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# CORONAVIRUS

**Working through this together**



# Together we will make it through this crisis

We know that everyone's lives are being impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We are making sure you're up to date with our services and know how to contact us if you need any additional advice or support while we work through this together. We are working hard to provide critical services, support the most vulnerable and help keep everyone safe. We are continually monitoring and adapting the way we work, based on the Government's advice.



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### Repairs

Our absolute priority remains the well-being and safety of our residents, employees and contractors. We are still delivering emergency repairs within residents' homes and carrying out other repairs within communal areas where social distancing can be easily applied. Emergency repairs will typically cover issues that present security risks, cause uncontrollable leaks, loss of power or loss of drinking water provision.

If you or a household member need to request an emergency repair, but feel unwell or need to self-isolate, please tell us so that we can discuss the best ways to support you.



Non-urgent repairs, replacement programmes and some other services are currently on hold. We'll let people know when we're able to take calls again about non-urgent repairs and how we're going to catch up with those works as soon as circumstances allow.

### Rents

We know that many people's work, family and income circumstances have seen dramatic changes. We believe that no one should lose their home because of coronavirus and we can support you if you're having difficulty with rent payments.

If you're unable to pay some or all of your rent, together with other bills, please get in touch with us as soon as possible on 01372 814 000. We can offer you advice on money matters, including help with claiming benefits, which many more people will now be eligible for.

**Don't forget, you can pay your rent by phone on 01372 814 000 or through our customer portal, My Rosebery [www.rosebery.org.uk/my-rosebery-login/](http://www.rosebery.org.uk/my-rosebery-login/)**

If you are one of our homeowners, we also encourage you to contact your mortgage lender to see if they can offer assistance.

During this time of crisis, the best way to contact us is through your **My Rosebery** account. As a one stop shop for everything to do with your tenancy, you can message us 24/7 and have a clear record of your contact and our response. No more hunting for emails or waiting for a call back!

To log in, visit [www.rosebery.org.uk/my-rosebery-login](http://www.rosebery.org.uk/my-rosebery-login)

Once you have registered, all you will need to log in with is your username and password.

If you have any questions about signing up, or if you need a tenancy reference reminder, please chat to us by using the Live Chat on our website!



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## Support and advice



We are regularly contacting residents who may need some extra support during this period. While we are trying to contact as many residents as we can, some may not be on the phone or email – **if you or someone you know would benefit from additional support please let us know.** We will do our best to support you.

Local Authorities (LA's) have established Community Hubs. The hubs are supporting people who the Government has identified as the most vulnerable and who have no social network to support them. We are in contact with the LA's and other community organisations, including the foodbank, to work up a plan about how Rosebery can assist – this may be through deploying our staff as volunteers or in some other capacity. If you need assistance, please get in touch.

## Estates and communal services



Our Estate Services contractors have been working hard to deliver a normal service while restrictions are in place.

You may see some contractors carrying out essential repairs, cleaning and maintenance – please ensure that you maintain social distancing as per Government advice, staying two metres apart from anyone else. Please also remember that the social distancing advice applies to neighbours and anyone else coming to your home to carry out these essential activities.

While our estate services are restricted, it's especially important that you properly dispose of all household rubbish and bulk refuse. Please keep hallways and other communal areas clear at all times. This will minimise the risk of fire and other health and safety hazards.

## Lettings and mutual exchanges



Because the Government recommends limiting contact, we are only carrying out works to provide accommodation for the homeless and we are temporarily suspending mutual exchange, Right to Buy and Right to Acquire applications. Once the guidance changes and our services return to normal, we will be in contact with customers who have applied to exchange or are waiting to move into one of our properties.

## Virtual Scrutiny Panel

We set up the Virtual Scrutiny Panel (VSP) to examine our frontline services. The panel:

- Is resident-led
- Reaches evidence-based decisions about the delivery of services
- Ensures all recommendations are acted upon and achieve the desired outcomes to improve services

### What's been happening?

The VSP has recently completed their investigation into anti-social behaviour (ASB), which residents identified as the most important to them.

Their investigations involved reviewing the existing ASB service, looking at service standards, performance data and customer feedback from members of the 'Sounding Board'. The panel also interviewed Rosebery staff, to understand the issues and challenges. The VSP will present its findings and recommendations to Rosebery's Board in May and we will then post the final report on our website.

### Help make a difference!

The VSP is one way of ensuring that Rosebery is accountable for the performance and quality of its services. By becoming a member of our panel, you will help to continually improve the services that will benefit you and your family, as well as your neighbours and the community.

If you would like to learn more about the work of the panel or would like to know how to become a member, please email [customerexperience@rosebery.org.uk](mailto:customerexperience@rosebery.org.uk) for an information pack.



## FAQ's for residents with lost or reduced income

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**Rosebery understands you may feel anxious during this unsettling period and we want to assure you that our Tenancy Sustainment Officers are here to assist you in any way they can. Our Tenancy Sustainment service can offer advice with claiming benefits and arranging flexible payments.**

Alternatively, you can seek assistance on claiming benefits from Citizens Advice. Currently, they are unable to offer face-to-face appointments, but they can be contacted online at [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/help-to-claim/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/help-to-claim/)

**?** **Do I need to continue paying my rent if my income has changed?**

Paying your rent should continue to be a priority. If you are unable to pay some or all of your rent together with other bills, please contact us – we're here to help you.

**What are your circumstances? I have lost my job as a result of the Coronavirus crisis.**

You can make a Universal Credit claim. This will include assistance with your rent.

The Government has also announced that Universal Credit will increase by £20 per week on top of the planned annual increase.

The money paid to assist you with your rent will be paid directly to you. You will need to make arrangements to pay all of the money allocated for this purpose to Rosebery to avoid any arrears. If you live in temporary accommodation, you are also able to apply for Housing Benefit.

If you are already in receipt of any disability related benefits, you are advised to contact us, so that we can support you to maximise your income.

**My hours of work have been reduced.**

You may also be able to make a Universal Credit claim. The Government has announced that Universal Credit will increase by £20 per week on top of the planned annual increase. Your own entitlement to Universal Credit though will depend on your household's income and your personal circumstances but we can check your eligibility.

Any money paid to assist you with your rent will be paid directly to you. You will need to make arrangements to pay all of the money allocated for this purpose to Rosebery to avoid any arrears.

**I have been put on unpaid leave by my employer.**

The Government will pay 80% of the wages of employees (up to £2,500) who are unable to work due to the Coronavirus pandemic. This is dependent though on your employer accessing the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and re-assigning your employment status to a furloughed worker.

While your income is reduced to 80% you must continue paying as much of your rent

as you are able to. Our Income team is available to discuss this with you.

**I am employed but unable to attend due to being sick or self-isolating.**

Your normal income will determine what support you are able to receive. Our Tenancy Sustainment Team will be able to advise you of your entitlement and how you can make a claim.

**I am self-employed.**

If your income has been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic you may be eligible to receive a grant for 80% of your monthly profits (up to £2,500) through the Self-employed Income Support Scheme. The HMRC will contact you if you are eligible. Qualification will depend on your individual circumstances.

A lump sum payment is not expected until the beginning of June. Our Tenancy Sustainment Team is available to assist you if you have trouble with paying your rent in the meantime.

If you are not entitled to a grant via the Self-employed Income Support Scheme you may be entitled to other Government support.



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### My circumstances have not changed.

You must continue to make your existing rent and service charge payments. If this includes any additional charges agreed as part of a repayment plan to cover historical arrears, you must meet these too. Any non-payment could result in Rosebery pursuing legal action in the future to recover your arrears.

### I need to claim Universal Credit. What does this mean?

Universal Credit is a means tested benefit and so your entitlement can be impacted by any other earnings you receive as well as those that any partner receives. The same applies to any savings that either you or your partner have.

Universal Credit is paid monthly in arrears meaning there will be a delay to you in receiving your first payment. You can receive money sooner if you ask for an advance, but you will need to repay this once you start to receive your payments. This is important to note as it will reduce the amount you go on to receive each month until the advance has been repaid.

If Universal Credit helps with your rent, this will be included in your monthly payment and you will then have to pay us (your landlord) directly. While Universal Credit may pay in arrears, your charges are due in advance. If you require assistance with your rent payments while you are claiming Universal Credit then our Tenancy Sustainment Team is able to provide advice and support.

### Below are some links to other information you may find useful:

- [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-and-your-money](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-and-your-money)
- [www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you#benefit-changes-because-of-coronavirus](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you#benefit-changes-because-of-coronavirus)
- [www.betteroffcalculator.co.uk/calculator/new/step1](http://www.betteroffcalculator.co.uk/calculator/new/step1)
- [www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk](http://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk)

### ? Who else should I contact regarding my change of financial circumstances?

Residents also need to contact their Local Authority's Council Tax department. With no or reduced income, a resident could be eligible for Council Tax Support but this needs to be applied for in addition to Universal Credit.

### ? Will I lose my home?

The Government's advice has been clear; no-one renting their home who has lost income due to the Coronavirus pandemic will be forced out of their home. The same principles will be applied to home owners. However, it is important that residents follow our advice and maintain their contact with us to avoid large arrears and to avoid potential action being taken in the future.

### ? I am a homeowner. Can I receive assistance?

Mortgage companies are offering a three-month mortgage holiday. It is important that residents contact their mortgage lender to enquire about this if they are struggling to make repayments.

### ? Will Rosebery be offering a 'rent holiday'?

Anyone taking a mortgage holiday still needs to repay the missed payments (with additional interest) but at a later date, when their circumstances have improved.

In the case of rent payments, Rosebery will agree repayment plans with residents, to allow them to make the necessary repayments, when their circumstances change. These are agreed on a case by case basis.

As a social housing provider, Rosebery has essential services it needs to provide, such as repairs and implementing Health & Safety measures. Offering a rent holiday would not be sustainable and would prevent the organisation from fulfilling its obligations in delivering these essential services.

Turn to page 8 for advice on helping you in to work



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## FAQ's for residents experiencing anti-social behaviour

**We hope individuals and families will be tolerant and kind during this challenging period. Unfortunately, we are getting more reports of nuisance and anti-social behaviour issues and incidents of domestic violence. If you see, hear or believe someone is under threat of domestic violence or experience problems that you're unable to resolve, please let us know. We can still offer advice and we remain in contact with the police and other statutory agencies. For serious incidents, please follow the usual processes and contact 999 for an emergency or 101 for non-emergencies.**



During the lockdown, as you spend more time at home, you are likely to become more aware of noise from your neighbours who are also home for longer periods and at different times to their usual routine. We encourage you to be patient and tolerant during this period. However, we are aware that there will still be incidences of anti-social behaviour and below are some answers to questions you might have:

 Find all the latest updates on our website at [www.rosebery.org.uk](http://www.rosebery.org.uk)  
 Or to discuss any tenancy issues, please call **01372 814 000**.

### How can I help reduce the impact of noise from my home during this period?

Here are some tips for reducing noise in the home to minimise disturbance to your neighbours:

#### DIY and gardening

- Avoid doing noisy jobs early in the day or late in the evening.
- Consider letting your neighbour know you are doing DIY or using noisy gardening tools. Make sure you do this with 'social distancing' in mind. Consider putting a note through their door or making a telephone call to them.

#### In the house

- Avoid slamming doors including cupboard doors and stamping feet.
- Keep the volume of your TV and music down – consider using headphones.
- Avoid using noisy appliances like washing machines and vacuum cleaners, early in the day or late in the evening.





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**? I am struggling with noise from my neighbour. Is there anything I can do?**

Initially, we suggest you ask yourself if the noise is unreasonable:

- Is it happening during unsociable hours?
- Do you think there is anything your neighbour could do to reduce the noise?

You may want to let your neighbour know they are disturbing you with their noise.

It is important you respect social distancing when you do this, so we suggest you consider making a phone call or posting a note to them rather than knocking on their door.

If you believe your neighbour's noise levels are unreasonable then you can record any noise using the **NoiseApp**. This is available free to download from your App Store (Apple or Android). When registering, simply select **Rosebery Housing Association** as your landlord. We will respond to you via the app.

**? My neighbour is ignoring Government guidelines and having visitors over during lockdown.**

During the current lockdown period, the Government advises that 'social distancing' measures are taken to reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This includes the need to avoid gatherings with friends and family or gatherings in public spaces.

Powers have been given to relevant authorities, including the police, for these measures to be enforced.

If you see or hear anything from a neighbour to indicate they have a 'gathering' of people in their home, you should report this to the police on 101.

Rosebery does not have the power to directly enforce these measures but we want to hear whenever and wherever gatherings are taking place, as we are keen to support the measures put in place by the Government to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

**? My neighbour and/or their visitors are being rowdy and/or abusive. What can I do?**

If you believe you are at serious risk from someone's behaviour, you must call the police on 999. For less urgent situations, you should call 101 to report such an incident.

If you have had reason to call the police because you have been subject to threatening or intimidating behaviour, then you must call us when you are in a place of safety to let us know of the incident. If you have a Crime Reference number available, please let us have this when you call. It will make it easier for us when we make contact with the police to gain evidence from them of the incident.

Where someone's behaviour towards you has been abusive but has not led you to call the police you should still report this behaviour to us. Initially you will be asked a series of questions by one of our Customer Experience Team about the issues you have experienced.

Depending on the information you give us, we will take different follow up actions. These could include a referral to your Neighbourhood Officer who will contact you to discuss how we will look to resolve the problems you are experiencing. This may include the need for you to keep a diary of future incidents using a **Diary Sheet**. You are invited to start recording incidents as soon as possible even if you have not managed to speak with us at that stage.



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## Help in your community during the coronavirus

Surrey County Council has created a Community Helpline to support you, your family and your community during the coronavirus pandemic. It offers official health advice, changes to council services, useful links for financial advice and a list of helplines should you feel that you're struggling. There's also information on offering help in your community or if you need help and support with shopping or chatting to someone on the phone.

**Community Helpline:**  
**0300 200 1008**

**Open**  
Monday to Friday: 8am to 6pm,  
Saturday and Sunday: 10am to 2pm

This Community Helpline is for two things:

1. To help direct residents who need support, if friends and family are unable to help with such things as picking up shopping, prescription collections or having someone who can be a telephone friend, and other services that can help.
2. To provide advice on where to register your offer of help to support your community.

The Community Helpline will not be able to provide any public health advice (please use existing services such as 111).

You can also visit the Surrey County Council Community Hub Coronavirus website for more information – <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/coronavirus>

### Let us have your thoughts and feedback

As always, we value your opinion and we welcome your feedback – positive or negative. Please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions on the way we are working through this and our response to your issues and concerns. Your views mean a lot to us and they allow us to deliver the best possible services particularly during this challenging time.



### Keeping in touch

Times are challenging but we are meeting these issues head-on and responding effectively to meet the needs of the most in need and to help keep everyone safe.

Our priority is to support our most vulnerable residents during this pandemic. We have been in touch with all of our residents who may require extra support and we are also carrying out frequent welfare call-backs for those who request them.

If you would like us to check in with you regularly, please let us know. It can be for extra information and advice, or just for a chat. And please also let us know if there is anyone else in your area who may need us to contact them.



### Helping you in to work

For many people, the Coronavirus crisis has led to them losing their job.

We work with the ETHOS Project which supports people to find work where they are unemployed or working fewer than 16 hours a week and looking for more. It provides guidance and support to help with your search for employment and includes help with:

- Writing CVs and covering letters.
- Searching and applying for jobs.
- Finding training courses.
- Interview techniques.

While one to one appointments cannot be offered during this current period, it is an opportunity for new skills to be gained using online learning portals and for CV's to be refreshed.

**If you need help, call Epsom's ETHOS advisor, Nanette Chandler, on 07904 908 871 or email [nchandler@surreyllp.org.uk](mailto:nchandler@surreyllp.org.uk)**

