

## **Coronavirus – Advice for tenants**

We want to help you protect yourselves as much as possible against coronavirus. You should follow general advice, but there are some other things you will need to think about if you live in shared accommodation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

### **General cleaning**

When cleaning you should use your usual household products, like detergents and bleach, as these will be very effective at getting rid of the virus on surfaces. Clean frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, handrails, remote controls and tabletops. This is particularly important if you have any symptomatic persons in the house.

### **Urgent repairs**

During this time your landlord should carry out urgent, essential health and safety repairs. All other repairs can be agreed by you and the landlord to be carried out once the government measures currently in place are relaxed. Urgent repairs include no heating or hot water, unsafe electrical installations, unsafe gas appliances, severe damp and mould, no working toilet, no washing facilities to maintain personal hygiene, serious leaks affecting the use of the living accommodation and serious disrepair affecting the security of the property. Appliances provided by landlords such as washing machines, fridges and freezers should be maintained in good repair.

If your landlord is not undertaking repairs please contact us on [customerservices@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@lancaster.gov.uk)

### **Evictions**

From 29 August 2020, with the exception of the most serious cases, landlords will not be able to start possession proceedings unless they have given their tenants six months' notice. These serious cases include those in relation to anti-social behaviour (including rioting), domestic abuse, fraud and where a tenant has accrued rent arrears to the value of over six months' rent.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/913299/Landlord\\_and\\_Tenant\\_Guidance\\_August\\_update.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/913299/Landlord_and_Tenant_Guidance_August_update.pdf)

It's illegal for your landlord to evict you without following the proper steps, coronavirus doesn't change this. If it is an emergency call 999 or contact us on [customerservices@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@lancaster.gov.uk).

The government has published technical guidance on evictions.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/913301/Technical\\_Guidance\\_on\\_Eviction\\_Notices\\_August\\_update.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/913301/Technical_Guidance_on_Eviction_Notices_August_update.pdf)

### Gas and electricity safety

- What to do if you smell gas

<https://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/gas-transmission/safety-and-emergencies/emergencies-and-safety-advice>

- Electrical safety advice

Inform your landlord immediately if you are concerned about the electrics in your property. If you notice burn marks around plugs or cables for example. Don't fix faulty electrics yourself. Inform your landlord or call a qualified electrician.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electrical-safety-standards-in-the-private-rented-sector-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities/guide-for-tenants-electrical-safety-standards-in-the-private-rented-sector>

### Fire safety

At a time when we are spending a lot of time at home please remember to be extra vigilant about fire safety. Your landlord has safety obligations under the law. These include safety certificates so you can see when gas and electrical appliances were last checked. There should be a fire alarm on every level of your home used as living accommodation and carbon monoxide alarms in all rooms that contain a solid fuel-burning appliance and are used as living accommodation. These should be tested regularly by the nominated responsible person.

### How to claim Universal Credit.

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim>

### **If you live in shared accommodation.**

#### Self-isolation

If you live with others in a shared house and you are the first in the household to have symptoms of coronavirus, then you must stay at home for 7 days, but all other residents who are well 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. For

anyone else in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14-day isolation period.

Cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of tissues into a disposable rubbish bag and immediately wash your hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

### Bathroom facilities

If you share a toilet and bathroom with other persons, it is important that you clean them every time you use them (for example, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with). Another tip is to consider drawing up a rota for bathing, with any persons who are unwell using the facilities last. Make sure that you use separate towels from the other people in your house, both for drying yourself after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.

### Kitchen Facilities

Avoid sharing a kitchen at the same time with anyone who is unwell while they are present. If they can, they should take their meals back to their own room to eat. If there is one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry utensils and cutlery. If this is not possible then wash them as normal using washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly. If any symptomatic persons are using their own utensils, remember to use a separate tea towel for drying these.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>