

SUGARHOUSE LEEDS – COVID-19 OFFICE POLICY

The last few months have been an incredibly challenging period for the whole of the country, as Covid-19 has caused drastic changes in the way in which we live and interact with others. As restrictions continue to be lifted, and businesses premises re-open, it has never been more important to ensure that the safety of staff and customers are forefront in everyone's minds. The health and wellbeing of our customers and staff has always been our priority and we have, in line with Government guidance, put a number of measures in place to ensure that all of our tenants, landlords, contractors and colleagues are kept safe.

Our Office;

Following government guidelines, we are now preparing our offices for re-opening once we have had the opportunity to put safe measures in place to do so.

In our modern world plenty of tasks can now be carried out via e-mail, telephone and video calls, and over the last few months we have been able to successfully communicate without the need for physical contact. Whilst our office will now re-open, we would still ask our customers to consider whether they need to visit our office or if we are able to communicate with you remotely.

Inside our office we will ensure that social distancing measures are in place and would ask that on arrival at the office that all customers check before entering to ensure they are able to adhere to social distancing guidelines where other customers are already in the office. Where this is not immediately possible, we would ask you to wait outside until it is safe for you to enter. To keep contact times to a minimum, we will try and reduce face to face time with customers to 10 minutes.

Screens will be provided between our staff and customers as a preventative measure and again we urge you to socially distance yourself at least 2 meters away. Where possible we will place barriers or floor markings to keep you at a safe distance and hand sanitiser will be provided as a further safeguard for you and our staff to use. Our offices are well ventilated and cleaned at various times throughout the day. If you are with people that do not need to enter the office, please ask them to wait outside.

Our staff will be cleaning their own desks multiple times throughout the day and are being encouraged to continue to wash their hands more frequently, and every time they return from an external appointment.

Our hours of service are subject to change at this time and therefore we would advise you contact the office before your visit.

Moving Into A Property;

The Government's guidance has been further clarified, with people now able to move home, and we are preparing for all tenancies to commence on their start date.

We have set up extra cleaning measures for all of our properties to reduce the risk of infection, which includes sanitising surfaces and ventilating the property during the cleaning process. We have also instructed all of our sub-contracted cleaners to wear suitable PPE equipment. All door handles, surfaces and other contact points will be disinfected and wiped down.

For our student changeovers and our new student tenants arriving on the 1st July, our procedures this year will be very different as it is neither possible nor safe for this volume of people to enter our premises during this time. As such we will be in contact with the head tenants of all new tenancies to make suitable arrangements for checking in and collecting keys.

Keys will be issued using a contactless collection and information about this will have been emailed to your head tenant prior to the start of your tenancy agreement.

We would ask you to bear with us during this period; student changeover is always logistically very challenging and this year will be even more so. We have had limited access to our properties over the last few months meaning that any issues or problems with the properties may be new to us. In addition, providing contactless check-ins and inventories for this number of tenants and properties at the same time is very difficult, and we would greatly appreciate your patience as we make adjustments. The safety of our tenants checking in and out remains our priority during this period, as does the welfare of our own team.

Key Returns and Collection;

To adhere to the Government guidelines and to protect both you and our members of staff, we have put procedures in place to make key return and collection as contactless as possible. Keys can still be returned to our office, and keys for new tenants will be issued in line with Government guidance. Further details will be provided for individual key collections prior to move in dates.

Property Viewings;

We are now able to carry out physical viewings on our properties, but with a number of restrictions in place to ensure everyone's safety.

Government guidelines confirm that we should only put prospective tenants forward to view when they are in a position to proceed. Please do not be offended if we ask more questions than usual about your personal circumstances. Where possible, we will firstly try and conduct a virtual walkthrough of the property or send you a series of internal photographs followed by a talk through of the house with one of our lettings team.

Where an appointment at the property is requested and required, this will be carried out with every effort made to adhere to the current government guidelines specifically around social distancing. We also must respect the current occupants and we may have to postpone or rearrange the viewing if we are not able to safely access the property.

We will ask you as the prospective tenant if you are showing any symptoms or have been in contact with anyone that has within the last 14 days, or if anyone in your household has been self-isolating within the last 14 days. If you answer yes to either question, we will re-arrange the viewing once it is safe to do so. You will be advised that if anything changes before the appointment takes place in relation to the above, that you must tell us and that you will not be able to attend the appointment. Again, your own safety and that of the current occupants and our staff is our number one priority at this time.

Viewers that are able to attend will be advised of the following points to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone in attendance;

- Please keep a minimum of 2 metres away from each other wherever possible.
- We recommend the use of your own PPE in the form of a face covering and gloves.
- We ask that you do not touch any surfaces.
- Please bring your own hand sanitiser which should be used before entry to the property.
- Only one person will be able to attend viewings – children and other members of a family or household will not be able to enter the property.
- Viewings are to be conducted in as short a time as possible (15 minutes is recommended).

- All internal doors will be opened in advance of the viewing.
- Our lettings negotiator will wear PPE during the course of the viewing in the form of face covering and gloves (wherever possible).

By agreeing to an appointment, you agree to adhere to these guidelines to the best of your ability and we confirm we will also do our utmost to do the same and will inform all parties of these guidelines prior to the appointment taking place.

If there is anything we can do to accommodate particular requirements then we are happy to discuss these, but the safety of all parties concerned will be our priority and we reserve the right to decide not to carry out an appointment if we are not totally satisfied this can be done safely.

Market Appraisals / New Landlords;

We will continue to carry out full market appraisals where this is possible and where the property is unoccupied. We will then communicate with the landlord via video conferencing to avoid both parties being in the property at the same time.

Where the property is currently tenanted, the same measures for property viewings will be put into place for any new market appraisals and these appraisals will be carried out only if it is deemed safe to do so.

The use of technology and the reduced need to all parties to be present at the same time, means that we should be able to continue to carry out appraisals with minimum disruption.

Finally, we would like to thank all of our customers, contractors and staff for their incredible understanding, patience and support during these difficult times.

We would also like to offer our unreserved thanks for all of our healthcare and key workers who are doing such an amazing job to keep us all safe. It is the very least we can do to ensure that we all do the same in our own households and businesses, and we look forward to continuing to help and support our customers in a safe and protected environment.