

## Advice for Homeless Applicants

In light of the governments announcement regarding social distancing and the closure of all none essential businesses, our Housing Needs Service is now working a telephone-only basis. The situation is unprecedented and we are working hard to minimise the disruption and deliver the best service we can under the circumstances.

The government has issued new guidance to landlords and tenants that provides additional protections for private tenants at this time. The guidance can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/876500/Consolidated\\_Landlord\\_and\\_Tenant\\_Guidance\\_COVID\\_and\\_the\\_PRS\\_v4.2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876500/Consolidated_Landlord_and_Tenant_Guidance_COVID_and_the_PRS_v4.2.pdf).

Please only approach the service if you are certain that you cannot make your own arrangements for accommodation during the 'lockdown period', or if your safety is at risk in your home.

If you believe you are at risk of homelessness during this time, we will do our best to manage your cases, but please be aware of the following:

- We would encourage you to contact us in the first instance. Most cases will be dealt with by telephone and email only.

**Lewes District Council**

**01273 471600**

**Eastbourne Borough Council**

**01323 410000**

**Email**

**customerfirst@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk**

- Following your initial request for assistance, you will be contacted by telephone or email to discuss your situation. Depending on the assessment made by the Council, if your case is considered urgent you will be offered a telephone appointment.
- The most urgent homelessness cases will be prioritised.
- If any duty is owed by the Council to provide emergency accommodation, you will need to make your own way to the accommodation from your current location.
- Telephone calls and emails may take longer to respond to. Paper correspondence may not be acknowledged until emergency measures are lifted.
- Applications to join the Housing Register including supporting documents may not be acknowledged or processed until emergency measures are lifted.
- We may need to ask questions about whether you or any member of your household has symptoms, in order to help us decide how best to support you.
- We will avoid completing home visits unless absolutely necessary
- Customers who need to self-isolate will be advised to follow Public Health guidelines about social distancing and isolating within a family home.
- If you have an existing application with us, there may be a delay in processing this, but you will be able to contact the team via telephone and email.

## Clients in Temporary Accommodation

The situation may change as further advice and instructions are released by the Government and Public Health England. We will update these pages accordingly and continue to plan with colleagues about how best to deliver key services to our customers.

Should we find ourselves in a position where we need to close our offices, or with significant staffing shortages, we will need to scale back further and may only be able to respond to very urgent homelessness applications.

## **Rough Sleepers**

Rough Sleepers who show symptoms of coronavirus are particularly at risk for a number of reasons.

Please be aware of the following advice for anyone in this situation:

- Any verified rough sleepers in Eastbourne or Lewes district who develop symptoms of coronavirus should be advised to make contact with us by telephone, or via their support worker if they already have one allocated.
- We will seek to make provision for those individuals to self-isolate, and to access the important services that they need.
- Rough sleepers without access to a telephone will be able to use phones that have been fitted outside our main contact centres in Eastbourne and Lewes, in order to speak to their key workers.
- Rough sleepers should continue to engage with their support workers to help them access the services they need, though this may be through telephone support rather than outreach visits.