

Environmental Health and Trading Standards

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28 April 2020

Coronavirus (Covid-19) government support for landlords and renters

Dear landlord/property manager,

The council is writing to you to raise awareness of the important changes to legislation affecting private renting, with reference to rented properties for which you have a responsibility through ownership and/or management.

- All ongoing possession cases and new possession cases have been suspended for 90 days from 27 March 2020. This means that no one can be evicted for any reason.
- Notice periods under possession order are extended to 3 months until 30 September 2020.
- Pre-action protocols now apply to the private rented sector (this introduces steps you must take before seeking a possession order).
- Tenants having difficulty making payments or falling into arrears are encouraged to speak to their landlord to jointly agree an 'affordable repayment plan' or rent deferment. Our advice is to address issues quickly where a tenant is having difficulty paying rent and to be prepared to accept payment plans or a period of rent at a lower value.
- Landlords are strongly encouraged to show compassion at this challenging time and to allow tenants to remain in their homes wherever possible and not to commence new notices seeking possession.
- You will need to offer your tenant a rent holiday if you have been granted a mortgage payment holiday for the emergency period.
- Tenants are protected under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 which means that they cannot be forced to leave your property without a court order and warrant for execution of that order. Breaches of the act can give rise to a civil action and could be a criminal offence.
- Landlords remain legally obligated to ensure properties meet the required standard. During the emergency period urgent health and safety repairs should be made where needed, with social distancing protocols followed where access to tenants' homes is essential.

The government's advice for landlords and tenants is available at www.gov.uk/coronavirus

The council will be prosecuting landlords responsible for unlawful evictions. We will also pursue




civil penalties for breaches of licence conditions under our selective and HMO licensing schemes.

Our private housing advice team is available to assist with landlord/tenant mediation and can provide advice to tenants experiencing financial hardship. They can be contacted by emailing housing.advice@towerhamlets.gov.uk or calling **0207 364 3558**.

For further information about the council's response to the coronavirus, including the latest information and advice on support for residents and businesses, including on housing, please visit www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/coronavirus

We thank you for your cooperation at this difficult time.

Yours faithfully,



David Tolley
Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards
London Borough of Tower Hamlets

