

## COVID-19

# CHECKLIST TO KEEP AGENCIES OPERATING

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Agents need to stay up to date and respond to the latest advice from Government, Public Health England and the Chief Medical Officer, but wherever possible continue to offer services, play a role in your community and provide the support that your clients need. This checklist is designed to help you pose relevant questions and support your compliance while observing the requirements necessary to carry out the day-to-day duties of estate and lettings agency.

- Office and team
- Clients
- Valuations and viewings
- Inspections, maintenance and cleaning
- Business continuity

## OFFICE AND TEAM

1. Ensure that your staff understand their individual responsibilities and are not afraid to alert you to any developments in their personal circumstances. Have a discussion every morning to ensure you are aware of any potential concerns or hazards.
2. Display posters reminding staff to wash hands in accordance with NHS Guidelines and use alcohol wipes to clean desks, keyboards, equipment and other surfaces regularly.
3. Keep alcohol gel on desks and promote regular hand washing.
4. Prevent staff from sharing phones and clean them with alcohol wipes regularly.
5. Wipe down office door handles, handrails and communal areas regularly.
6. Ensure you are up to date on the latest guidance on sickness pay and Government support for financial disruption. Businesses with fewer than 250 employees will be eligible for reimbursement for up to 14 days of statutory sick pay per employee: [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/873676/Covid-19\\_fact\\_sheet\\_18\\_March.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/873676/Covid-19_fact_sheet_18_March.pdf)
7. Where staff have an overseas holiday booked, ensure they are following the latest travel advice from the Foreign Office: [gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

## CLIENTS

8. Keep clear records of any and all conversations that may affect service throughout the period of disruption.
9. Communicate with your clients to ensure that they know that your business continues to operate, explain that you are taking measures to protect the health and safety of all parties.
10. Ensure you are maintaining compliance with Consumer Protection Regulations by providing reasonable information about prior residents in relation to the infection and appropriate cleaning measures to take.
11. Be aware of the vulnerable clients within your portfolio, offer extra assistance and check on them where possible.
12. Avoid handshakes, we're all getting used to it now!

## VALUATIONS AND VIEWINGS

13. Offer 360-degree viewings, or if you do not have the infrastructure in place, offer to show properties via video call or recorded film.
14. Make reasonable, regular checks before you allow landlords or vendors to carry out or host viewings. Ask if they have returned from an impacted area, have a high temperature or a recent dry cough or have had any contact with anyone with symptoms. If they have, they should not conduct the viewing. Keep clear records of all conversations.
15. Ask the same questions to applicants and potential buyers and if they have symptoms offer remote viewing. Keep clear records of all conversations.
16. Make extra checks involving the properties of elderly or vulnerable people and limit viewings, offer recorded 360-degree film viewing.

## INSPECTIONS, MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING

17. Provide disposable gloves for inventory providers and property managers.
18. Check the standard of cleaning between tenancies. Consider whether your current arrangements are sufficiently thorough.
19. Postpone inspections where possible and consider whether it is absolutely necessary to deploy a contractor. Ask tenants and contractors whether they have a high temperature or a recent dry cough or have had any contact with anyone with symptoms. Keep clear records of all conversations.

## BUSINESS CONTINUITY

20. Check your backup plan in preparation for any measures which restrict travel. Ensure staff have remote access to software and email, have appropriate tracked access to property keys and can make payments to suppliers and landlords, HMRC etc. Make sure you can divert phone lines to minimise disruption and do a test run to check that this will run smoothly.
21. Check your contracts and talk to suppliers including referencing agencies, board and signage contractors, inventory providers and third party call handlers, so that both parties understand the possible and likely impact of disruption.
22. Check the terms of any rent protection insurance you may have, in case tenants fall into rent arrears.
23. Consider your staff's individual circumstances in relation to likely caring responsibilities and how best to cover for sickness across the team.
24. Ensure you have contact details for all staff so that you can update them as to any emerging developments.
25. Tell staff to routinely check emails and messages before leaving home in case your office has to be closed.
26. Talk to the conveyancers and surveyors that frequently support your chains so that you are aware of small businesses who may struggle to progress transactions.
27. A dedicated helpline has been set up to help businesses and self-employed individuals in financial distress and with outstanding tax liabilities to receive support with their tax affairs: [tinyurl.com/vynfdxb](https://tinyurl.com/vynfdxb)

If you have urgent concerns ring 111 or visit: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19)  
Latest Government advice: [gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public](https://gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public)  
Health Protection Scotland: [hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings](https://hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings)  
Public Health Wales: [phw.nhs.wales](https://phw.nhs.wales) | Public Health Agency: [publichealth.hscni.net](https://publichealth.hscni.net)

DISCLAIMER This checklist is only intended to provide suggestions to practising property agents of areas that should be considered. This list is not exhaustive and Propertymark accepts no liability for any action taken as a result or consequences resulting from those actions.