

Frequently asked questions: Information for customers



What are you doing to protect customers and staff?

The safety and wellbeing of customers and staff is our highest priority. Before visiting your home we will contact you to ask you some extra questions. Please follow the latest government advice if you or members of your household are displaying symptoms.

Our staff and contractors will be wearing Personal Protective Equipment such as gloves during visits, and will ask you to keep a certain distance away or ask you to wait in a separate room in your home while the work is completed.

Are you still completing repairs?

Emergency Repairs

Please call us immediately on **0344 873 6290** if you have an emergency repair in your home.

When you contact us about your emergency repair we will ask you some extra questions, such as whether any one in your household is confirmed as having Covid-19, are “shielding” or self-isolating. This is so we can understand how best to protect you and your family, as well as the operative that attends your home.

If your repair is deemed essential we may:

- Ask some further questions at the front door before entering the property
- Distance ourselves by at least two meters from anyone in your property and ask you to move into a different room
- Avoid touching surfaces where possible
- Ask you to disinfect door handles and the work area prior to attending
- Wear Protective gloves and other additional protection equipment where necessary

It is advisable that you follow sensible precautions to keep yourself safe when our staff or contractors are visiting your property, as outlined in public health guidance found here www.gov.uk/coronavirus

How can I be sure that a member of staff or a contractor is not infected with Coronavirus if they visit my home?

We are ensuring that our staff and contractors have all of the latest information and guidance. Our employees and our contractors are following this guidance in the same way that everyone has been asked to and will take action to protect you as customers and themselves.

Non – Emergency Repairs

Over the next few weeks and months we will begin to gradually resume some of our routine repairs service. We will do this in phases, based on careful risk assessments with our contractors to ensure our customers and contractors remain safe at all times.

We will start with existing repairs that were placed on hold at the start of lockdown that **CAN** be completed safely and our contractors have materials available to complete the works required.

We will begin to contact customers with existing repairs that fall into this first phase. If you do not want the repair completed at this time, we will update our system to reflect this and we will contact you again to complete the repair at a future date.

We will contact customers individually to update them on the status of their repair and to provide details of when it will be safe to complete it. This means that not all of our customers whose repairs were placed on hold will be completed in this first phase. We understand that this may be frustrating but we ask that you bear with us so that we can work through this phased approach to a full repairs service as quickly and safely as possible.

When completing the repair we may:

- Ask some further questions at the front door before entering the property
- Distance ourselves by at least two meters from anyone in your property and ask you to move into a different room where possible
- Avoid touching surfaces if possible
- Ask you to disinfect door handles and the work area prior to the contractor attending
- Wear protective gloves and other additional Personal Protective Equipment where necessary

Please ensure you inform us if you or anyone in your household is shielding or showing symptoms of Covid-19.

It is advisable that you follow sensible precautions to keep yourself safe when our staff or contractors are visiting your property, as outlined in Public Health England (PHE) guidance which can be found here www.gov.uk/coronavirus and you can be assured that we are taking the necessary precautions.

You can continue to report repairs in the usual way as follows:

- The customer app – which can be downloaded from the App Store (Apple) and the Play Store (Android)
- Email our Customer Services Team on – reportrepairs@impacthousing.org.uk
- Telephone our Customer Service Team on 03448 736290

Please note that we may not be able to give you a date or time as to when the repair will be completed for the first few weeks as we work through this phased approach to the re-establishment of the repairs service.

Do I still have to allow access for Safety Critical Checks?

By Law, we must carry out safety critical checks in your home such as annual gas service and electrical inspections. These checks are continuing as normal.

Our operatives and engineers may need access to your home to complete these checks. You do not need to have direct contact with anyone visiting your property to complete these.

If you are due a safety critical check like your annual gas service and are self-isolating or are a shielded vulnerable customer, please let us know so we can understand how best to protect you and your family by calling us on 0344 873 6290.

I'm on a pre-payment meter and worried that I can't afford to buy more credit. What can I do?

All UK energy suppliers have committed to supporting customers that are affected by the Coronavirus outbreak and are worried about being able to pay for their Gas and Electricity.

This support can include:

- Reassess debt repayments and bill payments
- Reduce or pause payments

You should speak to your energy supplier to discuss what options are available to you or alternatively get in touch with our Money Matters Service on moneymatters@impacthousing.org.uk

I'm due to have a new kitchen/bathroom/roof/window/heating system. Will this still go ahead?

We're sorry but we have had to postpone planned works like new kitchen and bathroom installations until further notice.

I'm due to have a new aid/adaptation in my home, what will happen now?

We have cancelled any ongoing work on adaptations; any work that is yet to start on site has been postponed until further notice. We will still carry out urgent adaptations that support you or a member of your household to be discharged from hospital, wherever we can. We'll also continue to log any referrals we receive during this time, and contact you directly to advise you of the next steps.

I've been in touch with Impact to make a complaint about the service, will this still be looked into?

We are still continuing to investigate complaints in line with our complaints procedure wherever possible and we will agree any actions and timescales based on your complaint query when we speak to you. We may need to put on hold some cases where we would need to carry out any work but due to the current constraints on the service provided we are unable to complete the works, we'll discuss this with you when we contact you.

I'm having problems with my neighbour; is Impact still taking reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB)?

Yes, please contact us if you are experiencing any ASB. All contact will be by telephone until restrictions around travel and social distancing are lifted. You can

contact your Neighbourhood Officer directly their contact details which can be found on the main COVID-19 page on our website.

If you have been a victim of a Hate Crime or Domestic Abuse or any other criminal activity please contact Cumbria Police.

I want to move house, can I apply for vacant properties through Cumbria Choice?

Following further Government Guidance The Cumbria Choice Partnership are starting to take the first steps to reopening Choice Based Lettings. Cumbria Choice partners will begin to advertise properties on our website from the 28th May 2020. Normal weekly bidding cycles will resume however please be aware that they may be delays in processing the shortlists for properties. We thank you in advance for your patience

I'm worried about being able to pay my rent, what do I do?

Please contact us on 03448 736 290 so we can understand your circumstances and signpost you to appropriate support. We are unable to suspend weekly rent payments but we will work with you to find an appropriate solution to your needs. You can also find our direct contacts for your rent officer on the COVID-19 page of our website.

Can I pay without leaving my home?

We have many different payment options, you can pay by direct debit, our Impact Housing Customer App or payment over the telephone. Contact us on 03448 736 290 or direct to your rent officer for further assistance.

I'm concerned about benefits at this time. What should I do?

If you're concerned about benefits and changes to them, please visit our dedicated page on our website at (add link) or email us on Money Matters@impacthousing.org.uk

Please remember, if you have made a benefits claim, it's vital that you answer your phone, even if you don't recognise the number as it may be the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) trying to contact you. These calls may sometimes come from withheld numbers or 0800 numbers depending on the application you have made, so please keep your phone close to you and, if you've made a claim, look out for their call.

I am over 70 / have a pre-existing health condition. How does this affect me?

If you are 70 our staff will be contacting you to identify what help you may have available and how we might be able to help you. We are also contacting all our customers to offer signposting to services and to check on how you are doing.

I'm experiencing domestic abuse. What support is available?

If it is an emergency (a crime is happening, someone suspected of a crime is nearby, someone is injured, you are being threatened or you are in immediate danger) you should always call **999**.

You can also call:

- the **National Domestic Violence helpline** which is available every day of the year, which is Freephone **0808 2000 247**
- **Victim Support** – support available to anyone affected by crime Phone: 0845 30 30 900 Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Cumbria Support – visit the website for further support locally on domestic violence and safeguarding.

https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/LSCB/professionals/domesticabuse/domesticabusechampionsnetwork.asp?fbclid=IwAR2rcBFrZKvJSguUKeUaZBpxl_Qmla7TQDzEkeQvbXA9Td4CtDHi3XyADn4

I have some furniture to donate, when can I arrange a collection?

For the safety of our staff, customers and the general public, unfortunately all of our furniture stores and associated services are currently closed.