



CLINTON DEVON ESTATES

Our reference: LR/ajs/

Your reference:

To all tenants of residential properties

31 March 2020

Dear,

Clinton Devon Estates - Letter to all Residential Tenants - Coronavirus Update

The Estate appreciates Coronavirus is affecting everyone as we follow Government guidelines to help reduce the spread of this pandemic. Some of you will still be working whilst others will not. The Rolle Estate Office is now closed, and our office-based staff are working from home. Our email, post and telephones are being remotely accessed.

We have received some queries from tenants concerning access to properties for emergency repairs and on the question of rent payment. Staff and contractors attending emergency repairs will follow a protocol which is designed to help keep both you and them safe, in line with government guidelines. We would ask that you contact the Estate with maintenance matters in the usual way at mail@clintondevon.com or 01395 443881

On the question of rent, the Tenants' Handbook sets out our approach which is as valid now as pre-Coronavirus. You can find this at www.clintondevon.com. Last week the Government set out a 'Guide for Landlords and Tenants', which the Estate is following. This can be found at online at www.gov.uk and entitled **Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government -Coronavirus (COVID-1) Guidance for Landlords and Tenants**. We have attached a relevant extract which sets out some questions and answers on pertinent points.

If you have any immediate queries please contact Clare James, Adrian Pitts or myself, we are happy to have a conversation with you at any time if you are having any concerns. In time, once current social distancing has been relaxed and the Rolle Estate office has reopened, we would be happy to arrange to meet any residential tenant who has experienced financial hardship during this challenging period.

Yours sincerely

Leigh Rix
Head of Property and Land
leigh.rix@clintondevon.com



1. Rent, mortgage payments and possession proceedings

1.1 As a tenant, should I stop paying rent during the outbreak?

- Tenants should continue to pay rent and abide by all other terms of their tenancy agreement to the best of their ability. The government has a strong package of financial support available to tenants, and where they can pay the rent as normal, they should do. Tenants who are unable to do so should speak to their landlord at the earliest opportunity.
- In many if not most cases, the COVID-19 outbreak will not affect tenants' ability to pay rent. If your ability to pay will be affected, it's important to have an early conversation with your landlord. Rent levels agreed in your tenancy agreement remain legally due and you should discuss with your landlord if you are in difficulty.

1.2 What can I do about rent arrears?

- Tenants should continue to pay rent and abide by all other terms of their tenancy agreement to the best of their ability. Tenants who are unable to do so should speak to their landlord at the earliest opportunity.
- As part of our national effort to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak it's important that landlords offer support and understanding to tenants who may start to see their income fluctuate.
- An early conversation between landlord and tenant can help both parties to agree a plan if tenants are struggling to pay their rent. This can include reaching a temporary agreement not to seek possession action for a period of time and instead accept a lower level of rent, or agree a plan to pay off arrears at a later date. Where a landlord does choose to serve notice seeking possession for rent arrears or has done so already, the notice period and any further action will be affected by legislation lengthening the notice period (see Section 1.3) and/or the suspension of possession claims (see Section 2).
- If a landlord and tenant agree a plan to pay off arrears at a later date, it is important they both stick to this plan, and that tenants talk to their landlord immediately if they are unable to do so.
- If a tenant is worried about being unable to pay their rent, or if landlords become aware of tenants who may be in difficulty, advice is available from specialist providers such as Shelter, Citizens Advice and The Money Advice Service.
- Local authorities can provide support for tenants to stay in their homes. If you are experiencing financial hardship, you may be able to access new funding; we have already made £500m available to fund households experiencing financial hardship and are determined to take action to support people in need.