

23 March 2020

Re: Coronavirus

I hope you are all keeping well in these difficult times.

We have written to all our tenants this week but this is a message for their family and friends.

Firstly, I want to ensure you we are 100% focused on doing what we can to protect and support our tenants whilst considering the impact of social isolation and general increased levels of anxiety that I am aware many of them, (and us), are experiencing.

As you know, our tenants live in their own self-contained apartments and are, therefore, able to self-isolate if they need to do this either following government guidance or if they are concerned about their own personal risks

We have no plans to close our doors, we simply can't do this. Carers need to be able visit and tenants need to get shopping and supplies brought to them. We are, however, restricting who we bring into the buildings by carrying out only essential maintenance works and postponing all communal events. Volunteers have been asked not to come into our buildings but to provide telephone and online befriending instead.

Our House Managers are working 24/7 but we also need to protect them, not least in order to continue to be able to provide round the clock support, and so we have asked them not to have face to face contact with tenants, except in emergency situations that are not COVID (i.e. Corona) related; for example if a tenant with no COVID symptoms was to have a fall. All contact with house managers will take place over the phone or by computer for tenants who are hard of hearing. If you come into the development and want to talk to the house manager please don't ask them to open the office door, just call them – the number will be posted on the door of the office.

We have also now taken the difficult decision to close our communal lounges. With the government closing pubs, cafes and restaurants and encouraging social isolation as much as possible we feel this is the most responsible action we can take. We will be keeping the laundry room open but will be talking to tenants about working on a rota basis to reduce interaction.

We know that some of our tenants are able to manage without your support and want to remain as independent as possible, others will need more support with managing day to day matters. There is no blanket answer to what you should be doing but we would ask you to do the following:

- Do not enter our building if you or anyone in your family is feeling unwell. We all have a responsibility to protect each other. If you are in self-isolation and are concerned about your relative or friend please contact the house managers or our tenancy support team. We would rather help than see you bring the virus into our buildings.
- On arrival use the hand sanitiser or even better wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water.
- Go straight to the apartment of the person you are visiting
- Talk to them about shopping and consider how you can help them restrict the need for going out. This may see you buying extra items for them when you go shopping or arranging deliveries. Please be mindful that delivery companies are only leaving deliveries at the front door of the building. With only one house manager on duty getting these deliveries to people's front doors is almost a full-time job. Please don't order more than you need and if at all possible try and keep delivery orders between 9-5pm Monday – Friday, (unless the person you are buying for is happy and able to come downstairs to collect the delivery).
- If your relative or friend is reliant on support from carers, ask them if they have had any guidance from the agency about their contingency plans in the current situation? If not, you may want to contact the agency yourself to ask about this. We would suggest you email them or look at their website before calling as many agencies are understandable struggling with increased call volume
- If they are reliant on medication check with them that they have the right supplies and have systems in place for repeat prescriptions if required.
- If you are living abroad, we obviously understand your limitations in being able to assist. However, just getting in touch with your family member or friend could provide them with some much needed contact and you may even know someone that could assist in your absence.

We have some tenants who don't have anyone to support them. We have asked them to contact the house managers and we will, if necessary, do our best to arrange support systems for them. It is vital that where a tenant does have family members and friends, that they do all they can to provide support to ensure we can provide help for those tenants who do not have any support networks.

We are working on plans to mobilise a team of volunteers who will help us establish the support tenants need, including telephone and online befriending services. We are also looking at how we can use technology to organise virtual events. If you are able to join our volunteer team, please email volunteer@jbd.org

We will do our best to provide regular updates to tenants and relatives/friends

In the meantime, please follow government guidance and take care of yourselves and do all you can to protect your loved ones.

Best wishes

Lisa Wimborne
Chief Executive