



Contact: Enforcement Team
Telephone: 01302 737573
Email: housingstandards@doncaster.gov.uk
Date: 9 February 2021

Dear Householder,

CORONAVIRUS (COVID19): STAYING SAFE IN HOMES WITH SHARED FACILITIES

We are writing to you to raise awareness of the important current UK government advice for the coronavirus (COVID-19). Details of the current lockdown rules along with guidance and support about what you can and cannot do is available online at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

What should I do if I live with other people I am not related to and share facilities or common areas?

If tenants share facilities or common areas with other people, all residents should always do their very best to follow the latest [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) guidance](#). Everyone in the household should regularly wash their hands, avoid touching their face, and clean frequently touched surfaces.

Who needs to self-isolate and how does this apply to shared houses?

The government has issued [guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#). The same guidance applies to occupants of shared houses. All the occupants of the home should behave in the same way as a single household if one or more occupants have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

This means that if a tenant, who shares with people they are not related to, either tests positive or develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), they must self-isolate at home for the next 10 full days from when the symptoms started. In line with the Government guidance, all other residents of the home must also stay at home and not leave the house for the next 10 full days, providing they remain well for that time. The contacts of individuals who test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) are required to self-isolate for a period of 10 full days. Contacts will need to self-isolate for 10 days from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive has taken place.

Should anyone else develop symptoms they should then self-isolate for the next 10 full days from the onset of symptoms or longer if symptoms persist. Where possible, individuals should not go out even to buy food or others essentials, and any exercise should be taken within the home.

What does NHS test and trace mean for people living in shared houses (HMOs)?

This service ensures that anyone who develops symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can quickly be tested to find out if they have the virus. It also helps trace close recent contacts of anyone who tests positive for coronavirus and, if necessary, notifies them that they must self-isolate at home to help stop the spread of the virus.

If anyone is identified as having close recent contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they will be notified that they must self-isolate. This applies even if they do not have any symptoms. They must self-isolate for the next 10 full days after they were in contact with the person who has tested positive for COVID-19. This is crucial to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus. Self-isolation means staying at home and not going outside of the home at any time. If you live with other people, they do not need to self-isolate, but they should avoid contact with you as far as possible and follow advice on hygiene.

If anyone in the home (HMO) goes on to develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 then all the residents of the house must self-isolate.

Full [guidance on the NHS track and trace](#) explaining how it works is available.

What steps can I take to minimise the spread of COVID-19?

COVID-19 spreads from person to person through small droplets, aerosols and through direct contact. Surfaces and belongings can also be contaminated with COVID-19 when people with the infection cough, sneeze, or touch them. The risk of spread is greatest when people are close to each other, especially in poorly ventilated indoor spaces and when people spend a lot of time together in the same room.

It will be difficult for some people to separate themselves from others at home. You should do your very best to follow this guidance and everyone in your household should:

- wash their hands more frequently, for 20 seconds, with soap and water or use hand sanitiser and avoid touching their face
- regularly clean frequently touched surfaces
- the stay at home guidance for households with possible COVID-19 infection contains more detailed guidance on what to do about cleaning, disposal of waste, laundry and other useful information

Keep your distance: Minimise the time you spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas as much as possible, keep shared spaces clean and aim to keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from people you live with.

Bathrooms: If you can, use a separate bathroom from others. If you do share a toilet and bathroom, it is important to clean them properly after every time you use them (e.g. wiping surfaces you have come into contact with using soapy water). Toilet lids should be closed before flushing to reduce aerosol droplets. Make sure you use separate towels from other people, both for drying yourself after bathing and for hand hygiene purposes. Keep your towel in your room.

Kitchen: If you share a kitchen with others, avoid using it whilst others are in it. Take your meals back to your room to eat if possible. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry your used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly, remembering to use a separate tea towel to others and put them straight away. Do not leave things on the side to dry.

Ventilation: Keeping indoor areas well ventilated as much as is possible will reduce the risk of transmission by diluting internal air with fresh outside air. This should be balanced with other considerations such as comfort, safety and security. Try opening windows or doors and using trickle vents if these are fitted to windows. Extractor fans, where fitted, should also be used as much as possible.

If you are an employee and unable to work due to coronavirus, please refer to the guidance from the Department for Work and Pensions to find out about the support that is available to you.

Thank you for your cooperation at this difficult time and please monitor the Council's website for updated advice:

<https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/health-wellbeing/coronavirus-covid-19>

Yours sincerely

P Williams

Paul Williams Team Manager (Housing) – Enforcement Team