

30 October 2020



To: All Sandbourne tenants, leaseholders
and shared owners

Coronavirus/COVID 19 – Update (8)

As you know, from 14 September we reverted to our normal office hours with members of the team being available on 01202 671222, between 9 am and 4 pm (Monday to Friday) to take calls. At the time of this update, we expect this to remain the case.

However, unfortunately, the increase in the COVID–19 infection rates over the course of the last few weeks has led us to review some of the other plans we had in place and were making in order to return to a normal service. In particular:

1. We had begun to operate generally with three members of the team in the office on any working day on a rota basis, with the rest of the team working from home. In line with government advice to 'work from home if you can', we have now reverted back to just having two of the team in the office on any given day.

Please be assured that if you do telephone the office (**01202 671222**) and the person you want to speak to is not there, a message to contact you is relayed to them very quickly and, subject to their availability, you should still receive a call back the same day. However, this may also be subject to you being available to take their call.

We would ask that you listen carefully to any message you hear when ringing the office. As mentioned in the Autumn newsletter, we now have a new message when you are connected to our phone system advising that calls will be recorded for information and training purposes. This standard message is only 10 seconds long and you will then automatically go through to a member of our team. If our lines are busy, you will hear a different message telling you that you can leave a voicemail.

Please also remember that you can contact us at info@sandbourne.org.uk or via our website www.sandbournehousingassociation.org.uk using our contact form. These options are both monitored by our Admin Team throughout the working day and, as with telephone calls, messages are forwarded to the right person as soon as practically possible after they are received. Similarly, repairs can be reported directly to our Maintenance Team at repairs@sandbourne.org.uk and this mailbox is also monitored regularly.

2. As a result of the rising rates of infection, we have not used the meeting rooms that we set up in Southbourne, Bournemouth and Poole or made use of those in Ringwood in the way that we had originally planned or intended. This is frustrating for everyone, particularly as we appreciate that some people prefer to have contact with us on a face-to-face basis.

We have, however, been planning how best to use these facilities when infection rates begin to fall as this is likely to become an interim service in advance of it being safe for everyone to return to how we operated before the pandemic. Our plan is that as and when we can, we will arrange regular 'surgeries' where you will be able to book an appointment in advance to meet with a member of the team in a COVID secure environment. All the rooms will be set out to allow for social distancing, be equipped with sanitiser, and cleaned regularly. We will also insist that anyone attending such a meeting wears a face mask.

We will write to you again once we have a date when you can begin booking individual face-to-face meetings with our staff.

Until it is completely safe to do so, and due to the government restrictions on gatherings and the potential risks involved, we cannot hold any open meetings for residents at any of our sites.

In the meantime, however, members of the team are still attending sites to carry out regular safety checks and related activities and will continue to do so whilst the current government advice remains in place.

3. Communal lounges, guest rooms and toilets will still remain closed until further notice, for the reasons given to those residents affected in our Bournemouth 60+ properties in our last Covid-19 Update (7).

We appreciate and share the frustration that some of you feel at the moment that we are not as accessible or visible as we were prior to the pandemic but are sure that the vast majority will understand the reasons for this. Please remember that, in most cases, an issue or query that you may have raised with a member of the team in the past whilst they were on site can still be responded to quickly if you report it directly to the office.

We are as keen as everyone to see a return to normality as soon as possible and continue to monitor the situation and our response to it at very regular intervals. Please be assured that as and when we are safely able to take further steps to extend the service we provide we will. Until then, please continue to do what you need to so that you, your family and your neighbours stay safe.



David Hall
Head of Housing