

Information for prospective tenants of Kettering Borough Council regarding viewing and sign-up procedures during the Covid-19 pandemic

During the current Covid-19 crisis we are taking extra precautions to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. We are following government guidance to keep everyone safe and protected, so there will be changes in the way we manage letting our homes. This information sets out the precautions that we have taken and how our council property lettings processes have changed due to Covid-19

Viewing properties

We ask that only the prospective tenant(s) attend property viewings, and that children are looked after elsewhere wherever possible. If there are joint applicants (two adults) wanting to view the property, they will be expected to view the property separately and supervise children outside of the property.

A member of staff will meet you at the property having first opened the door and cleaned the door handles and other key areas in the property. The staff member will stay outside the property whilst you view. We ask that you stay a minimum of 2m away from them at all times.

You will be given gloves to wear and we request that you touch as few surfaces inside the property as possible.

After the viewing you will be asked to remove your gloves, and these will be disposed of at the property.

We ask you not to attend a viewing or sign up if you or any of your household members have any symptoms of Covid 19 including:

- A persistent cough
- High temperature
- Loss of taste or smell

After the viewing (via email or in the post) you will receive some important information including:

- A draft tenancy agreement
- The information usually included in our welcome meeting
- An introduction to your tenancy leaflet

Please take the time to read this information before the next stage (verification telephone call) so that you have the opportunity to ask questions if there is anything you don't understand or would like more information about.

Verification Telephone call

In order to minimise contact at the next stage (office-based sign up) we are now carrying out checks and giving essential information over the phone.

This telephone call will take approximately one hour and is an opportunity for you to ask any questions. We will ask you questions to check that the information we have from your Keyways application is correct. We will also complete an income and expenditure report with you. Before the call you may want to ensure that you have read the information provided and had a think about how much you usually spend on food, clothes, leisure etc.

It would also be very useful if you have the following information to hand:

- Bank statements for the latest three months
- Details of any debts that you have

During this telephone call we will also agree with you how much rent you will need to pay at sign up.

Sign up

Prior to the sign up you should call our Customer Services department on 01536 410333 to make the agreed rent payment.

You will need to come to the main Kettering Borough Council offices in Kettering to sign your tenancy, collect your keys and make your first rent payment if you haven't already done this.

You will be given an appointment slot for the sign up. Please do not arrive early. You will not be allowed to wait within the council offices if you arrive early.

We will keep the sign up appointment as short as possible to minimise face to face contact between you and our staff member. Please note that our sign up desk is now equipped with a Perspex screen between you and the staff member which is in place to minimise the risk for you, your family and our staff.

You will need to bring photographic ID and a payment card to make your 1st rent payment to the sign up appointment. Please note that we do not take cash at any time.

It is important that only the tenant(s) attend the office for sign up and that children are looked after elsewhere. Please advise us if you anticipate any problems with this. In the case of a joint tenancy, we will ask you to sign separately.

Support

We want to help you make a success of your tenancy and are committed to providing you with the support you need to do so. Under usual circumstances we would be visiting you frequently, especially throughout the first year of your tenancy. Obviously during the current lockdown guidance, we are not able to visit as frequently but it doesn't mean that we are not there for you.

Our Neighbourhood Managers and Income Officers will be delighted to speak to you over the phone and our Tenancy Support Team are still able to offer specialist and specific support around many issues such as: finances, budgeting and benefits, access to healthcare, setting up your new home and many other issues.

Please talk to us at any stage of the sign-up process or once you are in your home to let us know how we can support you.