

Covid-19 – Corona Virus – Rent Issues

In these times of uncertainty, I am continuously keeping up to date with the constantly changing legislation surrounding the Corona Virus outbreak and its implications on the rental sector.

At the time of writing, it is a Tenant's responsibility to contact their local authority if they are having difficulty in making their rental payments.

You need to do this to access any benefits available to you and make yourself aware of any Government schemes that may assist with rental payments over the coming weeks.

We believe all help will come via the benefit system, so it is important to claim as early as possible if you are experiencing hardship.

If you are having difficulties, we would encourage you to apply for Statutory Sick Pay and Universal Credit if you are eligible. The Government has introduced temporary changes to make it easier to apply. Further details can be found here

<https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

Mortgage Payment Holidays

Landlords may be able to claim mortgage payment breaks. Whilst this is potentially good news, I understand that mortgage payments are **only deferred** and not waived.

Crucially, lenders want proof from Landlords of the Tenant's hardship in order for them to qualify so you do need to keep proof of your situation.

Mortgage payment breaks are only being offered to landlords whose tenants are experiencing financial difficulty due to the Covid-19 outbreak and as such, you will need to provide us with the following information to allow your landlord to apply (if they have a buy-to-let mortgage):

- Sign off note from Doctor (obtainable via 111)
- Comparable wage slips showing a decrease in income or SSP payments
- Bank statements for comparison showing the same decrease in income
- Letter from your employer showing reduced hours/layoff
- Letter from your accountant confirming a reduction of income
- Copy of benefits claim

Rental Payment Holidays

Similarly to a mortgage payment holiday, the rent will be deferred rather than written off. It will still be owed and accrue on your account so anything you can do to minimise the debt will help you in the long term.



Should you wish to apply for a payment holiday (or temporary reduction/deferment of part rent), I ask that you put forward a payment plan for me to take forward to your Landlord on your behalf.

It has not been made clear by the Government what should happen if a Landlord is in financial difficulty and unable to make mortgage payments after this 3 month period so we can only hope that the situation is resolved by this point or the Government rolls out further financial support.

Please do also remember that the non-payment of rent poses other issues from a management point of view, such as a lack of funds to pay maintenance and safety testing contractors, or our own overheads such as salaries to enable the business to continue operating during this time.

The situation we are all faced with is unprecedented. Please be assured that I will work closely with you and your Landlord to enable us to overcome and get through this difficult time together.

For further information, the following links might be useful

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19>

https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit?fbclid=IwAR1NyvtUDDEQ6i8DrEofC31VvuWcALggzp8AJ8rLpr6NCc4ie3_EuvaNJKw

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-alternative-payment-arrangements/alternative-payment-arrangements?fbclid=IwAR2iIXCPV2X4GVJe_gUng92hgDEv_ifMGo8gwnUGmhw39jAcq_ljyQh_t7wE

If you are in a situation where you need to apply for a payment holiday/deferment, please let me know by email confirming the following:

1. The circumstances relating to the requirement for a payment holiday/deferment
2. The amount of rent you believe you will be able to pay out of your total rent amount
3. A proposed payment plan to repay the arrears once the Covid-19 crisis has passed.

I am here for you – I have a wide network of Contractors etc so do let me know if you need anything – via email please.

In the meantime, please follow the Governments advice on how to protect yourself <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19>

Stay well & safe