to 80% of your average monthly profits. The grant will be capped at £2,500 each month. An amount for March, April and May will be paid at the start of June. You can claim this, even if you are still working.

You will be eligible for this scheme if:

- more than half of your income comes from self-employment
- your average annual profits are less than £50,000 a year
- you were self-employed before April 2019 – if you were late filing for 2018-19, you have until 23 April to sort this out.

BE AWARE that scammers are already making phone calls, sending texts and emails claiming to be from HMRC. Give no information and don't click on links. When HMRC contacts you direct, you will be able to go to the gov.uk website to complete an online form.

You must still pay your rent

We know these are difficult times, especially if you're worried about your job.

The Government's Coronavirus Bill, enacted on 26 March, stops landlords from evicting tenants for three months. This is to protect tenants from becoming homeless during the pandemic.

However, this is not a rent holiday. **You must still do your best to pay in full and on time.** We need the money we collect to provide you with the home and services you rely on.

If you have lost your job, had your income or hours cut, or lost income from self-employment, we need you to tell us. If you are struggling to pay, we will offer support and advice. We will be flexible about making a payment plan that works for you.



We're looking out for your welfare



We are making regular calls to tenants – whether you live in general needs or sheltered housing – to find out how you are managing.

Some vulnerable tenants have opted to hear from us every day.

If someone is in danger

Being stuck at home can be dangerous for some people. If someone is abusing you or another member of your household in any way, do try to call us. We will do all we can to help you.

If you are in danger and unable to talk on the phone, call **999**, and then press **55**. This will transfer your call to the relevant police force who will assist you without you having to speak.

They advise you to try to make any noise if you can (tap the phone, cough or similar) so they know the call isn't automated.

We will keep you informed

We will send you bulletins like this one and put the information on our website too.

We have a multilingual member of staff who has been calling tenants whose first language is not English.

Local updates

We are making a special effort to call tenants if COVID-19 affects their block or scheme. We recognise that not knowing what is happening can make people anxious. Good information helps to reassure people and them safe.



Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Giving us essential feedback

We are enormously grateful to the five members of the Tenant Panel, who have been feeding back their views and suggestions on our coronavirus work for the past two weeks.



Phone conference

The Panel met for its first-ever telephone conference on 31 March and it will hold similar meetings once a month during the crisis.

So far, members have mainly commented and made recommendations on our Tenant Welfare Plan. We are already taking action on what they have told us.

The Panel is open to new members and there has never been a better time to join and get involved in our work.

If you join the Panel, you can help make sure that we deal with the current crisis in the best way possible, as well as influencing our direction for the future. Call 020 8524 6987 to leave a message if you would like to apply.

Need to contact us?

Call 020 8524 6987 and leave a message. We will phone you back as soon as we can.



Don't fall for scams

Sadly, there are criminals already taking advantage of the pandemic to trick people.

There are scammers going door to door selling fake COVID-19 testing kits, people claiming to be from the NHS, and emails, texts and phone calls claiming to be from HMRC.

Don't fall for it. Never click on links in emails. Don't open the door to salespeople – now more than ever. Don't give personal or financial details on the phone to someone you don't know.

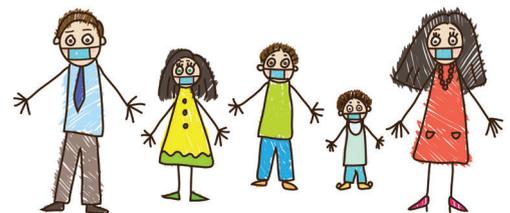
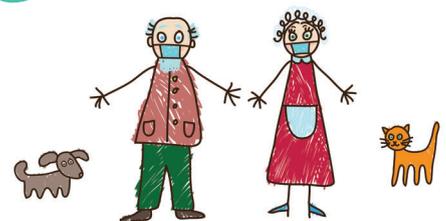
Make sure you stay safe

As your landlord, we're doing our best to keep people safe – but you have to take responsibility for your own safety too.

Remember, your communal areas cannot be as safe as your home. You need to wash your hands or use hand sanitiser after passing through or touching door handles etc.

In and around our properties, please act responsibly and keep your distance. Stay at least 6ft (2 metres) away from anyone who doesn't live with you. Keep your children at home.

Follow the public health guidance. Stay at home except when going to work, food shopping or taking exercise. Wash your hands thoroughly before and after going out – and don't touch your face.



And to kill the germs, **wash your hands** with soap and water, or use a sanitiser gel.