



**PROPERTY
MANAGEMENT**



updated 15th April 2020

UPDATED GUIDANCE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Since we last wrote to you, the impact of coronavirus on our everyday lives has become even greater. Each and every one of us has been impacted by this dreadful virus, and we are truly in this together.

The full team are now settling into working from home, ensuring that we can answer your queries as best we can, often working late into the night, as we fully understand that you and your families need our reassurance at this time.

We know how difficult it has been for many of our tenants, we are trying to support you through this, with practical information and advice we are being supplied with, even though this is changing daily or further support is being added.

Of course this list is not exhaustive and you are welcome to ask any questions or raise any concerns you may have, all information provided has been taken from the government website, please ensure you visit these sites, incase information changes.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Where can I get more information from RNL?

RNL Main Phone – 0113 3229169

Email: info@rnlpropertymanagement.com
maintenance@rnlpropertymanagement.com
accounts@rnlpropertymanagement.com

OOH – 07584022800

For genuine emergencies only in relevance to maintenance outside of business hours.
Do not abuse this service.

NHS Helpline - 111

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

The below links will help you assess your situation in terms of being eligible for Universal Credit or Statutory Sick Pay if you are unable to work:

Gov.uk re Employers or Employees:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-employees-employers-and-businesses>

Statutory Sick Pay Guidelines:

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

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

<https://www.gov.uk/housing-benefit>

<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en>

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What happens if the government lockdown restrictions are not lifted by my move out date?

We know that this is concerning, given that move out date for the majority of RNL tenants is by the 30th June 2020.

In all scenarios, we are working with tenants, outgoing and incoming, along with agents and landlords on a case by case basis.

For any tenancies ending before the 30th June 2020;

Whilst we are still in the middle of the government restrictions, and information is changing daily, we have been following government advice for any unavoidable contractual move outs, where all parties have agreed, following the strict government advice.

For any tenancies due to end on or after the 30th June 2020;

As above, information is changing daily of when the restriction may be lifted, it is quite possible by then, that we can proceed with less restriction. Whilst still complying with any government instruction.

Information relevant to both queries.

We have been able to facilitate some contract extensions for a month or two, provided the property has not been let, or with consent from all parties involved, delay contract starts dates to accommodate any tenants still needing to remain in their property.

Unfortunately, each case will vary depending on factors associated with the tenancy, for example if the property has let for the next academic year with another agent. If this is the case, we can still work around it if and where necessary.

However, if you are displaying symptoms, self-isolating or shielding someone in your property, please follow medical advice and you MUST contact us, either by phone or email with urgency so this can be discussed.

For any tenants who have not found a property for the next academic year, we are working with agents, who have the facility to carry out virtual viewings and can be done so on various platforms, for example ZOOM – so you can still “view” the property as a group – do get in touch and we can ensure your details are passed along.

Please note, you may start to receive moving out information from us, do not be alarmed, especially if we have agreed an arrangement. We must send this as per your tenancy agreement.

I have left the property; can I return my keys?

If your tenancy has not ended, we are unable to accept the return of your keys. Any keys posted through the RNL Property Management letter box will be held for tenants and can be collected at any point. Tenants may access their property at any time. If you do choose for RNL to hold your keys for you and you post them through the letterbox, please be sure to send an email to info@rnllpropertymanagement.com to advise that this is the action you have taken.

ACCOUNTS

We are ensuring all of our tenants and landlords have practical advice and guidance under the Coronavirus Act 2020.

Understandably many of you are worried about being able to pay your rent, the accounts team are working tirelessly, trying to ensure your concerns, your guarantors concerns are answered. Communicating with the Landlords and researching the best possible advice, in order to help you.

My circumstances have changed, and face not being able to my rent, what can I do?

We are working with all tenants on a case by case basis. Please note that Landlords are being flexible at this time and the team will work with you to ensure you are supported.

Any working tenants affected, maybe able to claim housing/universal benefit to assist with any rental payments.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-employees-employers-and-businesses>

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

<https://www.gov.uk/housing-benefit>

<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en>

If you are affected, it is imperative that you get in touch with the accounts team, if you simply do not pay, without contact, we have to follow the legal process of rent recovery, and do not wish cause any angst for you or your families, should you receive these notifications. It is so important that you contact us, so we can update your profiles.

The local University has allowed students to stop paying rent. Why should I have to pay mine?

We are aware that Universities and other government funded agents, have been able to cancel tenancies in their own accommodation, as they have unlimited funding to be able to do this. For private Landlords this is essentially their income, and in some cases, their only income. Landlords are affected by this also and are reliant on the rent to cover outgoings on the property and for themselves and their family. Landlords are only being offered, if applicable, the deferred mortgage relief for 3 months, their mortgages still need to be paid once this is all over, including the deferred payments. Students are still being granted the full loan amount, tax free, that they would have received for living away from home which should assist you with some, if not all rental.

If you were also working to subsidise your student loan and have been affected, please do follow the links above for further assistance.

If you are affected, it is imperative that you get in touch with the accounts team, if you simply do not pay, without contact, we have to follow the legal process of rent recovery, and do not wish cause any angst for you or your families, should you receive these notifications. It is so important that you contact us, so we can update your profiles.

I pay for my bills inclusive with my rent – can I stop paying for my bills, if I have moved home?

Bills are inclusive of your rental and we ask you follow the same protocol as above. We have logged with the utility companies we work with, that if they are offering reductions, to advise so they can be passed on.

Please refer to your tenancy agreement for your inclusive usage in terms of utilities.

If you have left the property, please take meter reads, so we can do accurate usage calculations. Ensure any timers have been turned off, along with the boiler, electrics and water (if you have items in the fridge/freezer and are planning to return, leave it on).

MAINTENANCE

Will maintenance continue as normal?

Unfortunately not, non-essential maintenance will not be carried out at this time, or an extended timeframe will be given.

We have created a list of further hints and tips, including links to You Tube videos that will help tenants. This can be found on the RNL website, under our news section.

Where tenants can be aided to resolve their issues remotely, we will provide a Whatsapp number for video calling / sending in photos to fault diagnose. The intention being to either remove the need for the contractor to attend or allow them to diagnose and more efficiently repair cutting contact time.

If we need access for a repair, we will need to make a judgement on the urgency of the situation, for example, if there is an immediate risk to safety. If there is an immediate risk, we will attempt all possible steps to complete the repair.

Please respect we work with self-employed contractors and they will also have their own guidelines.

What if my annual gas or fire certificate is due during the time of self-isolation?

If we are not able to carry out a check, due to self-isolation of the tenants, in these extreme circumstances we will keep an open communication between the tenant, landlord and contractor. We may also need to advise the local authority team that we have been unable to carry out a check, and arrange one as soon as humanly possible.

We ask that tenants ensure their fire doors are closed at all times (not propped open) and that detectors are not tampered with.

Please ensure you follow the tenancy agreement and DO NOT smoke within the property, light candles or anything else that may place yourselves and housemates in danger. This is risk to life and we need you to take this seriously.

Will you be carrying out property visits as normal?

Unfortunately not, we will be following all government guidance at this time. If there is a need for a property visit, we may be able to do this via Whatsapp video. If we have been advised a property is empty, we may be able to visit, taking precautionary measures.

OTHER INFORMATION

If you are contacting us, please try where possible to use one method of communication, we are trying our best to respond to emails, within a 48 turnaround - where Landlords have gotten back to us. Unfortunately, even though we are trying our absolute best, it is not always possible to keep you updated, if the 48 hour window has passed.

If you are calling us, we are trying to get back to you, in the same time-frame - however as you can imagine, phone lines are busy at the moment, due to this unprecedented crisis.

The very best way to get in contact with the team, is via email, and that way there is an audit trail of what has been requested, discussed, meaning anyone from the team can assist.

RNL recognise that these are exceptional circumstances and are working with tenants and landlords as best we can. If you are getting in touch with us, please be patient and courteous, we appreciate it.