

## Estate agents

Estate agents can open for business but should consider how and when to reopen their premises given government guidance on [safer working](#). Estate agents should inform customers and their own staff about their procedures, so that they are safe throughout the sales process.

- Agents should ask whether any party is showing symptoms or has been asked to self-isolate before going ahead with any viewing, or visits to offices.
- Agents should operate using an appointment system for visits to their offices and when conducting viewings.
- Agents should not carry out any open house viewings.
- Agents should strongly encourage clients to view properties virtually in the first instance and then only physically inspect properties which they have a strong interest in.
- Agents can accompany physical viewings and seek to maintain a minimum of 2 metres distance from others wherever possible. Where social distancing is not possible and the visit is within an enclosed space, they should consider wearing a face covering in line with [government guidance](#).
- Where they do not accompany the visit, they should make sure that both buyers and sellers clearly understand how the viewing should be conducted safely.
- Agents should not drive clients to appointments.
- All parties viewing a property should wash their hands with soap and water (or hand sanitiser if not available) immediately after entering the properties, with internal doors opened and surfaces having been wiped down before they enter. Separate towels or paper towels should be used if possible and washed or disposed of safely after use.
- Agents should do what they can to promote flexibility when arranging move dates, for example advising clients to ensure contracts have explicit terms to manage the timing risks presented by coronavirus.
- Agents should work with their clients and other agents to broker a new date to move where sales are due to complete and one of the parties falls ill with coronavirus or has to self-isolate.
- Agents should ensure that any keys are appropriately [cleaned](#) before handover.

## Letting agents

Tenants' safety should be letting agents' and landlords' first priority. The government has put in place protections for tenants during the coronavirus outbreak, including legislation to delay when landlords are able to start proceedings to evict tenants. This means until 30 September 2020, most landlords will not be able to start possession proceedings unless they have given their tenants three-months' notice.

This guidance for landlords and letting agents is to help them safely let empty properties, or properties which tenants are voluntarily vacating. While broader measures to protect tenants during the coronavirus outbreak remain in place, letting agents and landlords should endeavour to avoid ending tenancies where the tenant wants and is able to stay.

Letting agents and landlords should be aware of and follow government [guidance on coronavirus and renting](#), which explains these protections in greater detail, and make sure tenants are aware of this guidance.

- Private landlords and letting agents should not conduct viewings in properties where tenants are symptomatic or self-isolating, or where it has been determined that they are clinically extremely vulnerable and are shielding.
- In other cases, where viewings can proceed, they should be conducted in line with the guidance on viewings earlier in this document.
- Any visits to a property must be made in accordance with government's [guidelines on working in other people's homes](#) and [social distancing](#).
- If possible, necessary repairs, gas and electrical safety checks should be conducted in the period between a property being vacated and a new tenant moving in. If this is not possible and visits are needed to an occupied property, this should be done by appointment with measures put in place to ensure physical contact is minimised, for example with residents staying in another room during the visit.
- Landlords should make every effort to abide by gas and electrical safety requirements, which continue to be of great importance for tenants' safety. This may be more difficult due to restrictions associated with the coronavirus outbreak, for example where a tenant has coronavirus symptoms, is self-isolating or shielding. Under such circumstances, provided the landlord can demonstrate they have taken reasonable steps to comply, they would not be in breach. See further Health and Safety Executive [guidance on how to deal with specific circumstances](#). Letting agents may also want to consider obtaining landlord and tenant consent for inventory clerk appointments to also occur before a tenant moves in or after a tenant moves out during vacant periods if possible.
- Letting agents and landlords should take steps to ensure any properties are prepared ready for new tenants, this may include cleaning to minimise any potential spread of the virus in line with [government advice](#).
- Letting agents and landlords should consider how best to conduct tenancy check-ins for new tenancies agreed while broader measures remain in place, taking care to follow government advice on [social distancing](#) to minimise possible spread of coronavirus.
- Letting agents and landlords are reminded of the [temporary COVID-19 measures that adjust right to rent checks](#), temporarily allowing these checks to be conducted remotely. Lettings agents and landlords should consider other areas where in person payments, referencing or checks can be conducted remotely instead and take further advice if required.

## Tradespeople

Moving home is often a time when people want to undertake work to improve their new home or prepare their old home for sale. This work can involve fitting new kitchens, redecorating, and other home improvement work. This work is also important when people aren't moving home. It is a key way for households and landlords to improve the home environment and address poor quality accommodation while also providing important work for tradespeople whose businesses have been affected by the virus.

Tradespeople should follow the government's safer working guidance. Companies should ensure employees understand how to operate safely and communicate this to customers.

- Tradespeople should contact the household in advance to check that no member of the household is showing symptoms of coronavirus or self-isolating. If they are, works should be delayed.
- No work should be carried out by a person who has coronavirus symptoms, however mild.
- Tradespeople should wash their hands on entering the property using separate towels of paper towels which need to be washed or disposed of safely after use.
- Tradespeople should seek to minimise contact with homeowners and remain 2 metres apart from householders at all times.
- Tradespeople should implement a buddy system and ensure that the same people work together where this is needed.
- Tradespeople should bring their own refreshments but you should ensure they have access to hand washing facilities, using separate towels or paper towels if possible, which should be washed or disposed of safely afterwards.

## Surveyors and EPC assessors

Surveyors and EPC assessors are free to visit properties to carry out surveys. Surveyors should follow the latest government guidance for [working in other people's homes](#). Where surveys are carried out, all public health guidance on [social distancing](#) must be followed. Companies should ensure employees understand how to operate safely and communicate this to customers.

- Surveyors should contact the owners of the property to be surveyed prior to the survey to make sure they understand which areas will be surveyed and ensure that all doors and access panels are open and surfaces have been [cleaned](#) with household cleaning products in line with public health advice. During a visit, members of the household should follow social distancing guidance, staying 2 metres away wherever possible, for example by staying in another room.
- No work should be carried out by a person who has coronavirus symptoms, however mild or anyone who has been asked to self-isolate.
- Surveyors should wash their hands immediately upon entering the property, using separate towels or paper towels which need to be washed or disposed of safely after use.
- Surveyors should be clear in any reports about areas which they weren't able to inspect due to public health limitations.