

GOING BACK TO WORK AFTER LOCKDOWN

6-point guide for estate and letting agents*

**Based on all guidance and best practice available as of 24th April 2020*

The Foreign Secretary reference in his Coronavirus update on 16th April the fact that 'there was light at the end of the tunnel'. Hopefully, this means that one day, in the not too distant future, we will see a return to the offices which we left several weeks ago and things could start to return to normal, although this normal may not be as we remember it and may be a new normal.

The most important thing is to ensure that when we return to our offices, we are not increasing risk of a second round of the virus and a further lockdown, and that we continue to do all we can to safeguard everyone.

This will ultimately mean changes to your processes and how you and our teams all work together.

When lockdown restrictions are lifted this will hopefully be accompanied by guidance concerning visiting people in their homes. For example for undertaking viewings, valuations and end of tenancy visits, at which time we may need to update our 'policy points' – but the information in this guide has been based on all guidance and best practice available as of 24th April 2020.

Remember, stay safe and follow the guidelines.



Here is our policy to help our colleagues and clients stay safe.

We will cover:

1 PEOPLE

2 PREMISES

3 VALUATIONS

4 VIEWINGS

5 COMPLIANCE

6 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

7 LINKS

1 PEOPLE

- 1.1 We will check on the health of our people working for us. We will have 1-2-1's with each member of our team to establish they are healthy to return to work. We have completed a health assessment form for all our staff.
- 1.2 Working with our staff we have looked at the opportunities to work from home and where this is possible, we do have a number of our staff currently working at home. This is to avoid overcrowding of our offices.
- 1.3 We will be having regular chats with our team to make sure they are ok, we will let them know it is fine to express their concerns or if they are anxious and let them know that we are all in this together.
- 1.4 As part of our morning meeting, we will hold daily checks to ensure no health issues have changed.
- 1.5 As a client of Bradford & Howley we would ask you to inform us of any health concerns relating to COVID-19 as soon as possible.



2 PREMISES

- 2.1 Our offices are laid out to allow for the social distancing rules. We would encourage all our clients to keep face to face contact to a minimum, however, sometimes this is unavoidable which we understand.
- 2.2 Our offices have been thoroughly cleaned, including all client areas, kitchen, staff rooms, toilets etc.. prior to our return to work.
- 2.3 We have an ample supply of hand gel, antibacterial wipes and are readily available for our staff and customers to use. We also have facemasks and gloves if required.
- 2.4 We will continue to have a regular cleaning routine throughout the day that will include insuring we wipe down our desks, chairs, keyboards, screens and all the appropriate stationary.
- 2.5 We have signs in our window to limit the number of customers in the office at any one time.
- 2.6 Our staff are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water regularly throughout the day and the restrooms are regularly stocked up with the appropriate soap and disposable paper towels.



3 VALUATIONS

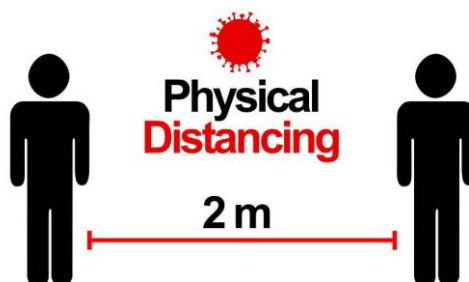
We have looked at our people and our offices, but we also need to cover ourselves for visiting our client's homes. Estate agency is a people business and requires interactions with buyers, sellers, applicants, landlords, tenants, and contractors. Our aim is to provide a safe environment for all concerned.

- 3.1 We have the ability to offer a virtual valuation using our i-value tool, if you would like to know more about this, we will send you the appropriate link.
- 3.2 When meeting you face to face; we will ask you a few questions relating to COVID-19 to assess any risk associated with a visit. Remember, this is a two-way process so making sure that we are all fit and healthy is reassuring to everybody.
- 3.3 On valuations we will be avoiding handshaking or any other physical contact, we will be keeping a 2 metre distance. We will have hand sanitisers with us and prior to the meeting we will use this before and after the appointment. We also have facemasks if you would like us to wear them.
- 3.4 When we arrive back to the office, we will ensure we wash our hands with soap and water prior to conducting any other task.
- 3.5 We will never attend a valuation if we are feeling unwell.



4 VIEWINGS

- 4.1 For your convenience on some of our properties we do have virtual viewings available if this is how you would like to see the property first. We understand, a physical viewing of the property will be required before you make an offer.
- 4.2 Any customer viewing a property with us will be asked to inform us if they are unwell and we will postpone the viewing.
- 4.3 Prior to attending the viewing, we will need to know how many people you would like to attend, and we will limit this to no more than three people in the property at any one time (this includes the representative at Bradford & Howley).
- 4.4 If the property is occupied, we will be checking the health of the occupier prior to arranging any appointments.
- 4.5 Where a physical viewing does take place, we will be avoiding any handshaking or any physical contact as we will be keeping a two metre distance.
- 4.6 We have a supply of hand gel in our cars and wipes so that we are able to sanitise our hands before and after viewings and wipe down anything we have touched during our visit.
- 4.7 We will never travel in the car with anybody else and we will always meet viewers at the property.



5 COMPLIANCE

- 5.1 We are still legally required to confirm the identity of buyers, sellers, landlords and tenants. This should be completed before any business relationship commences.
- 5.2 We have our own ability to search of this electronically and therefore may not require seeing some ID. If we do need to see physical documents when we are meeting you at the property, we will wear protective gloves when handling any correspondence.
- 5.3 If a face to face meeting is not possible to confirm identity, we do have the ability to do this via a Zoom conference call.



6 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 It is important that we ensure the health and safety of our tenants and have a continuing obligation to do an annual gas safety check, gas engineers are permitted to visit.
- 6.2 Contractors may continue to visit properties to undertake maintenance and repair, but we will complete a health assessment with a contractor prior to their visit.
- 6.3 Where a face to face visit must take place in the property, we will ensure a health assessment is completed prior to us visiting the property. We have protective gloves and facemasks if these are required. We also have the necessary hand sanitisers and will use these prior and post appointments.
- 6.4 Where a tenant is required to visit the office we will ensure a two metre social distancing is observed.
- 6.5 Any keys that are issued, we will wash our hands prior and after handing over keys and keys will be wiped with an antibacterial wipe.
- 6.6 For new tenancies, we will ask our landlords to consider a slightly longer void period prior to a new tenant taking up residents. This is based on research that coronavirus is still detectable on surfaces up to 72 hours.



7 LINKS

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>



Disclaimer: The information we provide is based on legislation; government guidance; and/or our considered best practice, all as available at the time the information was provided to you. We will do our best to ensure the information is complete and accurate.