



# COVID-19 POLICY: SAFE WORKING

## The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020

These regulations come into force on 13th May 2020:

"To undertake any of the following activities in connection with the purchase, sale, letting or rental of a residential property –

- (i) Visiting estate or letting agents, developer sales offices or show homes;
- (ii) Viewing residential properties to look for a property to buy or rent;
- (iii) Preparing a residential property to move in;
- (iv) Moving home;
- (v) Visiting a residential property to undertake any activities required for the rental or sale of that property "

Although Estate Agents were able to open for business from 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020, after considering how and when to reopen our premises given government guidance on safer working, W J Meade decided to re-open our branches from the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. We have appropriately laid out the offices to abide by social distancing regulations, delivered training on social distancing and provided, installed and stocked the branches with the relevant cleaning products and PPE.

In order for us to show our commitment to the public, our clients and our competitors, we have published the following policy document to show how we are abiding by Government regulations to ensure and promote a safe working environment both in the office and when we are entering other people's homes.

### OTHER PEOPLE'S HOMES:

- We will ask whether any party is showing symptoms or has been asked to self-isolate before going ahead with viewings, or visits to offices.
- We will operate on an appointment only basis for both viewings and office visits. Our doors will be locked so prevent walk-ins.
- We will encourage virtual viewings/ tours as a first instance, and physical viewings will only be arranged for those with a strong interest in the property.
- The government expect agents to accompany viewings, and we will seek to maintain a minimum of 2 metres distance from others, where possible.
- Where social distancing is not possible and the visit is within an enclosed space, we will wear face masks and gloves.
- No open house viewings will take place.
- If we do not accompany the visit, we will make clear to both the buyer and seller how the viewing should be conducted safely.
- Clients will be expected to meet us at the property; we will not drive any client to a scheduled viewing.
- All parties should wash their hands with soap and water (or hand sanitiser if not available) immediately after entering the property. Separate towels or paper towels are to be used if possible and washed or disposed of safely after use.
- Internal doors should be left opened and surfaces should be wiped down before any prospective buyer enters the property.
- We will do what we can to promote flexibility when arranging move dates, including liaising with all parties to extend a move date, in case someone involved has contracted the virus or is self-isolating.
- All keys will be thoroughly cleaned before handover to the client.

#### LETTINGS COMPLIANCE:

- Where possible, necessary repairs, gas and electrical safety checks will be conducted in the period between a property being vacated and a new tenant moving in. If this is not possible and visits are needed to occupied properties, this will be done by appointment only. Measures will be put in place to ensure physical contact is minimised, for example with residents staying in another room during the visit.
- Periodic Inspections were temporarily halted during lockdown (March – June), and those that should have taken place during the lockdown period were forwarded to 6 months' time.
- We will make every effort to abide by our obligations to complete gas and electrical safety requirements, however should a tenant be experiencing symptoms, they are self-isolating or shielding, we will work with the occupiers to come up with a mutually agreeable procedure and time frame. We will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable steps to comply, and therefore would not be in breach of any legislation.
- We will take additional precautionary measures to ensure that properties are prepared ready for new tenants. This may include; cleaning to minimise any potential spread of the virus, and cleaning of keys before handover.
- Right to rent checks can be conducted remotely (during COVID-19) and therefore, if we cannot see the tenant face to face, we will complete a video call to check ID and ask for a scanned copy for our file.
- To limit office contact, we will send (and accept) all paperwork (where possible) electronically through DocuSign. This will include; terms and conditions, tenancy agreements, referencing paperwork etc.

#### OFFICE PROCEDURES:

- Operating on an appointment only basis.
- Opened the branches on minimal staffing and reduced hours to abide by social distancing.
- We have reviewed layouts to allow workers to work further apart from each other.
- Used floor tape to help people keep to a 2 metre distance.
- Avoided people working face to face (use side by side or back to back).
- Used screens (where needed) to create a physical barrier between people.
- Encourage workers to remain on site, but when not possible, reminded them to abide by social distancing while off-site.
- Frequent cleaning of work areas and equipment between uses.
- Frequent cleaning objects and surfaces that are touched regularly such as computers, printers, scanners, door handles, kitchen and bathroom facilities.
- Clearing workspaces and removing waste and belongings from the work area at the end of a shift.
- Used signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough and sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available.
- Provided hand sanitizer in multiple locations in addition to washrooms.
- Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and social distancing is achieved as much as possible.
- Provided more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.
- Where possible, providing paper towels as an alternative to hand dryers in handwashing facilities.

This Policy has been approved and authorised by:

**Name:** William Maddin  
**Position:** Operations Manager  
**Date:** 14.05.2020  
**Due for Review by:** 01.12.2020  
**Signature:** 