

Information for Yorkshire Housing Customers

Updated 14th May 2020

We have created these FAQs based on the questions you're asking.

We are continuing to review how we carry out essential services, whilst balancing this with keeping both you and our colleagues safe by following the latest advice about minimising non urgent travel and social contact.

What to expect from our staff and contractors

We have carefully reviewed how we can deliver services in the current circumstances. Our priority has always been the safety of our customers and staff. We are now able to deliver some services that have previously been suspended.

Question	Response
I'm worried about letting people into my home.	<p>When you contact us to ask for a repair/visit we will ask you for information to help us understand if someone in your home is self-isolating, shielding or has Covid19 symptoms. We will ask you the same questions again when we arrive at your home.</p> <p>This means that: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will not visit you if we are experiencing symptoms of C-19 or feel unwell.• We will not visit you if we have been told to self-isolate because someone at home is ill.• We will not visit you if you tell us you are unwell, have symptoms of C-19, are self- isolating because someone else in your household is ill or where you have been advised to Shield for 12 weeks by your GP
How do we stay safe?	<p>When we do visit you, we will ensure that we thoroughly wash our hands at the start of the visit and will wipe down all surfaces that we touch.</p> <p>We ask that you stay in another room or sit / stand more than 2m away: please do not offer us food or drink during the visit.</p> <p>All our teams are aware and have been trained on the need to maintain social distancing and we are providing PPE where this is appropriate.</p>

Paying my Rent & Service Charges

Question	Response
<p>My pay has stopped or reduced completely. I can't pay my rent.</p>	<p>We understand that this a deeply worrying time and that this brings concerns about paying your rent. We want you to know that no tenant or shared owner will lose their home as a result of COVID-19.</p> <p>We do need you to pay your rent to help us fund essential frontline services. But if you have lost your job or been placed on reduced hours and need to adjust the method, time or frequency of your payment, we can help. The schemes that the government have introduced may also reduce the financial impact.</p>
<p>I've just gone onto Universal Credit. What should I do about my rent</p>	<p>As part of your claim for Universal Credit you will have been asked about your rent. The DWP will ask us to verify what you have told them. When we have done that you will be paid 'housing costs' as part of your claim, this is for you to pay your rent. It may not cover all of your monthly rent and you will need to top up that payment from your personal allowance. If you did not tell the DWP about your rent payments during your original claim, you need to contact them through your online portal immediately so they can rectify the mistake.</p>
<p>Will my housing benefit still be paid as normal?</p>	<p>We have had confirmation from the majority of the local authorities we work with that they will be able to continue making payments. We will keep customers informed of any changes.</p>
<p>I already owe some rent but now I can't pay?</p>	<p>We understand that people's circumstances are changing rapidly. We are monitoring advice from the Government and the DWP and we will carry on updating our processes.</p> <p>Please contact us if you are worried about being able to maintain your rent payments.</p>
<p>I can't go into work but I don't know whether I'll get paid.</p>	<p>The government have announced a range of measures to support people affected by Covid-19.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • removing the waiting days for people claiming Statutory Sick Pay on Covid-19 related grounds • suspending all face-to-face assessments for disability and sickness claims for three months • removing the minimum income floor for self-employed people in receipt of Universal Credit who are affected by Covid-19

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suspending the need to visit the Job Centre to apply for an advance when claiming Universal Credit due to Covid-19 • suspending conditionality and sanctions for people affected by Covid-19 <p>Where additional measures have been introduced, they cover people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-isolating in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19; • infected by Covid-19; • caring for a child or qualifying young person who falls into either category above. <p>We would advise anyone needing more information to visit keep existing link on website</p>
I always pay my rent at the post office, what will happen if that closes?	<p>We have a variety of different ways that you can pay your rent if you're not able to carry on with your normal payment method. We are working with Allpay, our payment provider, to make sure we can continue to provide you with an efficient service.</p> <p>The full range of payment options is available here.</p>
My business has closed and I don't know whether I'll get paid	<p>The Government has announced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme that will enable your employer to pay you up to 80% of your wages up to £2,500 per month. Your employer can choose to pay the other 20% themselves but that is not compulsory. More details are still being worked on around the scheme but it can be backdated to March 1st if you haven't been paid. It is reliant on your employer making the claim for the grant.</p>

My Home

Question	Response
I've been offered a property can I still move in?	<p>Over the coming weeks we will start to let our homes. We are able to offer a remote sign up service and release keys on site.</p> <p>We will be prioritising those in urgent housing need such as those who are homeless. We will be in touch with you shortly if you have been offered a property.</p> <p>For those who have already been allocated a property, this offer still stands. We are also continuing to advertise</p>

	properties throughout this period, please check Right Move for current vacancies.
I'm due to hand my keys in but I need to extend my notice.	We are contacting all of our customers who were due to leave their properties and we are happy to extend your tenancy until you are ready. Or to talk about the reasons you requested a move. If you have any questions, please give us a call.
I want to do a mutual exchange	We are now able to process your mutual exchange and one of the team will be in touch with you to arrange this. Please do not exchange prior to permission being granted.
My neighbour is not following the government guidelines	We have received a number of calls over the past few weeks where people have concerns about neighbours not following government guidelines. Although legislation has been passed by the government around Coronavirus there are no powers for us as a housing provider to enforce the guidelines. We can help if there is specific anti social behaviour – see below Many Police authorities have information on their own websites about enforcement and how to report a breach.. For more information please look here < https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do >
My neighbour is constantly having large groups of people at his property	Where there is specific anti social behaviour occurring at a property which is causing distress we can help. We have already secured orders through the Courts which require people to stop serious anti social behaviour which is putting others at risk.
Something is not right at my neighbours home	We recognise that these are difficult times for our customers, if you have seen or heard something that has caused you concern please contact either ourselves, your local authority or the Police. You can find helpful information here If you're worried that a child or young person is at risk or is being abused contact the local Children's Social Care Team If you are concerned about a vulnerable adult being abused contact the local Adult Social Care Team If you are concerned about domestic abuse National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 200 0247 Call 999 if the adult or child is at immediate risk. If it's not an emergency, you can report the crime online or call 101. Calls to 999 or 101 are free.

<p>My neighbour is playing loud music its really annoying me. Can you sort it out?</p>	<p>Yes, we can still deal with neighbour nuisance. For many nuisance complaints we already deal with them over the phone. We have a new noise App which allows you to record incidents and send them directly to us.</p> <p>In the first instance we will discuss the incident over the phone with you then decide on a course of action.</p> <p>The various ways to contact us are available here.</p>
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Environmental Services

<p>You stopped cleaning my block and mowing the grass. Do I still have to pay my service charges?</p>	<p>We have set October as a date to make the adjustments to charges on accounts because we feel this is a reasonable timeline that allows us to track, calculate and model the overall financial impact where services have been reduced due to Covid-19. We hope to have resumed full services by this time which means we can accurately adjust charges for the following period. October is already a planned review date for some customers so we will expand this to include all impacted customers. Although the change happens in October, we will also begin talking to customers as part of the review process in June and formally notify customers of the changes in August.</p>
<p>Will you still be carrying out environmental works? For example, grass cutting.</p>	<p>We have started our grass cutting service from this week.</p> <p>The service will be carried out in a way that is safe for both colleagues and customers under the current COVID-19 restrictions.</p> <p>As we had to stop the service for several weeks to allow us to consider how to safely provide it, the grass is now too long for our normal machines, so some heavier equipment will be brought in to help.</p> <p>This will be a cutting service only at first. This is because collecting the cuttings and emptying the grass collectors requires our team to work closely together and they would not be able to follow the social distancing guidelines. Many other housing associations and local authorities have now also resumed their grass cutting services as a cut only service.</p> <p>We appreciate that customers will want us to get gardens back to our usual service, however we ask that you bear with us as we have over 500 sites needing attention. We are unable to do</p>

	any border work or hedge trimming whilst on site as the grass cutting is our first priority.
When will you clean my windows?	We are continuing our programme of cleaning windows, these are done on a quarterly basis and there has been no disruption to this service. We will always observe current government guidelines when working in communal areas to keep our customers and staff safe

Repairs & Improvements

Question	Response
Why are you still carrying out gas servicing?	We have a responsibility to ensure that we carry out any statutory checks to our properties. When we contact you to tell you that your annual check is due, please let us know of any concerns you have.
I had a repair which was due to be done next week. Will you still be coming?	<p>The government have asked us to take a ‘common sense’ approach to repairs. To reduce the risk to you and colleagues of having people from outside your family in your home, we can only carry out emergency repairs. This includes problems with heating, hot water, burst pipes and any equipment fitted in your home to help someone with a disability.</p> <p>You may see us carrying out roof repairs, this is because Spring/Summer are the best times to do this work as we hopefully get better weather! This enables us to make sure your home is watertight for the winter. We will also carry out outdoor decoration works as again the weather (hopefully) should be better!</p> <p>Please only contact us if it is a genuine emergency and needs someone to come to your home. Unfortunately, all other repairs which you had booked with us will need to be delayed. You do not need to contact us to do this – we will contact you. At this time we cannot advise when non-emergency repairs will be carried out as it largely depends how long restrictions stay in place.</p> <p>We will continue to carry out essential safety checks to our homes, including gas servicing.</p>
What do I do if I have an emergency? For example a burst pipe or no power?	If you have an emergency you will be advised by a customer services colleague how to make safe your home. A burst pipe, loss of power, heating and/or hot water (where your boiler is the sole source of heat and hot water) will be classed as an emergency.

	<p>If you are displaying symptoms of the Coronavirus infection please let us know when you contact us. This will enable us to plan how to carry out the repair whilst also keeping our staff safe.</p> <p>If you are self-isolating because you or a family member is unwell or you are in one of the higher risk groups, then we will need to plan with you how best to carry out the repair. This will be in full accordance with recommendations from Public Health England.</p>
Why are you working on empty properties?	<p>We want to minimise the risks to our customers and staff. Working in an empty property does not put customers at risk and our staff will be following government guidelines to work safely. You may find that there are a number of vans outside these properties – this is because our staff need to travel separately – we apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.</p>
I'm due to have a new kitchen fitted later this year. Will it still be fitted?	<p>We have had to temporarily stop our programme of improvements, including new kitchens and bathrooms. This is because we would have to spend time in your home, which would be against public health and government advice.</p>

My Support

Question	Response
I'm unable to get food for my family due to Covid19	Whether that's because you are struggling financially or are unable to get out, we may be able to help. please contact us and ask to be referred to our Customer Assistance Service
I need my medicine and have no one to collect it for me.	Get in touch, we may be able to get it delivered for you.
I am feeling lonely and isolated	Our befriending service can help. We can arrange for someone to call you for a chat and check you are Ok.
Will there still be support available if I need help with my tenancy or with employment?	Yes, the Tenancy Coach team will continue to take referrals and support customers. Get in touch and we can talk things through with you over the phone.

My Community

Question	Response
Can I access activities going on at Yorkshire Housing Community Centres and Communal Rooms?	<p>In line with the Government guidance we have closed all Community Centres and Communal Rooms until further notice. We have asked customers not to use the Communal rooms and there are signs up explaining this. We ask all our customers to be mindful of the social distancing guidelines set out by the government.</p> <p>Our sheltered schemes remain closed to all but essential visitors and our communal areas should not be used for social gatherings. We ask that you stay 2 metres (6 feet) away from anyone not in your household at all times.</p>
Can I still use the laundry facility at my community centre?	<p>Yes, for the time being, though we advise users to follow Government social distancing guidelines and ensure that only one person use the facilities at a time.</p>