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## **PEMBROKESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE**

Following the most recent Government guidance, Pembrokeshire County Council's housing department has had to cut back on all face-to-face meetings and home visits.

Staff are still working to support tenants, those who are homeless and those who are on the Choice Homes waiting list but they have had to make changes to some of those services.

### **Choice Homes Allocation Scheme**

- allocations under the Choice Homes Scheme have now been suspended for the time being. Instead the focus will be on working with the Housing Associations and businesses to identify, match and prepare properties for those in an emergency situation. This includes the suspension of Mutual Exchanges and Transfers.
- customers can still complete housing applications but there may be a delay in these being responded to as the Council prioritises other areas. If customers wish to discuss their housing application they should call: 01437764551 or email: [haalloc@pembrokeshire.gov.uk](mailto:haalloc@pembrokeshire.gov.uk)
- if customers have any information to add to their housing application, they are asked to email a picture or a scanned copy of it to: [haalloc@pembrokeshire.gov.uk](mailto:haalloc@pembrokeshire.gov.uk) and where possible avoid sending anything in the post.

### **Homelessness**

Staff are available to give advice and assistance over the telephone to those who may be at risk of becoming homeless in the near future.

Demand remains high for this service and given the current circumstances and any landlords who are interested in working with the Housing Department to supply accommodation for those in an emergency situation are asked to get in touch.

Accommodation will need to be fully self-contained and furnished to include cooking and washing facilities in order for people to self-isolate where necessary. To enquire, please email: [haalloc@pembrokeshire.gov.uk](mailto:haalloc@pembrokeshire.gov.uk)

Emergency Legislation has been introduced which bans both social and private landlords from starting possession proceedings to evict tenants for at least the next three months.

Support has also been introduced to home owners and landlords in the form of a three-month mortgage payment holiday if they are struggling to meet payments as a result of COVID-19 outbreak.

If you are homeless and need advice, contact the duty team by emailing: [housingadvice@pembrokeshire.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvice@pembrokeshire.gov.uk) or phoning: 01437 764551 and asking for the housing advice team.

### **Current Tenants**

The housing department will continue to provide advice and support to tenants by telephone for emergency tenancy issues only.

It is in the process of identifying tenants who may be vulnerable and in need of additional support during this time. If you are a tenant who may need additional support, please let us know so that we can link you in with the essential services that you need.

You can also access the Community Hub on: <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-communityinformation/i-need-some-help> or call: 01437 776301

Housing staff is also asking tenants to let them know if they are in self-isolation or displaying any symptoms so that we can ensure staff safety in the event of an emergency.

Please email: [tenman@pembrokeshire.gov.uk](mailto:tenman@pembrokeshire.gov.uk) or call 01437 764551 and ask to speak to the Tenancy Management Team.

### **Sheltered Housing Schemes**

The department has taken several measures to support and comply with the Government guidance for self-isolation and social distancing within our Sheltered Housing schemes.

- communal lounges have been closed
- tenants have been advised that they must socially isolate themselves.
- wardens are available via phone or email to support tenants and ensure they have access to food, medication and essential services
- tenants are advised to only allow essential visitors to their property (or example to deliver food, medication etc)
- always keep two metres separation from people

The Council is concerned that some residents and visitors are not adhering to the strict government guidance and would plead to keep themselves and others safe by maintaining isolation during this period.

Anyone who is a Sheltered Housing tenant, or concerned about a Sheltered Housing tenant who may need help and assistance during this time, can contact the warden for the scheme or call: 01437 764551 and ask to speak to the Housing Customer Liaison team.

### **Building Maintenance Service**

Our Maintenance teams are working hard to make sure we can respond to emergency repairs only, which should be reported as normal. All other repairs that involve social contact have been suspended.

All customers reporting repairs are asked to inform the department if they are self-isolating or showing symptoms of the virus so that staff and customers alike can be protected

We will keep you updated in the coming weeks as we react to the evolving situation.

### **Paying Rent**

It is important that tenants continue paying their rent where possible, either via the automated phone line on 01437 775164 or by paying online through: <https://myaccount.pembrokeshire.gov.uk>

If customers need advice or assistance regarding paying their rent, they can email: [revenue.services@pembrokeshire.gov.uk](mailto:revenue.services@pembrokeshire.gov.uk)

For tenants who are worried about paying their rent or who are in financial difficulty, they may be entitled to help to pay their housing costs through Universal Credit or Housing Benefit depending on their circumstances. To find out about the financial support available, go to: [www.GOV.UK](http://www.GOV.UK) or for Housing Benefit and Council Tax enquiries, email: [revenue.services@pembrokeshire.gov.uk](mailto:revenue.services@pembrokeshire.gov.uk)

If customers require additional support with this, Citizens Advice are continuing to support customers online and via telephone. Local Advice line number is: 01437 806070.

Opening times are: Tuesday and Thursday: 10 am to 5 pm and Wednesday: 10 am to 5.30 pm. Further information is available at: [www.pembscab.org](http://www.pembscab.org)

***For further information contact: Len Mullins, Press and Public Relations Manager, on 01437 775387. The Council's press releases are also available on the Authority's website: <http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk>***

