



MAXEY
GROUNDS



COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT AND GUIDANCE

IN RELATION TO VIEWINGS AND INSPECTIONS OF PROPERTY

Based upon Government advice on home moving during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak dated 13.05.2020)

ALWAYS

- Wash your hands frequently either with soap and water or use hand gel if your hands are already clean.
- Stay at least 2 metres apart from clients and colleagues.

Vulnerable people or those shielding (those who have received a letter from their GP advising them they are in a vulnerable group)

- This group may need to move home. However, this should be balanced with the increased risks presented by coronavirus.
- This group may wish to seek medical advice before considering moving.
- Ask clients if they have any medical conditions which they need to make you aware of.

People self-isolating with their family or having tested positive for coronavirus

- Should not leave their home.
- Should not move home or undertake property viewings.
- If there is a contractual commitment to move, this should be delayed until **ALL** members of the household end their self-isolation period.
- If there is an **URGENT** need to move – contact Public Health for advice.

What does this mean for property moves or purchases which are scheduled whilst measures to fight coronavirus apply?

- Initial viewings should be done virtually.
- All physical viewings should be limited to members of the same household.
- No open house viewings should take place.

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Estate Agents can open for business but should consider how and when to reopen their premises given government guidance on [safer working](#).

- Agents should ask whether any party is showing symptoms or has been asked to self-isolate before going ahead with any viewing, or visits to offices and complete the checklist provided for this purpose.
- Agents should operate using an appointment system for visits to their offices and when conducting viewings.
- Agents should remind viewers of the viewing procedures and email them a copy of the procedure in advance of the appointment.
- Agents should remind viewers that there should only be a minimal number of viewers from the same household attending, and no children present.
- Agents should arrive 15 minutes before the viewing to ensure the property is prepared for viewing.
- Agents should not carry out any open house viewings.
- Where they do not accompany the visit, they should make sure that both buyers and sellers clearly understand how the viewing should be conducted safely.
- Agents should not drive clients to appointments.
- Agent to carry sanitizer for their own use
- All parties viewing a property should use hand sanitiser on entering the property, with internal doors opened in advance and surfaces having been wiped down before they enter. If agent accompanies clients on a viewing, they **MUST** follow social distancing rules wherever possible. Where social distancing is not possible and the visit is within an enclosed space, they should consider wearing a face covering in line with [government guidance](#).
- Agents should ensure that any keys are appropriately [cleaned](#) before and after use.

Advice to Buyers:

General

- Encourage people to do their initial property searching online.

Viewings

- By appointment only.
- Minimal number of people on a viewing from a single household.
- To bring their own antiseptic hand gel and sanitize hands before entry and having left the property.
- Avoid touching surfaces.
- **No** children to attend viewings.
- Only view properties they are considering making an offer on having, where possible, viewed virtually first.
- A copy of the appropriate part of this guidance is to be emailed to all Viewers when confirming the appointment

Advice to Sellers:

General

- Allow us to provide a virtual tour or suggest they could assist with virtual viewings.

Viewings

- By appointment only, accompanied by Agent where possible to ensure compliance with guidance.
- Advise the sellers to vacate their property during viewings unless they are conducting the viewing themselves (whilst maintaining social distancing rules from the visiting party).
- If conducting the viewing, ensure that all visiting the property have sanitized their hands upon entry.
- Seller to open all internal doors in advance so they do not have to be touched by those viewing.
- Ensure surfaces including door handles are cleaned before and after each viewing with standard household cleaning products.

Appraising / Listing a property

Ensure you ask **ALL** sellers prior to any physical visit if any member of the household resident in the property is showing signs of Covid or is self-isolating. If so, you may **NOT** visit. Where Tenants are resident best practice is to speak directly to them to ensure the medical situation is fully understood.

- You can visit a property in order to take photos/videos and details for particulars.
- The same procedures apply for appraising / listing as for viewings in relation to hand sanitizing, opening doors, pre and post cleaning and social distancing.

Property surveys

- No visit should be carried out by a person who has coronavirus symptoms, however mild, or anyone who has been asked to self-isolate.
- Surveyors to bring their own antiseptic hand gel and sanitize hands before entry and having left the property.
- Surveyors should not enter a property where a member of the household is showing symptoms of coronavirus or self-isolating.
- Surveyors should follow government [guidance for professionals working in other people's homes](#) and guidance on [social distancing](#).
- Surveyors should be clear in any reports about areas which they weren't able to inspect due to public health limitations.
- Where prospective buyers want a trades person to inspect a property the same advice should be given during the appointment as above [safer working guidance](#).

Letting agents and private landlords

- All inspections and visits to be undertaken using the appraisal/listing procedures as above.
- Private landlords and letting agents should not conduct viewings in properties where tenants are symptomatic or self-isolating, or where it has been determined that they are clinically extremely vulnerable and are shielding.
- Where viewings can proceed, they should be conducted in line with the guidance on viewings earlier in this document.
- Any visits to a property must be made in accordance with government's [guidelines on working in other people's homes](#) and [social distancing](#).
- If possible, necessary repairs, gas and electrical safety checks should be conducted in the period between a property being vacated and a new tenant moving in.
- If this is not possible and visits are needed to an occupied property, this should be done by appointment with measures put in place to ensure physical contact is minimised, for example with residents staying in another room during the visit.
- Landlords should make every effort to abide by gas and electrical safety requirements, which continue to be of great importance for tenants' safety.
- This may be more difficult due to restrictions associated with the Covid-19 outbreak. Under such circumstances, provided the landlord can demonstrate they have taken reasonable steps to comply, they would not be in breach. See further Health and Safety Executive [guidance on how to deal with specific circumstances](#).
- Letting agents may also want to consider obtaining landlord and tenant consent for inventory clerk appointments to also occur before a tenant moves in or after a tenant moves out during vacant periods if possible.
- Letting agents and landlords should take steps to ensure any properties are prepared ready for new tenants; this may include cleaning to minimise any potential spread of the virus in line with [government advice](#).
- Letting agents and landlords should consider how best to conduct tenancy check-ins for new tenancies agreed while broader measures remain in place, taking care to follow government advice on [social distancing](#) to minimise possible spread of coronavirus.
- Letting agents and landlords are reminded of the [temporary COVID-19 measures that adjust right to rent checks](#), temporarily allowing these checks to be conducted remotely. Lettings agents and landlords should consider other areas where in person payments, referencing or checks can be conducted remotely instead and take further advice if required.