

Engaging with tenants about the Coronavirus (Covid-19)

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Chartered
Institute of
Housing

In these uncertain times, it will be important to engage with your residents to provide them with both information and reassurance. We have been talking to housing providers about what they are doing, and have collated the following things for you to consider:

1. Share the latest public information with your residents

Things are changing rapidly. Be sure to share the latest information so your tenants keep up to date. The latest advice can be found on the Gov.uk coronavirus page at www.gov.uk/coronavirus which also includes links through to local rules for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This BBC page also gives simple clear advice on all the topics above with easy to follow visuals: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51048366>

Using simple graphics like these on newsletters to tenants could be an effective way to communicate these important messages, particularly to those who aren't able to access digital technology.

2. Call tenants especially those who are likely to be vulnerable to isolation and loneliness

Isolation and loneliness have been very difficult for so many people as a result of restrictions since March. This could particularly be the case

for older tenants. Whilst they might be safer at home, they could feel quite lonely as well. Drawing together a list of your likely to be at risk customers and calling those people once a week to see how they are could be a really be a lifeline to some people.

3. Reinforce your commitment to your customers and changes to your working procedures

Share information with tenants about your changing ways of working including:

- How tenants can get in touch if your office is now closed
- If they need a visit or a repair explain the new procedure
- Explain how repair will be carried out if they are self-isolating or in a vulnerable group
- Explain the support available for extra care sheltered and other specialist schemes
- Provide reassurances of what will happen if they will not be able to pay their rent and let them know who to contact.

Guidance for:

- England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland

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4. Provide list of helpful contact telephone numbers, websites and contact points for those needing further support, these could include:

- Details for their local food banks
- Contact relating to access to benefits and other financial support mechanisms
- Local shops and pharmacies who are now providing home deliveries
- Any 'local support system' helpline numbers to deliver basic groceries and medicines to those most at risk and telephone 'buddy' services
- Medical information help points such the 111 corona virus webpage
<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>
- Wellbeing websites and telephone numbers if they are feeling particularly anxious about the corona virus. For example Mind has some really useful information as does Age Concern UK and the Campaign to End Loneliness. Webpage links below.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/conditions-illnesses/coronavirus/>

<https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/blog/coronavirus-and-social-isolation/>