

Housing Advice – Coronavirus May 2020

The coronavirus pandemic has thrown up a number of question marks over normal life, including concerns about housing, whether that is in rented accommodation, halls of residence or in owned properties. The Office for Students (regulatory authority for the higher education sector in England) is working alongside universities, colleges and other stakeholders to produce a series of briefing notes to support students during the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic.

In the meantime, UCP is committed to supporting students throughout this period and is working with, Taverner's Halls and the Citizen's Advice Bureau to make sure that up to date information is available to you.

Key points in relation to housing amidst coronavirus: *all below information has been taken directly from the [Citizen's Advice Bureau website](#).*

- **Eviction laws have changed.** This means that your landlord might have to give you more notice. Court actions are also postponed. To check what to do if you can't pay your rent because of coronavirus, please visit the [Citizen's Advice Bureau website](#).
- **If you need to leave your accommodation:** The government has said you should delay moving home, where possible, because of coronavirus.
- **If you are worried about being evicted:** Your landlord might have to give you extra notice before they can evict you. If your landlord gives you an eviction notice on or after 26 March 2020, the notice has to be increased to 3 months for these tenancy types:
 - *assured, assured shorthold and starter tenancies* - you're likely to have this if you rent from a private landlord or housing association
 - *secure, introductory and flexible tenancies* - you're likely to have this if you rent from the local council
 - *protected tenancy* - you're likely to have this if you started renting from a private landlord before 15 January 1989
 - *demoted tenancy* - you may have this if you rent from your local council or from a housing association
 - If you rent from a private landlord, your tenancy depends on the rental agreement you have. You can [check your tenancy type here](#).
- **If your rented property needs repairs:** The government has said landlords should continue to make sure properties are safe to live in, and carry out any urgent repairs. You should avoid any direct contact with contractors and other people that come into your home. If someone in your home has symptoms of coronavirus you should only get repairs done if it's an emergency, for example a broken boiler. You'll need to put extra safety measures in place, like cleaning the area before and after the repair is done.
- **If you normally have to leave your house to pay rent:** Ask your landlord if you can pay your rent in a different way, such as a card payment over the phone or an online

transfer. You can also contact your bank for advice about different ways to pay. Don't send cash through the post.

- **If you have a mortgage and cannot afford repayments:** If you are experiencing financial difficulties meeting your mortgage repayments because of COVID-19, you may be entitled to a mortgage or rental holiday for 3 months. You must contact your mortgage provider to discuss your circumstances. Further advice can be found on the [Citizen's Advice Bureau website](#).
- **If you live in shared housing and are worried about your health:** If you or someone you live with has symptoms of coronavirus there are things you can do - read how to [keep each other safe](#) on GOV.UK.

If you're extremely vulnerable because of a medical condition, you might have been told to 'shield' yourself. You can read about how to [live safely with other people](#) on GOV.UK.

If your shared housing makes it impossible for you to shield yourself, it's likely to be considered unsafe for you to stay there. This is known as being 'unreasonable to continue to occupy'. You should contact support@ucp.ac.uk in this instance or you can ask your local council for help finding somewhere else to live. That means you'll need to [make a homeless application](#).

If your council doesn't offer suitable alternative accommodation, you should contact support@ucp.ac.uk or your [nearest Citizens Advice](#).

- **If you are in Taverner's Halls and have an issue:** you should contact support@ucp.ac.uk to discuss your specific concerns.