



CRHA NEWS

October 2020

This newsletter is intended to give you an update on how CRHA is operating in response to the latest government advice and guidelines on how to deal with the impact of the ongoing pandemic.

We still cannot afford to be complacent as the winter months bring the risk of a spike in infections that could result in further restriction on movement being introduced.

We therefore repeat our previous advice for everyone to remain vigilant and continue to look after yourselves, your family, friends and neighbours.

We will continue to do our very best to help you to live safely in your homes and we would like to thank you all for your patience and understanding during such a difficult time for everyone.

In the last newsletter I advised you that I was leaving CRHA. However, those plans have changed and I have decided to delay my departure in response to a request from the Board of Management to stay with CRHA for a little while longer.

Best wishes

Peter Moore

Chief Executive

Covid-19 Update

Much of the information we provided in the July 2020 newsletter remains valid. A copy is available on our website if you need it, but here is a short recap.

Routine visits

These remain cancelled until further notice.

Staff will be on site to carry out inspections but visits to individual homes will only be made by prior arrangement.

Stock Condition Surveys

Our programme of stock condition surveys remains on hold.

CRHA Office

The CRHA office remains closed to the general public. Staff who cannot work from home are working from the office

Contacting CRHA

You can contact us on our office telephone number of 01208 892000 or by emailing us at info@crha.org.uk.

However, many tenants now use MY CRHA (our online portal) to get the information they need about their rent account or a repair or to send us a message. It is free, easy to use and available 24 hours a day, so you can access your information at a time that suits you.



How do I register for MY CRHA?

Simply send an email to info@crha.org.uk with your name and address requesting that you be set up on MY CRHA.

You will receive a reply to your email, then a further email giving you instructions as to how to register on MY CRHA.

Repairs

Please continue to report all necessary repairs to us.

We have been logging all non-urgent repairs that have been reported and we have been working our way through the backlog that built up during lockdown, as well as processing new requests for non-urgent works.

Some jobs may take longer to complete than normally would be expected. We continue to ask for your patience during this period.

Test your heating

If you have not used your heating for some time it makes sense to turn it on to check that it is working correctly before it gets too cold.

Safety in the home - contractors

We continue to ask our contractors to comply with current government safety guidelines. These are:

- Operatives will keep 2 metres distance from occupants of your home during each and every visit.
- Operatives will carry hand sanitizer at all times and wash/sanitize their hands at regular intervals.
- Operatives will always have personal protective equipment (PPE) with them and use it in line with government guidelines.
- The number of visits to complete a job will be minimized.
- Operatives will clean all surfaces that they need to touch.
- Operatives will not accept offers of refreshment.
- Operatives will only carry out work if fit and healthy to do so.

Safety in the home - what you need to do

We need you to take certain precautions to help protect both your health and the health of the visiting contractors. These are:-

- Tell us if you are self-isolating. If you are self-isolating no work will be carried out in your home unless it is to remedy a direct risk that affects your safety.
- Tell us if you are shielding.
- Always maintain 2 metres distance from contractors.
- Stay in another room(s) until the repair is complete.
- Open all internal doors and keep all corridors clear.

Minimise your chances of getting sick

- Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands after you've touched shared surfaces, especially before eating.
- Wash hands for 20-30 seconds (the internet is full of good ideas for songs you can sing to pass the time) and make sure to dry them thoroughly.
- Avoid touching your face. This virus can survive for hours to days as tiny droplets on surfaces which we may inadvertently touch. Then, when we touch our mouth, nose, or eyes, we can infect ourselves.

Keep all surfaces as clean as possible

- Coronaviruses can hang around on inanimate surfaces like steel for up to 48 hours, glass and wood for four to five days, and plastic for up to nine days. Make sure that all surfaces are regularly and thoroughly cleaned with detergent or disinfectant.

Advice for tenants for homes connected to a sewage treatment plant, septic tanks or sewage pump.

- The use of disinfectant wipes to clean surfaces has understandably increased during the pandemic.

- **Please do not dispose of these wipes by flushing them down the toilet.**
- The drains attached to your toilets are only designed to cope with human waste and regular toilet paper.
- Please therefore follow the advice previously circulated and do not put anything else into the system, and particularly avoid putting anything like wipes or sanitary products down the toilet.

Paying your rent

You need to continue paying your rent and abiding by all other terms of your tenancy agreement.

The Government has put a package of financial support in place for people experiencing money problems caused by the pandemic. Please let us know if you require help accessing that support.

If you have difficulty paying your rent, you should speak to us at the earliest opportunity. We will always listen sympathetically to anyone experiencing difficulties and we will try to agree a plan to help you through the crisis and to bring your rent account out of arrears within a reasonable time once the crisis is over.

CRHA's Commitment to Residents

CRHA is committed to:

1. Keeping people secure at home

No one will be evicted from a CRHA home as a result of financial hardship caused by coronavirus, where they are working (or engaging) with CRHA to get their payments back on track.

2. Helping people to get the support they need

CRHA will help residents to access benefits and other support to alleviate financial hardship, including supporting people to get work where we can.

3. Acting compassionately and quickly where people are struggling

CRHA will work with any resident who is struggling to find arrangements to pay rent that is manageable for them in the long term.

Legal action will only be taken in serious circumstances – for example as a last resort where a resident will not agree a plan with us to help them pay their rent, or where it is needed urgently in cases of domestic abuse or of anti-social behaviour that is putting other residents or communities at risk.

Paying your rent from home

An easy way to pay your rent without having to leave your home is to telephone Allpay on **0844 557 8321**.

You can pay your rent using a debit or credit card, but you will need to have your Allpay card to hand. Please let us know if you need a new Allpay card.

Further help

The People Hub

The People Hub has been set up to help support residents across Cornwall during these uncertain times. Advisers are on hand to provide free confidential advice and support regarding work, employment, and training.

You can find the people hub at:

<https://www.ciosgrowthhub.com/peoplehub>.

Help for people who are self-isolating

From 28th September 2020 the Government will give those that are affected by COVID-19 a one off payment of £500 to self-isolate for 14 days.

We understand that the criteria for the payment is as follows:-

1. Employed or self-employed can apply (but not anyone on furlough).

2. Anyone can apply who is in receipt of Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income Support Employment Support Allowance, Income Support Job Seekers Allowance and Pension Credit.

3. Applicants must have proof that they have been told to self-isolate (either COVID Positive or symptomatic) via the NHS Test and Trace App.

Cornwall Council are currently organising how this can be claimed and it is likely that applications will be made online. Please let us know if you require further information

Food Bank

Please contact Angie Morrissey for a confidential discussion if you would like to find out more about what help might be available from a local food bank.

Help with Fuel Costs on Pre-Payment Meters

We might be able to help you access some assistance if:

- you have a traditional pre-payment meter (one where you are responsible for going to top up the meter)
- you have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. This might be directly through loss of earnings or indirectly, for example due to increased energy usage at home
- are at risk of self-disconnection

Please contact us for further information if you are on a pre-payment meter and you struggling to meet your fuel costs.

Flu Vaccine

Visit www.nhs.uk/flujab for more information on why it is important to have the flu vaccine and check whether you are eligible.

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