

Housing Services – June 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:

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Actions

We have moved to phone / online contact only, the purpose being to reduce non-essential face to face contact with residents / clients. To protect you and our staff, home visits will only occur if absolutely necessary..

Housing services

Here is a description of the key services:

Repairs and Maintenance

The Housing Department will begin a phased approach to resuming the full repairs and maintenance service to Council residents in line with Government Covid19 guidelines.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-letter-to-social-housing-residents>

This means residents can report internal repairs and communal repairs as follows:

Priority 1 and 2: By calling the Council on 020 8901 2630 or 0800 614 456

Priority 3 and below: By reporting your repair via the Council website at www.harrow.gov.uk/housingportal

The range of repairs and their priority is detailed in the [Repairs Charter](#).

Residents will be able to report all repairs, urgent and non-urgent. On receiving your request, you will be asked essential questions to ensure that we can provide you with a safe service for our customers, staff and contractors.

Our main repairs contractors, Wates and Slade, will contact you to confirm an appointment date, providing it is safe for them to attend and in line with Covid19 guidelines.

Essential inspections by Surveyors will continue to be on an emergency basis only, providing it is safe to do so and non-essential inspections will be carried out over the telephone.

For repairs to domestic gas boiler and central heating systems please continue to report this directly to Quality Heating Services by telephone on 01494 795 041 or email:

customer-services@quality-heating.co.uk

Aids and Adaptations

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) applicants:

When we receive a request from social services for a major adaptation one of our Home Improvement Agency advisers will call to assist you to complete DFG application and send completed pack either by post or email. Once we receive signed application together with supporting documents (either by post or email) we will then carry out a full financial assessment. If financially eligible then the case will be allocated to a surveyor to process DFG application further.

If you are not shielding the allocated surveyor will contact you and if you are happy for the survey to go ahead, a visit will be arranged at a mutually agreed time. At the survey the surveyor will determine whether the works can go ahead whilst following Covid 19 guidelines. If it is possible a contractor will be arranged to carry out the works.

Please note however that we currently have a 3 month backlog of cases due to the Covid 19 crisis and it may take longer than normal to process applications

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. If you are not shielding, the allocated surveyor will contact you and if you are happy for the survey to go ahead, a visit will be arranged at a mutually agreed time. At the survey the surveyor will determine whether the works can go ahead whilst following Covid 19 guidelines. If it is possible a contractor will be arranged to carry out the works.

Please note however that we currently have a 3 month backlog of cases due to the Covid 19 crisis and it may take longer than normal to process applications

If any person in the home is self isolating or showing symptoms of Coronavirus we will be unable to proceed further.

Tenancy management

1. 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. [Here is a list of Housing Officers patches.](#)

We are 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 by searching council rent on the Harrow Council website or email: housing.residentservices@harrow.gov.uk. They will be able to advise and guide you in making the necessary applications for benefit.

2. Our gas servicing is still taking place - we ask residents to provide access as requested for this vital health and safety work.

Leasehold services

If you need to contact the Leasehold Team please email them via Leasehold&RTBServices@harrow.gov.uk

Estate services

1. We're running a slightly reduced caretaking service which will focus on urgent health and safety tasks, checking corridors are clear and bulk removal. 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 the correct distance away from them.
5. Please dispose of rubbish responsibly, the Harrow recycling site at Forward Drive is now open.

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.

You must follow the government guidelines around shielding and visiting others.

Housing Needs services

- 1 Provides a service to homeless households and those at risk of homelessness. Please contact housing.advice@harrow.gov.uk if you are being asked to leave your home.
- 2 Provides advice and assistance if you're struggling to pay rent or a mortgage because of the Covid-19 impact on your employment. Please don't delay, contact housing.advice@harrow.gov.uk now.
- 3 Advice for all housing problems for private tenants and homeowners. Please contact housing.advice@harrow.gov.uk
- 4 Applications for social housing (council and housing association) is done online - properties are advertised on Locata, with virtual viewings and visits to properties carried out in line with government guidelines. www.Locata.org.uk/harrow
- 5 Work closely with private landlords and help with lettings. Landlords/agents: We require rooms in shared houses, as well as small and family sized private rented properties. Please contact landlords@help2let.co.uk to discuss what financial support packages we can offer.

Major repairs and building programme

Major repair projects and house building programmes are operating a normal service with all contractors now back on site and projects being progressed, in line with government safety guidelines.