



CRHA NEWS

COVID-19 Update

July 2020

I am writing 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.

Although Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly so far appear to have not been as badly affected as other parts of the country, we cannot afford to be complacent. It is possible that we will be subject to further outbreaks and perhaps local lockdowns.

We therefore urge 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.

Best wishes

Peter Moore

Chief Executive

Will CRHA be recommencing routine visits?

No - our programme of routine visits to each of the homes that we own will remain cancelled until further notice.

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

Is the CRHA office open?

CRHA has made adjustments to its offices to allow those staff who cannot work from home to return to work in the office when required. Some staff have been back working from the office from 20th July 2020.

However, the adjustments we have made to the office to allow for work to be done in a safe and socially distanced way means that the office is not open to the general public.

If you do need to speak to someone please telephone or email to see if we can help you without you travelling to the office.

If a visit to the office is unavoidable then you will be required to make an appointment.

How can I contact 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.

What is happening with the repairs service?

As you will know, during lockdown CRHA repairs service was limited to dealing with emergency and urgent responsive repairs to keep homes safe, watertight and secure.

As the lockdown has eased we have begun reinstating some services, such as:

- Responsive repairs to the external envelope of our homes and also to boundary treatments.
- Servicing and safety checks to gas, oil, and other heating appliances to keep homes safe and to meet legislative requirements.
- Some external redecorations have been commenced, with others being programmed to start over the coming months. Those of you due to have external painting done this year will be receiving a separate letter.
- Repairs to empty homes to allow them to be relet.

What happens if I report a repair?

Please continue to report all necessary repairs to us.

We have been logging all non-urgent repairs that have been reported.

From **Monday 3rd August 2020** we hope to be in a position to start issuing orders to our contractors so that we can catch up on this backlog. We will also process new requests for non-urgent works.

Our contractors are returning from furlough and slowly returning to full capacity. Materials from builders' merchants can be in short supply. Some jobs may take longer to complete than normally would be expected. We ask for your patience during this period.

Other aspects of our maintenance service will be rolled out as and when resources are available, and it is considered safe to do so. This will include: -

- External painting and repairs to schemes due for cyclical painting.
- Planned cyclical works to chimneys and stoves, electrical testing and repairs, smoke detector testing and other servicing activity.
- Planned replacement works to heating installations.

Will it be safe for contractors to come into my home?

Some people may be wary of providing access to their home during the ongoing Covid-19 situation. We understand this and we have asked 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 kind offers of refreshment.
- Operatives will only carry out work if fit and healthy to do so.

What do I need to do?

We also 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 affect your safety.
- Tell us if you are shielding. From 1st August 2020 people who are shielding may permit landlords and contractors to carry out routine visits and inspections.
- 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.

What happens if I have difficulty paying my rent?

Tenants should continue to pay rent and abide by all other terms of their 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.

How can I pay my rent if I cannot get out of my 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.

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.

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