

During this time we understand that your living circumstances may have changed with some students travelling to home towns and cities at present. We are aware that these decisions may affect your rental payments and decisions and so we hope these questions and answers are able to assist you.

For further information on current regulations please ensure to take a look at the government's guidelines found [here](#)

The Office for Students have also provided guidance for students regarding COVID-19. The advice for students can be read [here](#)

If you do have any questions please do not hesitate to contact student housing where our team will be happy to assist you:

student.housing@port.ac.uk

023 9284 3214

I live in the private sector and I have left my property to return home, do I still have to pay rent?

As your contract is with a private landlord/agency you would need to enquire with them directly but, if you have signed a fixed term contract, you will still need to pay rent until the end of the contract.

If you feel that you cannot afford to pay rent then try to inform your landlord of this as soon as possible.

You can enquire regarding ending the tenancy early or negotiating an earlier end to the agreement but this is not guaranteed and would be with your provider to discuss with you.

What can I do if I cannot afford to pay rent?

If you find yourself in a situation where you are unable to pay your rent, there are some steps you can take:

- Explain about your situation and see if there is any way that they may agree to a rent reduction or to a late rent payment
- Enquire as to whether payments can be spread out over a longer period at a lower rent so this is more affordable
- Enquire if any measures can be put in place such as the option of reduced rent or half rent to

cover basic bills for your landlord (e.g mortgage payments)

This will be at the landlord's discretion and, anything they are able to agree to, you should get in writing.

There is also some information on the [Shelter Website](#) for during this time.

What should I do if I need financial support?

You can speak to our dedicated Student Finance team by emailing studentfinance@port.ac.uk to find out if you are eligible for some additional support during this time. They can also help with regards to budgeting and finances.

We are aware that some students are facing financial issues as a result of the current COVID-19 outbreak and student wellbeing is at the heart of discussions by the Government and the University of Portsmouth.

You should also be aware that if you are on a PAYE contract (e.g. part time student work), you may still get 80% of normal income. The guidance can be found on the [Government website](#) .

Can my landlord carry out inspections or annual certifications?

Landlords are being asked to make every effort to abide by existing regulations but the government do understand that this may not be able to be carried out.

There are restrictions in place which mean that only *essential* travel to properties should be carried out. Landlords have been advised to carry out as much necessary work as possible and correspond with tenants accordingly.

Periodic/annual domestic safety inspections such as Gas Safety certification etc. can continue to be carried out by qualified personnel, where there is appropriate notice given, and if possible for safe access. All contractors will have been given advice by their professional bodies/companies on how to proceed when entering any premises that has tenants in residence, regarding maintaining their personal safety and social distancing measures within the property - and all tenants should ensure that they operate the same measures and ensure that contractors are given appropriate space (such as stay in another room) while any necessary work is completed.

Can my landlord still carry out repairs?

Landlords still have obligations to carry out essential repairs to the property but they have been asked to be cautious of current guidelines with restrictions in mind.

If the issues are not deemed urgent it may be that the repairs can wait for a more appropriate time.

A list of urgent health and safety issues would include (but is not limited to):

- Issues with the fabric of the building (e.g leaking roof)
- A broken boiler or plumbing issue (leaving no access to heating, hot water or toilet facilities)
- Broken white goods
- Broken external doors or windows

If these are repairs that need attention at the property then guidance should be drawn to contractors to explain the current guidelines for working with clients

Can I still have guests over in my private house?

Alongside current regulations there should not be anyone in properties (including guests) that do not live here. Other regulations include:

- Limiting travel to commuting to/from work
- Going outside for medical concerns, food essentials and one exercise outside per day
- Keeping at least 2 metres (6ft away) from individuals when out
- Only going out with one other member of your household at a time

I am vacating my property soon, how do I go about this?

The government and the National Code have advised that students should now stay where they are and should not attempt to travel. This would include staying in private rented accommodation while current restrictions are in force.

This also means students should not travel to pick up any belongings during this time.

Can my landlord still carry out viewings?

During this period of lockdown it is only advised to carry out *essential* travel.

In this instance we recommend landlords offer the following for viewings:

- Arrange this in line with government legislation when and if the ban on essential travel is lifted
- Ask for the landlord to upload videos, pictures or a walkthrough video tour of the property
- If the landlord does not already have these you may wish to consider negotiating by offering to take videos and a walk through video tour of the property to send to the landlord.

My flatmate has got Covid-19 symptoms; what should I do?

Please follow this link [here](#) for NHS advice on self isolation and the Covid19 outbreak and the government advice [here](#)

Please also inform info@port.ac.uk at your earliest possible convenience.

The general advice is that the whole of the house will need to self-isolate for a minimum of 14 days

Can my landlord evict me?

A landlord cannot force a tenant to leave their home without a court order.

From 27th March 2020, eviction proceedings have been suspended for 90 days.