

Dear Tenant

COVID-19
SPECIAL
EDITION



When we sent you our last newsletter in December last year, we could never have predicted the situation in which we now find ourselves.

As the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues, we want to assure you that the safety and wellbeing of our tenants, customers, staff and contractors is an absolute priority for the Atrium Group. As the situation changes, we'll continue to monitor our services and assess how we can best deliver them to you.

Because of the coronavirus (COVID-19), we've had to restrict a number of the services you previously received. We understand this may be disappointing and worrying for many of you. However, we'll make sure we continue to provide our most essential services to you, in the most effective way we can.

Inside this newsletter you can read about how we've responded to the COVID-19 crisis as an organisation, and how it's affected our services. There's also information on help and support available to you just now, as well as advice on what to do if you have money worries.

Please keep up-to-date with the latest developments relating to our services and opening times. You can check via our Facebook page (Atrium Homes) and our website www.atrium-homes.co.uk

Stay safe and well,

Stephen Black
Chief Executive



HELP AND SUPPORT

During these difficult times, it's important to stick to the advice about staying at home and reducing social contact. But that doesn't mean you have to get through things all on your own. There are lots of organisations offering ideas and practical assistance to help you cope with the current crisis. Whenever you need it, we can point you in the right direction.

We're living through unfamiliar times right now and the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has changed how we live day to day. If you feel confused, stressed or anxious at some point, you're not alone. Whether you've been directly affected by the virus, or are struggling to cope with the restrictions, it's important to look after both your physical and mental health.

If things are becoming a bit much, you should talk to someone about how you're feeling. This could be a family member, friend or your GP. You could also try calling a helpline (see numbers to the right). There is always help available from somewhere.

In particular, vulnerable and older people could be feeling more isolated and lonely just now, with coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance advising people to limit social contact.

Staying in touch, while protecting family, friends and loved ones is important and can make a big difference to people who may be feeling alone at this time. For many, the phone will be the easiest and most accessible way to keep in contact. Keeping in touch digitally - through video chat, WhatsApp groups, instant messages or texts - may also be an option for some.

HELPLINES

The following organisations can offer you support by phone:

Breathing Space Scotland
0800 83 85 87

Advisors are available in the evenings (6pm - 2am) and at weekends (24 hours) for anyone feeling low, anxious or isolated.

The Silver Line 0800 4 70 80 90

Friendship and advice 24 hours a day for older people.

Samaritans 116 123
Volunteers who will listen to or talk through your worries (available 24 hours)

NHS 24 on 111
For urgent health advice out-of-hours, when your GP Practice is closed.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE MONEY WORRIES

COVID-19 is affecting us all in one way or another. For many people, it has brought extra money worries.

You might be worried about your household income and paying bills. Or maybe you're wondering if you're entitled to benefits at this time.

If so, follow the link below to access a benefit calculator and find out what you may be able to claim:

www.entitledto.co.uk/benefits-calculator/Intro/Home?cid=129344d1-8b19-48e4-939f-b63a1a3e0c94

Alternative link:
tinyurl.com/yc8ehn7f

If you are entitled to Universal Credit, then you can make a claim using the link below:

www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit

If you require further assistance, please contact Atrium Homes.

Call 01563 528 816
or email info@atrium-homes.co.uk



HOW HAS ATRIUM RESPONDED TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS?



MONDAY 16 MARCH

Following government advice, we were required to close our office to the public from Monday 16 March 2020.

This involved:

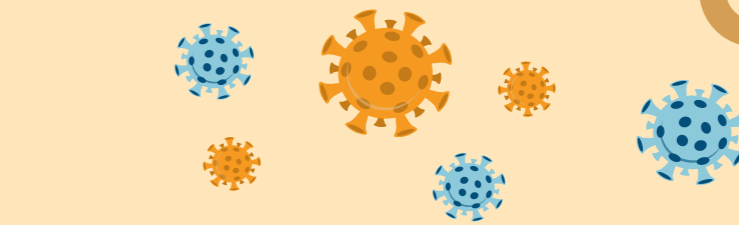
- Restricting access to our office.
- Reducing face-to-face contact and advising customers not to visit our office.
- Carrying out essential home visits only, which were pre-arranged, with screening questions introduced following guidelines.

The office remained open as a place of work, but staff were advised to maintain social distancing rules, handwashing protocols, etc.

TUESDAY 17 MARCH

Following further announcements by the First Minister on the Monday evening, staff were advised that while the office was still going to remain open for now as a workplace, we now required some home/remote working across the staff team. The aim was to ensure that at any given point, the larger part of the staff team was working remotely, rather than from the office.

Between Tuesday 17 and Thursday 19 March, all Atrium staff tested their remote working capabilities, with our ICT support team resolving any issues that flagged up.



TUESDAY 21 APRIL

We altered settings on our phone system to restrict public phone access to between 10am and 3pm, Monday to Friday. This was in response to system data, which showed that most calls into us were between these hours. This approach was aimed at allowing us to manage staff resources better, while still providing the public with some direct access.

Contact by email, via our website and through Facebook is still available and unrestricted. Staff continue to work between 9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday. Outwith the 10am - 3pm daily window, tenants are directed to our out-of-hours call services for emergencies.

MONDAY 23 MARCH

The Prime Minister announced the country was going into lockdown. The Atrium office closed completely, with all staff working from home from Tuesday 24 March. This has been the case since.

Our staff team mobilised quickly following the lockdown announcement and - thanks to our investment in technology - were operating the following day and available to take your calls.



Here's an update on 8 of Atrium's key services and how you can expect them to be delivered during the current pandemic.

1. REPAIRS

Our staff are prioritising emergency repairs and safety checks.

Unfortunately, we've had to suspend all non-emergency repairs at this time. However, you can continue to report them to us and we'll log them now, for action later.

Examples of repairs which we WILL attend to just now include:

- Loss of power
- Blocked drain
- Blocked toilet

At the moment, if you contact us about an emergency repair, you'll be asked a set of questions firstly by staff taking a note of your emergency repair, and then by the operatives who carry out the repair. This is to safeguard both yourself and the operatives.

You'll be asked:

- If you or anyone in your household are self isolating.
- If you or anyone in your household are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- If you or anyone in your household have been diagnosed with the virus.

While our contractors are in your house:

- You MUST comply with social distancing. This means keeping at least 2 metres (6 feet) apart.
- Where possible, you and all other members of your household should stay in another room while the contractors carry out your repairs.

This is to protect you, your household and the operatives, and keep everyone safe.

Thank you for complying with these measures.



2. GAS SERVICING

Your safety is important to us and so we're pleased to have been able to restart our programme of gas servicing. It's vital at this time that you respond to requests for access to carry out the annual landlord gas safety check. You'll be contacted by our gas contractor, GasSure, in advance. You'll also have the chance to rearrange the appointment if it doesn't suit you.

The contractor is taking every precaution to ensure we carry out their gas servicing and repair activities safely. In your letter from GasSure which they'll send you before they visit, they'll ask that if the answer to any of the following four questions

is YES, you should call their office to discuss further:

- Q1:** Have you, or anyone in your home, been diagnosed with COVID-19?
- Q2:** Are you, or anyone else in your home, self-isolating, even with mild symptoms?
- Q3:** Have you, or anyone else in your home, been in contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?
- Q4:** Have you, or has anyone in your home, been notified by the NHS that they are clinically at high risk and are part of the national "shielding" programme?

3. HOUSING APPLICATIONS / ALLOCATIONS

At this time, ALL allocations have been suspended. This means we are not starting any new lets for any houses. However, you can still request and submit a SEARCH housing application, which will be actioned later on.

4. RENT

We understand managing your rent account may be challenging at the moment. However, you must continue to try and pay the appropriate monthly charge. Perhaps you're making new claims for benefits to meet your financial needs. We'd like to support you during this time through some of the following ways:

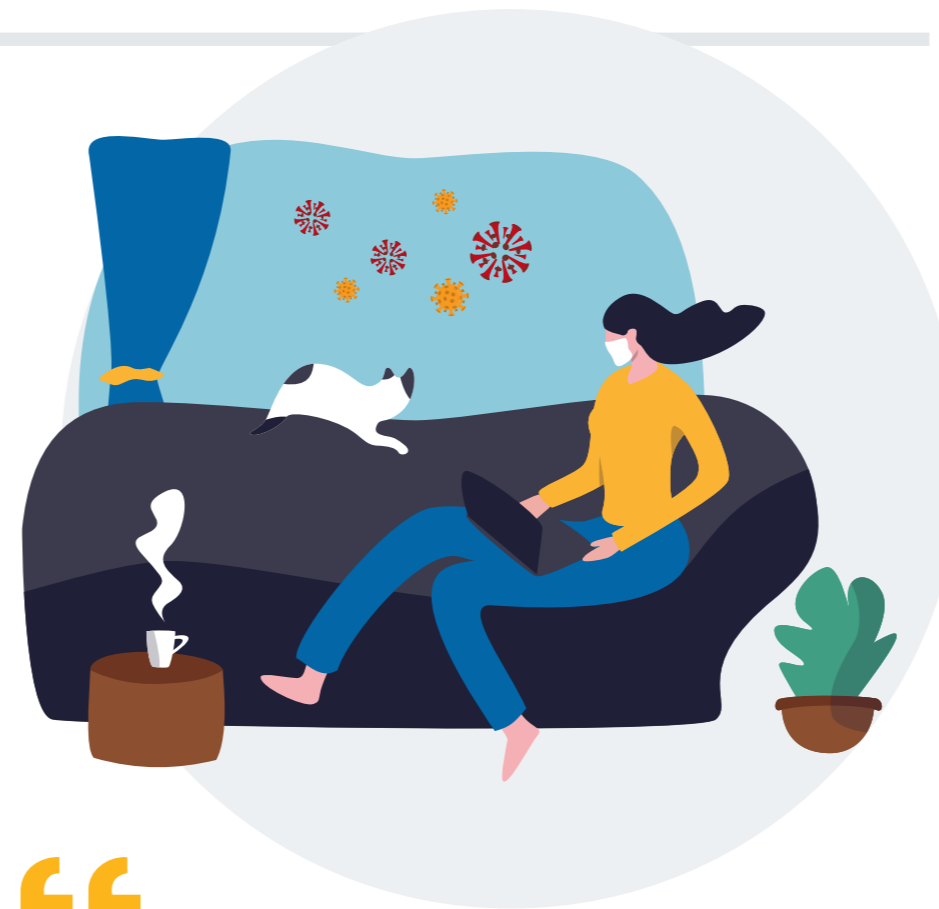
- Helping you with claims through our Rents and Money Advice Teams.
- Helping you with rent payment difficulties through a range of repayment options.
- Not pursuing eviction actions, in line with Government policy.

If you're struggling to pay your rent, please get in touch with us on 01563 528 816.

You can still make payments towards your rent by:

- Calling 01563 528 816.
- Making a payment online or at a PayPoint.
- Setting up a Direct Debit or Standing Order if you prefer.

Please call the above number for further information.



We all need to adapt to these new ways of living. And it's important we all show consideration for those around us.

5. NEIGHBOUR COMPLAINTS

More people than usual are in their homes for extended periods of time at the moment, as they follow the Government's advice on lockdown. Many of our customers have children at home, are working from home themselves or are key workers required to work shifts.

We all need to adapt to these new ways of living. And it's important we all show consideration for those around us, as well as patience with the changed lifestyles of people confined to their homes.

So please be aware of your actions, the impact they could have on your neighbours and whether they could be perceived as anti-social behaviour (ASB).

If you're experiencing anti-social behaviour or problems with your

neighbours, please record any incidents with date, time and a short description of the incident. If the incident is ongoing and causing you to be in a state of fear or alarm, you must phone Police Scotland on 101 (non-emergency) or 999 (emergencies only).

Our staff are not currently carrying out home visits. So if you need to get in touch, please complete our online 'Contact us' form at www atrium-homes.co.uk/contact/ or email [info@ atrium-homes.co.uk](mailto:info@atrium-homes.co.uk). You can also phone 01563 528 816. Your name and details will be taken, and the relevant member of staff will be in touch.

Your complaint will be recorded and dealt with as per our Anti-Social Behaviour policy, with any action at this time limited until further notice.

6. HOMES FIT FOR 21ST CENTURY LIVING STANDARD (HFF21CLS)

CCG, the contractors undertaking HFF21CLS works to tenanted properties, had to come off site on 23 March 2020, following the lockdown instructions. There have been no works undertaken since.

At this point, it's not possible to say when the programme of works will restart, or assess the impact on the 20/21 programme.

Sunnyside Square West, New Build

McTaggart Construction also ceased work on the new build site at Sunnyside Square West on 24 March. This site is very near completion, with the works programme originally due to end in August 2020.

Staff will be starting to pre-allocate these properties. So, if you're interested in being considered for any of them, please submit a SEARCH application as soon as possible.

The development at Sunnyside Square West will consist of 27 units:

No. of Units	Housing Mix/Apartment Size	Unit Type	Tenure
3	4 Person 3 Apartment	Houses	Rent - General Needs
16	3 Person 3 Apartment	Bungalow	Rent - Older & Ambulant Disabled
2	3 Person 3 Apartment	Flats	Rent - Physical/Sensory Disablement
2	2 Person 2 Apartment	Flats	Rent - Physical/Sensory Disablement
2	2 Person 2 Apartment	Flats	Rent - General Needs
2	3 Person 3 Apartment	Flats	Rent - General Needs

27 Units

7. LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance Ltd (JOC) took over the landscape maintenance contract, to look after our open and communal spaces, on 30 March 2020. Due to the current restrictions in place, and based on advice in their sector, they can only keep grass cutting going in open areas,

with crews working in line with social distancing guidelines and travelling in separate vehicles.

All open space grass cuts have been completed to specification and a very good standard. There's no garden maintenance service just now, but we're exploring ways to get this underway.



We have been using our website and Facebook page to deliver updates, advice and guidance.



8. COMMUNICATION

During this difficult time, we understand that some of you may be feeling vulnerable, especially if you don't have any family or friends around you. We want to offer you our support when and wherever we can, including:

- Providing regular website updates about support opportunities as and when they become available.
- Using our Facebook page to deliver updates, advice and guidance.
- Providing contact details and referral details for support agencies.
- Ringing our more vulnerable customers to talk about how they're affected by coronavirus and offering support if possible. So please don't be surprised if you receive a call, email or text message from a member of our team. We're trying to contact as many of our customers as possible during this time to see if we can help. We're offering advice and support, and where possible helping you to access the different local and national support networks available.