

Dear Customer,

In light of the evolving Coronavirus (Covid-19) situation, we would like to assure you that the team is working hard to continue to provide a service to you. We are still working on cases, taking new applications, dealing with households facing homelessness and sign posting to relevant agencies. Please continue to liaise directly with your officer via email and telephone communication. In most cases we can resolve the matter over the phone. We have an increased number of staff currently working remotely and they all are contactable via telephone and email. Please use this method to contact your officer.

**This is a difficult time for us all. We are concerned about your health and well-being and it is important that we are all taking care of our own health and well-being as well as our families. This means us all following the government guidance on dealing with Coronavirus. Please see below link. We strongly encourage you to follow this advice.**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

If you are feeling unwell please follow advice from NHS website regarding self-isolation and the use of 111 Coronavirus Service. Please see link below.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

**If you are homeless and in our temporary accommodation and need to self-isolate please call our Customer Services Team on 01789 267 575 and they will direct your call accordingly. Please do not visit the office. We will be able to assist you over the phone.**

More information regarding Council services and how they may be affected by the Coronavirus can be found on our website. You will also find further updates on here. Please see link below.

<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/health-care/coronavirus-information.cfm?frmAlias=/coronavirus/>

If you are in private rented or a housing association tenancy our advice to you is that you remain in your home to prevent any unnecessary movement and travel. You are also entitled to exercise your right to remain in your home even if your notice has expired. The government announced on 18 March 2020 that there would be a radical package to protect renters and landlords affected by the Coronavirus. The following changes are being put into place -

- Emergency legislation to suspend new evictions from social or private rented accommodation while this national emergency is taking place.
- No new possession proceedings through applications to the court to start during the crisis
- Landlords will also be protected as 3 month mortgage payment holiday is extended to Buy to Let mortgages

However, where you remain unaffected financially, i.e. you haven't lost work/ had a drop in your income as a result of this crisis, you will still need to meet your responsibilities to pay your rent and follow the conditions of your tenancy agreement where you have the means to. When the crisis comes to an end, this protection will most likely stop and landlords will resume action against those in default of their tenancy agreements, who have no justifiable reason for being so.

Further information is available on the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/complete-ban-on-evictions-and-additional-protection-for-renters>

If you are worried about paying your rent because you have lost your job or your hours have been reduced, please visit the government website on how to claim benefits.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-for-employees>

<https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus>

**From Tuesday, 5 May 2020, Home Choice Plus will once again be advertising housing association properties across the Stratford-on-Avon District area.**

Applicants will be able to visit the [Home Choice Plus website](#) to see what properties are available and to place bids in the usual way.

The current coronavirus lockdown has meant that it has been difficult for housing associations to carry out the necessary works to prepare properties for allocation. Consequently, this means we are likely to see fewer properties available to bid on. However, we hope that this situation will begin to improve once the lockdown measures have begun to ease.

For those who are successful in their property bids, the current situation does also mean there may be delays in arranging tenancy sign-ups. In such situations, housing association landlords will keep tenants informed as to whether or not tenancy sign-ups will be able to take place.

- Home Choice Plus is the housing register that advertises and allocates Housing Association properties, when they become vacant.
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council does not own any housing stock; all social housing is provided by housing associations.