



Living in shared accommodation under Covid-19

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Introduction

If your home is shared, or parts of it are shared, all Covid-19 government guidance applies to you. Please remember:

- You can't be removed from your home because of the virus.
- However your landlord does **not** have to provide alternative housing for tenants if others in the property contract the virus.
- If you are living in housing which you share with other people, or share facilities with other people, you should follow current Public Health England guidance to avoid the virus and reduce the risk of spreading it.
- You can find the guidance at these sites:
⇒ www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance
⇒ www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/coronavirus-information/
- Both sites include easy read and translated versions of the guidance.
- Please follow the current guidance as closely as you can.

What is shared housing?

There are many types of shared accommodation. You might live in:

- A House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) which could be made up of a room for each person or family, with shared kitchens and bathrooms, shared halls and stairs.
- A flat where each person or family has a flat to themselves including kitchen and bathroom; but there are shared hallways, entrances and stairs.
- A hotel or hostel where there are shared halls, stairs, facilities and lounges.

Where there are shared areas, the Covid-19 virus can be spread. The threat is reduced by cleaning, by avoiding shared areas as much as possible, and by keeping a safe distance from other people who use the shared areas at the same time as you.

This note sets out how.

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Living in shared housing

Social distancing and self-isolating may be slightly different for you, if you live in shared housing.

- Bear in mind your family's needs, the needs of others in your shared house, and the needs of everyone in your building.
- You can help stop the spread of the disease within your own home, and you can help stop it spreading to your neighbours and others in the building.
- Please do whatever you can to limit social contact in your home, especially in shared areas, on stairs and in corridors— and when you go out for supplies, for exercise or for work.
- In this note, we talk about 'you and your family'—and by that we mean whoever you are living with and sharing with. Not your wider family who live elsewhere. We also talk about 'the building' meaning the whole shared building e.g. the whole house in multiple occupation (HMO), the whole hotel or hostel, and everyone living in it.

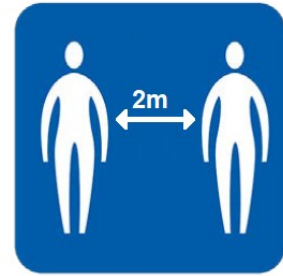
If you get the symptoms

*It's
important to
stay home*

- If you or a member of your family develop symptoms you need to follow the government guidance here www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance
- If you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, or your condition gets worse, or your symptoms do not get better after 7 days, use the NHS online coronavirus service at <https://111.nhs.uk/> or you can call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.
- If you or your family (or anyone living with you) have symptoms of COVID-19 and you live in a house with other people where you share facilities (such as a house in multiple occupation) it's important that you tell the manager or landlord of your house. For a HMO, the whole building is usually treated as one household for the purposes of self-isolation, meaning everyone needs to follow the self-isolation rules if someone in the building has symptoms. However, this can depend on the layout of the HMO and your landlord will be able to get more advice on how best to self-isolate to reduce the spread of infection in the building.
- You can also contact your the local housing team. In East Cambridgeshire, email customerservices@eastcambs.gov.uk or call 01353 665555.
- If members of your family are vulnerable and are living with you, think about separating them from the rest of the family. Could they go elsewhere during the isolation period? If not, try to stay away from them as much as possible.
- If you develop new coronavirus symptoms at any point after ending your first period of isolation you need to follow the same guidance on self-isolation again.

Social distancing

- Stay 2 metres or 6 feet (that's around 3 steps) away from anyone outside your own family.
- If you must come within 2 metres of other people who live in your building, for instance when passing on the stairs, do so for as short a time as possible and protect yourself from potentially infectious sneezes etc.
- The government has now advised that members of the public should consider covering their faces in enclosed spaces. You may wish to consider this if there are areas of your home you share with others. Remember to dispose of face masks safely, or launder regularly if using a fabric bandana.



Wash your hands often

- Clean your hands frequently each day by washing with soap and water for 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer. This will help protect you and the people you live with. This step is one of the most effective ways of reducing the risk of passing infection to others.
- Avoid touching your face with your hands.
- Do not shake hands with anyone.
- Wash your hands immediately before you go out, and when you return home.



Regularly wash your hands

Cover your coughs and sneezes

- Cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze. If you do not have a tissue to hand, sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not into your hand.
- Dispose of tissues into a rubbish bag and immediately wash your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer.

Visitors

- Do not invite or allow social visitors, such as other friends and family, to enter your home. If you want to speak to someone who is not living with you, use the phone or social media.
- However if you or a family member gets essential care in your home, carers should continue to visit.
- Carers may use facemasks and gloves to reduce the risk of spreading infection.



Do not have visitors



Do not shake dirty laundry

Laundry

- To reduce the possibility of spreading virus through the air, do not shake dirty laundry.
- Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. All dirty laundry can be washed in the same load. Use the warmest water setting you can, and dry items thoroughly.
- If you do not have a washing machine, you can use the launderette. If you have been in isolation, wait a further 72 hours after your isolation period has ended before you take the laundry to a public launderette.
- Clean and disinfect anything used for transporting laundry with your usual products, in line with our cleaning guidance.

Waste

- If someone in your family has, or might have, Covid-19, store any personal waste such as used tissues and disposable cleaning cloths securely in disposable rubbish bags.
- Once you've finished cleaning, double-bag any rubbish, store it securely for 72 hours then throw away in the regular rubbish.
- Waste should be stored safely and kept away from children. You should not put your waste in communal waste areas until the waste has been stored for at least 72 hours.
- Other household waste can be disposed of as normal.

Keep your home well ventilated

Using shared areas

- Avoid visiting all shared areas at the same time as other people, like lounges, games rooms and shared kitchens. It might be useful to draw up a rota.
- Stay 2 metres away from anyone outside your own family
- Keep shared spaces well ventilated by opening windows.
- Don't share plates, cups, kitchen utensils or towels, especially if you are vulnerable or self-isolating.



Try to get food & medication delivered

Pets

At present, there is no evidence that companion animals/pets such as dogs and cats can be infected with COVID-19

Supplies

If you can, try to keep a small stock of:

- Disposable gloves
- Disposable aprons
- Cleaning fluid
- Disposable cloths
- Disposable bin bags

Cleaning

- When cleaning you should use your usual household products, like detergents and bleach, as these will be very effective at getting rid of the virus on surfaces.
- Regularly clean surfaces such as door handles, handrails, remote controls and table tops which are often touched.
- This is particularly important if you have an older or vulnerable person in the house.
- Wear disposable gloves and aprons for cleaning, and disposable cloths if possible.
- Clean shared bathrooms and kitchens each time you use them, for example wiping all the surfaces you have touched.
- Avoid creating splashes and spray when cleaning.
- Remember to wash your hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds after cleaning, even if you were wearing gloves.
- Ventilate rooms regularly by opening the windows to let the air circulate, keeping the door closed.

*Regularly
wipe down
all surfaces*

Bathrooms

- If you share a bathroom with other people who live in your building, make sure you clean it thoroughly after every time you use it, for example wiping surfaces that you come into contact with.
- If someone in a shared building is self-isolating but cannot use a separate bathroom, you might want them to go last on a bathroom-use rota and deep-clean after they have used it.
- If someone in your building is vulnerable they should use facilities for bathing first.

*Don't share towels,
including hand towels
and tea towels*

Kitchens

- If you use a shared kitchen, you could set up a rota for its use.
- If someone in a shared building is self-isolating, they could wear a face mask, use the kitchen after everyone else and take their food back to their room. Or you might be able to help the person self-isolate by delivering food to their room.
- The kitchen should be cleaned thoroughly after each use, particularly after a self-isolating person uses it.
- Avoid sharing cutlery or utensils. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry your family's used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly.



Use separate facilities, or clean them between use

Remember, by staying home, you are protecting the lives of others, as well as making sure the NHS does not get overwhelmed.

Your well-being

- Please stay home except for shopping for basic essentials, medical needs and your once-a-day exercise.
- This can be tough if you have limited space inside or outside your home.
- You could keep up your family and social contacts on the phone, Skype or on the internet. You can shop, contact your landlord and other services online. You can find out about getting online at <http://makingmoneycount.org.uk>
- Physical exercise can be good for your wellbeing. Look for online classes or courses that can help you take some exercise in your home, if you have enough space.
- Yoga is good for body and mind, if you can make space for a yoga mat in your home.
- It's important to take care of your mental as well as your physical health. Visit *Keep your head* at <https://keep-your-head.com/> and also www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/
- These websites give useful tips about dealing with mental health issues, and you can find out where to find more help if you need it.

Getting some support

You can contact Community hubs to search for, ask for, or to offer help in you local area. Here are the contacts for the hubs:

Cambridgeshire directory

You can use these directories to search for the help you need. Look for "I need help"

- www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/coronavirus
- www.peterborough.gov.uk/coronavirus
- Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1800 & Saturday 0900 to 1300
- communitycv@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
- 0345 045 5219

Cambridge

- www.cambridge.gov.uk/updates/2020/03/18/coronavirus-changes-to-our-services
- Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 17:15
- community.resilience@cambridge.gov.uk
- 01223 457000

East Cambridgeshire

- www.eastcambs.gov.uk/content/coronavirus-community-support
- Mon to Thurs 08:45 to 17:00 & 08:45 to 16:30 Fridays
- covid19@eastcambs.gov.uk
- 01353 665555

Fenland

- www.fenland.gov.uk/coronavirus
- Monday to Friday 09:00 to 16:00 & Sat 09:00 to 12:00
- Covid19@fenland.gov.uk
- 01354 654321

Huntingdonshire

- www.wearehuntingdonshire.org/
- Mon to Thurs 08:45 to 17:00 & 08:45 to 16:30 Fridays
- Crm_communitydevelopment@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
- 01480 388388

South Cambridgeshire

- www.scambs.gov.uk/coronavirus/
- Monday to Friday 08:00 to 17:30
- Duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk
- 03450 455 218

Peterborough

- www.peterborough.gov.uk/coronavirus
- Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00
- covid-19@peterborough.gov.uk
- 01733 747474