

Additional home moving guidance for people becoming ill or needing to isolate during the moving process, including Moving Day

There is already comprehensive guidance from government, the industry, individual sector and consumer guidance for those involved in moving home:-

Government guidance:-

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/government-advice-on-home-moving-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

Industry guidance:-

<https://www.propertychecklists.co.uk/downloads/20200513>

To help communicate the 'new way' to move home to buyers, sellers and tenants, the consumer guides below will also be helpful:-

Preparing for a property professional to visit your property for sale or let during COVID-19 -

<https://www.propertychecklists.co.uk/articles/prepare-property-professional-visit-your-property-sale>

Home viewings, property visits and assessments during COVID-19

<https://www.propertychecklists.co.uk/articles/home-viewings-property-visits-and-assessments-checklist>

Checklist for moving day during COVID-19 - <https://www.propertychecklists.co.uk/articles/checklist-moving-day-during-covid19>

But what happens if someone develops symptoms or Covid-19 during a house move or is asked to self-isolate?

This additional guidance covers what consumers and the industry should do if someone:-

Becomes ill with Covid-19 symptoms

Is diagnosed with Covid-19

Is alerted by the NHS's test and trace system that they have been in contact with someone that has Covid-19 symptoms and they need to self-isolate

When and if available, and to reduce the impact of any spread of the virus during home moving it would be worthwhile for home movers and those within the industry, be they buying or letting, to sign up to the NHS track and trace app when it becomes available.

If anyone is asked to self-isolate during the moving process, please ensure they follow government guidance:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

If you have any symptoms or are contacted by the NHS test and trace system, here is the information on what to do:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

What if someone has symptoms/becomes ill during offer to exchange?

If someone becomes ill during these stages, it is possible to continue with the home buying and selling process up to the point of people visiting the home eg for a valuation or the physical move. The move should not take place unless everyone in the chain is free of the symptoms and Covid-19 itself. If contracts have not been exchanged it is still possible to withdraw from the transaction.

What if someone has symptoms between exchange and completion or accepting an offer on a property let

If someone becomes ill during this time, the property lawyers will need to negotiate organising the physical move when everyone in the chain is free of the symptoms and Covid-19 itself.

If it is not possible to postpone the move for any reason, the person with Covid-19 and anyone that is self-isolating with them will need to be out of the property before move (completion) day and not enter the new property until everyone else has gone eg removal people and other occupants.

If the property is a shared home or House in Multiple Occupation, see below and read this article:

<https://www.propertychecklists.co.uk/articles/how-do-you-let-and-rent-house-multiple-occupation-hmo>

The property the person is leaving will have to be deep cleaned by someone who is not self-isolating and is free of Covid-19 prior to anyone entering it eg removals team and post leaving the property. For more information on deep cleaning and what to do on move day, read <https://www.propertychecklists.co.uk/articles/checklist-moving-day-during-covid19>

For anyone suffering with or having Covid-19 symptoms who cannot postpone their move, face masks will need to be used on move day.

Moving day

It is recommended that a supply of face coverings is available for everyone on moving day, just in case any symptoms are developed during the day.

If someone develops symptoms on move day, ideally the move should be delayed if at all possible, please follow the latest self-isolation rules <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Anyone that develops symptoms on the day whether they are buying/selling or letting, and the move can't be postponed, will need to stay away from everyone on the move day. For example, if one person in the household has had to isolate and there is someone that can manage the move that doesn't have symptoms, they can go ahead, but with the precautions, if they have symptoms, they need to take the precautions too.

This person needs to wear a mask and keep at least 2m social distancing from anyone they meet.

However, if you are moving yourselves, you can continue to pack if you are all well enough, but you will need to do a deep clean of the property as soon as you have emptied it. Read the following for more information:-
<https://www.propertychecklists.co.uk/articles/checklist-moving-day-during-covid19> .

You will need to alert your property lawyer and agent as soon as you are aware you have symptoms so that they can advise the other parties.

When travelling to your new home, you will need to remain within the car on the journey and ensure the agent drops off the keys to the property you are moving into, rather than picking them up from the agent or the previous homeowner/tenant.

What if the property is an House in Multiple Occupation?

If the property is an HMO, the person with Covid-19 will ideally need to delay the move in, or as a minimum stay in their room and self-isolate according to the guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

The property will need to be deep cleaned once they have moved in and the tenants should:-

1. Agree a time to use the communal areas eg the kitchen and bathroom
2. Clean shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms, take meals in the room

3. Regularly clean other shared spaces including living rooms (including all surfaces)
4. Keep shared spaces well ventilated eg opening windows and doors
5. Don't share tea towels and other towels
6. Use separate crockery and eating and drinking utensils
7. Keep 2 metres away from others, whether inside or outside

Ideally the tenant should secure a Covid-19 test if possible.