

Housing Services – March 2020

In light of Coronavirus (Covid19) crisis, Housing has to prioritise services to residents until further notice during business hours and out of hours. Please do not visit Harrow Civic Centre at this time. We apologise for any inconvenience caused and thank you for your patience during service restrictions and reductions in resources.

You can keep informed about Harrow Council services [here](#)

Actions

- We have moved to phone / online contact only, the purpose being to reduce non-essential face to face contact with residents / clients. Home visits will only occur if absolutely necessary to protect both you and our staff.
- We will shortly commence contacting vulnerable residents (tenants aged 70 years and over or at risk) to check on their welfare.
- In addition, the Council is coordinating efforts to support vulnerable Harrow residents experiencing hardship or loneliness. You will be able to access certain types of support in the coming weeks should you need it – Harrow Council will provide regular updates on its website.

Priority housing services

Here is a description of the key services we are focusing our resources over the coming weeks:-

Repairs and Maintenance

For tenants who have a domestic gas boiler within their property and you wish to report no heating and/or hot water/radiator defects/central heating-hot water pipe leaks/boiler not firing up, please continue to call Quality Heating Services in the normal manner on 01494 795 000

From 23.03.20 the repairs team will only offer a priority 1 emergency service, for example

1. Lost keys
2. Blocked toilets/drains
3. Major leaks
4. No power to one or more rooms
5. Essential repairs following adverse weather such as storms
6. Communal repairs such as broken communal door/window, hanging roof tiles, burst pipes causing major flooding
7. Any repair that represents an essential health and safety concern to the well-being of a resident or major property damage

And Council surveyors will no longer be able to visit you, but if a survey is required they will contact you by telephone.

At the first instance if you have an emergency repair please contact Access Harrow on: **020 8901 2630 or 0800614 456** or on-line <https://www.harrow.gov.uk/housing-property/request-repair-council-home> with the full nature of the repair so we can process your request efficiently.

You will be asked if any household is showing flu-like symptoms and if you do we will not be able to send a contractor out unless they wear protective equipment. In such cases the contractor will carry out a door-step risk assessment to protect their and your safety. They may ask you to move to a different part of your home.

We will ask residents to report non-urgent repairs at a later date once we are able to so.

Aids and Adaptations

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) applicants: If we are in receipt of a request from social services for an adaptation one of our HIA advisers will be in touch to carry out a telephone preliminary means test if applicable, and then allocate it to a surveyor.

Unfortunately however it cannot proceed further than this as the surveyor will need to carry out a survey prior to preparing a scheme. When the crisis is over the surveyor will contact you to arrange a survey.

Non DFG applicants: If we are in receipt of a request from social services for an adaptation, your case will be allocated to a surveyor, unfortunately however it cannot proceed further than this as the surveyor will need to carry out a survey prior to preparing a scheme. When the crisis is over the surveyor will contact you to arrange a survey.

A surveyor will only visit if a case is urgent and involves works to facilitate hospital discharge. If any person in the home is self isolating or showing symptoms of Coronavirus we will be unable to proceed further.

Any cases which have already been surveyed will be processed through to approval stage ready for works commencing when the crisis is over.

Tenancy management

1. You can still contact your housing officer if you have any questions about your tenancy or worries about paying your rent and to report anti-social behaviour. They are working remotely but they can pick up emails and take phone calls. We may ask you to email details or photos and speak to you over the phone instead of visiting you in person.
2. Keeping rental and service charge payments going via the All-Pay system for telephone and internet payments. If you have difficulty paying your rent during this period it is important you contact your Housing Officer on the following email: housing.residentservices@harrow.gov.uk . They will be able to advise and guide you in making the necessary applications for benefit.
3. Meeting statutory deadlines for Leaseholders
4. Our gas servicing is still taking place - we ask residents to provide access as requested for this vital health and safety work.

Estate services

1. We're running a reduced caretaking service which will focus on urgent health and safety tasks, checking corridors are clear, bulk removal, only. If you are requested to remove items from the communal areas please do so immediately. This is to keep you and other residents safe.

2. For your safety staff are checking that the corridors in our blocks are clear. Some of them are quite narrow so please keep corridors clear and remember the social distancing rules to remain 2 metre/6 feet away from our staff who are checking them.
3. Do not allow your children to congregate in communal areas on or around our estates.
4. Please follow the social-distancing guidance with our staff. If it is urgent you speak to them on the estate please ensure you remain at least 2 metre/6 feet away from them.
5. We understand residents are at home and taking the time to clear out their belongings but please do not leave them on the estate. Please dispose of rubbish responsibly. If it does not need to be removed urgently please keep it in your home/garden/shed etc until COVID-19 is over.
6. For information the recycling site at Forward Drive is closed to the public.

Sheltered Housing Schemes

1. It is vital that we maintain our social distancing. This means being 2 metres/ 6 feet away from one another. To encourage this to happen we have now closed all communal kitchens within sheltered housing schemes.
2. To limit the spread of the Coronavirus residents must either stay at home within the scheme or stay with family/friends. We must insist residents do not spend time travelling between the two locations. Please decide where it is best for you to stay and remain there.

Housing Needs services

- 1 Providing a service to homeless households and those at risk of homelessness within 56 days. Please contact housing.advice@harrow.gov.uk
- 2 Providing advice to and exploring housing options for those in urgent housing need and/or risk of homelessness. Please contact housing.advice@harrow.gov.uk
- 3 Continuing to allocate any available social housing and general fund properties (council and housing association) - Harrow Council properties won't be advertised or allocated at this time but Housing Association properties will be advertised
- 4 Work closely with private landlords/temporary accommodation providers to assist with statutory homelessness duty. Landlords/providers should contact landlords@help2let.co.uk

Major repairs and building programme

We will respond to any urgent issues on site, particularly if bad weather makes a site unsafe or there is loss of power/water to existing homes in immediate vicinity. Regeneration work at Grange Farm estate has had to stop for the time being.