

Tenants' Newsletter



January 2021

Coronavirus & Service Update

As you will have seen on the news, the situation with Covid-19 has increased dramatically and we are in the midst of the country's third national lockdown. This is to give you an update on how this affects the services we provide and further updates will be available on our website: www.odu-dua.org

Contacting staff

Our offices remain closed and staff continue to work from home insofar as this is possible. You can contact us by phone on 020 7625 1799 to access your housing and repairs services but please bear with us if you experience more difficulty than usual in getting through. Our staff are still working and you should continue to contact us if you need to do so.

Repairs

With the third lockdown recently started we may start to experience more constraints on the availability of contractors to carry out works or on their ability to source materials and parts needed for repairs. We advise you to continue reporting all repairs to us in the usual manner and we will tell you if we are able to carry out your repair. All genuine emergencies will be attended to but we may have to delay other minor works to a future point in time when the current restrictions are eased or lifted.

Gas Safety Checks

Gas safety checks continue to be required by law and if your check is now due or will become due shortly, we will still send a gas engineer to perform the check. They will be doing this with full regard to the need to protect the well-being of the household in which the check is being performed and their own safety. If you have any questions about your gas check, please call us. If you are diagnosed with coronavirus or suspect you have it and are self-isolating, please let us know.

Rent

Your rent is still payable during this time but if you have any difficulty in paying your rent you should let us know as soon as possible. Depending on your circumstances, you may be entitled to make a claim for Universal Credit or Housing Benefit.

Lockdown 3 – Stay Home & Stay Safe

The message is simple: we must all stay home and only have contact with people outside our household in exceptional circumstances.

Be a good neighbour - as people may be working from home and children may be trying to study please be considerate for example, playing your music or watching TV too loud, carrying out DIY, etc.

Go to the government website:

www.gov.uk/coronavirus for further information.

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Hoax Calls and Scams

Track and trace scam

A new telephone scam is coming to light callers contact residents saying they are from NHS Track & Trace, telling the resident that they have been in contact with someone suffering from Covid 19 and need to have a test sent out to them. This is swiftly followed with a request for the resident's bank details; the caller states that the test and results cost £500 (this amount can differ).



Please do not fall for this scam. If you need a test sent out to you because you are unable to attend a test site, this is done for free, both delivery and collection, followed up by the result.

Important! The NHS Test and Trace service will NOT:

- *ask for bank details or payments
- *ask for details of any other accounts, such as social media
- *ask you to set up a password or PIN number over the phone
- *ask you to call a premium rate number, such as those starting 09 or 087

Covid-19 doorstep scam

There are people calling door to door claiming to be carrying out Coronavirus testing at your home for you on behalf of the NHS or your GP.

NHS teams are NOT conducting any door to door testing for the Coronavirus - these are thieves trying to get into your home.

Vaccine Scam

No one is being charged for the vaccine. If you are in one of the priority groups you will be contacted by your GP service.

Pension pot scams

Criminals are continuing to target pension pots throughout the coronavirus outbreak.

- * Be wary of free pension review offers. If you are contacted out of the blue about your pension, it's likely to be a scam
- * Check the FCA's Financial Services Register to make sure that anyone offering you advice or other financial services is authorised by the FCA. And only use the details provided on the FCA Register - not details a firm gives you, in case they are pretending to be an FCA authorised firm.

Romance Fraud

Action Fraud has seen a significant increase in "romance" fraud this year as the coronavirus outbreak has led to more people trying to find love online. In these scams, a criminal creates a fake profile on an online dating or social media platform and targets individuals in an attempt to gain their trust. This eventually leads to requests of money for investments, legal fees, travel or a new project, for instance. Early requests for money and a reluctance to talk about their work or life may be red flags. If you experience anything suspicious, please talk to someone you trust for help.

If you are a victim of fraud or cyber crime, report it to Action Fraud at actionfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040.

Healthy Start for you and your family



What is Healthy Start?

With Healthy Start, you get free vouchers every week to spend on milk, fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables, fresh, dried, and tinned pulses, and infant formula milk. You can also get free vitamins.

Pregnant or have children under the age of four? You could qualify if you're on benefits, or if you're pregnant and under 18.

You can find out more information about the Healthy Start scheme, such as whether you qualify and how you can apply by visiting:

<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>

or calling the helpline on 0345 607 6823



Safety in Communal Areas

Landlords have a responsibility to manage the safety of communal areas and to make sure there are no obstructions in the building, or anything that gives off smoke.

Therefore nothing should be left in these areas that would:

- Prevent or cause difficulty to residents escaping from the building
- Stop the fire services carrying out their duties
- Give off toxic smoke and gas when burning
- Explode due to high temperatures (e.g. glass)
- Cause the fire to spread more quickly

This includes items such as bikes, motorbility scooters, pushchairs, washing, shoes, door mats, plants, tools. This list is not exhaustive.

Odu-Dua has a zero tolerance approach. So, going forward tenants will be given 7 days notice to clear items from the area. If the items are not cleared then they will be removed without further notice.



Please also note that your own homes contents insurance won't cover any items kept in communal areas. This means that **nothing** can be left or kept in any communal area, including shared gardens and grassed areas, hallways, stairways, landings and meter or other cupboards. The best way to look after your possessions is to keep them in your own property.

The Housing Ombudsman's

The Housing Ombudsman is the organisation that reviews complaints from tenants living in social housing. In July 2020, it published a new Complaint Handling Code. Registered Social Landlords such as Odu-Dua Housing Association are required to adhere to the guidance within the code and will be accountable to the Housing Ombudsman service if they do not.



The purpose of the Code is to enable landlords to resolve complaints raised by their residents quickly and fairly and to use the learning from complaints to make service improvements where they are required. The Code also acts as a guide for residents setting out what they can and should expect from their landlord when they complain.

At Odu-Dua HA, we believe that good complaint handling promotes a positive landlord and resident relationship and we welcome the new Complaint Handling Code. We have carried out a self-assessment against the code as required by the Housing Ombudsman and this was discussed by the Board in December 2020.

Six Areas covered by the Self-Assessment

- ◊ Definition of a complaint
- ◊ Accessibility and awareness
- ◊ Complaint team, procedures and processes
- ◊ Fairness in complaint handling
- ◊ Putting things right
- ◊ Learning from complaints and making improvements

We are pleased to say that we are already complying with the code in most areas, however, we recognise that there are also some areas for us to improve:

We need to change our definition of a complaint to:

"an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents"

We need to ensure that our tenants know that they can make complaints in different ways (other than by writing to us) and that our Complaints Policy is easily accessible on our website.

Complaint Handling Code

When we next update our Equalities and Diversity policies we need to include our policy statement on reasonable adjustments.

Our procedure needs to include requirement to keep complainants informed throughout the process until the complaint is resolved.

We need to find out and record whether a tenant is satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

We must regularly remind our tenants of our complaints policy and procedures so when something does go wrong they know what they can do.

When we receive a complaint, we need to inform complainants of our proposed decision and allow them to comment on this before it is made final.

We need to report on complaints in our Tenants' Newsletters and also in the annual report of the Board in our Financial Statements.

We have used the self-assessment to make changes to our Complaints Policy and Procedure and we will be sending out a leaflet to tenants as well as putting updated information on our website.

If you are interested in reading the Complaint Handling Code in more detail it can be accessed via the Housing Ombudsman website at:

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>

Keeping your contact details up to date

When you ask for a repair to be carried out we use the details that we have on our system to arrange for access with the contractor. Sometimes the details that we have are incorrect, this especially applies to mobile phone numbers. If you have changed your number recently please check with the office that we have your correct details.

We are also using email details to send out rent statements, newsletters and information. Please keep us informed of any changes your email address. If you prefer for your email not to be used in this way please contact the office and let us know.



Dealing with Condensation and Mould

Condensation occurs when there is a build up of moisture in the air which then turns into liquid on contact with cold surfaces. Here are some tips to deal with condensation in your home and prevent mould growth:

- Ventilation will help reduce condensation, open windows for 15 –20 mins or so each morning.
- Avoid over-cluttering your home as poor circulation can contribute to condensation.
- Try to avoid hanging clothes to dry inside the property, if possible put clothes outside to dry. If it isn't possible to hang clothes outside, ensure windows are opened to allow moisture to escape and never hang wet clothes on your radiator.
- Wipe any condensation that builds up on windows with a cloth or kitchen towel.
- Wipe window frames and other areas where mould appears with a soapy cloth and dry with a kitchen towel. Fungicidal cleaner or mild bleach solution can also be used to treat mould – make sure to gently wipe and not scrub the mould.
- Cooking releases moisture into the air - cover pans when cooking to reduce the amount of steam released into kitchen.
- Showering and bathing release moisture into the air - ensure doors are closed, extractors are switched on and are kept clean to help remove this moisture and prevent mould growth.
- Keep your heating at a steady temperature in the winter as condensation is not able to form on warm surfaces.
- Any clothes or fabrics that are affected by mould need to be thoroughly cleaned in order to get rid of the mould.



Health and Safety: Electrical safety checks in your home



As a landlord, Odu-Dua has a responsibility to carry out a periodic safety check on the electrical installations in your home to ensure that they are in a satisfactory condition and are safe for use.

Although electricity is a part of our everyday life, it can be dangerous. Therefore, carrying out a electrical safety check is important and we will be continuing this programme during the current lockdown. When your check is due our contractors will contact you to arrange an appointment, it is essential that you provide access to your home to our contractors so they can carry out this inspection.

Caring for your stainless steel sink

Stainless steel is arguably one of the most versatile materials for kitchen sinks and most of our properties have these. It's extremely durable but that doesn't mean it's bulletproof. Stainless steel can be damaged by abrasive pads, the wrong kinds of cleaners, and even ordinary things like water and salt. Using bleach to clean your stainless steel sink may seem second nature but you will cause damage if you do so. Despite its name and reputation, stainless steel can both stain and rust. Following these handy do's and don'ts will help keep your stainless steel sink clean and stain-free. Following these DO's and DON'Ts will keep your stainless sink and appliances clean and stain free.

DO



Regularly clean your stainless steel with warm water and a non-abrasive cloth like a microfiber towel



For tough dirt and grime, add dishwashing liquid to your warm water and lightly scrub with a non-abrasive cloth



For fingerprints and smudges, use glass cleaner and a microfiber towel



If your stainless steel is looking drab or showing signs of rust, use a stainless steel cleaner and be sure to follow the directions



When you clean your stainless steel, always rub in the grain's direction to prevent streaks



Complete your cleaning by drying the surface with a clean towel to prevent spotting



Bring back your stainless steel's luster by rubbing a little mineral oil onto the surface with a clean, soft towel—be sure to rub with the grain for best results

DON'T



Never use steel wool, metal brushes or other abrasive tools. Ever. These cleaning tools will scratch the surface and leave your stainless steel's finish susceptible to rust



Avoid using bleach—bleach and other strong solutions as those will stain and damage stainless steel



Never use any cleaning towel or sponge that isn't clean—cleaning solutions and bits of debris left behind from other cleaning jobs can stain, scratch and discolor stainless steel

Inspections by Remote Video

In order to assist with raising your repair order Odu-Dua are now using a remote video inspection tool. This means we can look at your repair without visiting your property.

All you need is a smart phone and data. You do not need to download an App.

How does it work?

The Repairs Officer will send you a text message inviting you to join a video inspection,

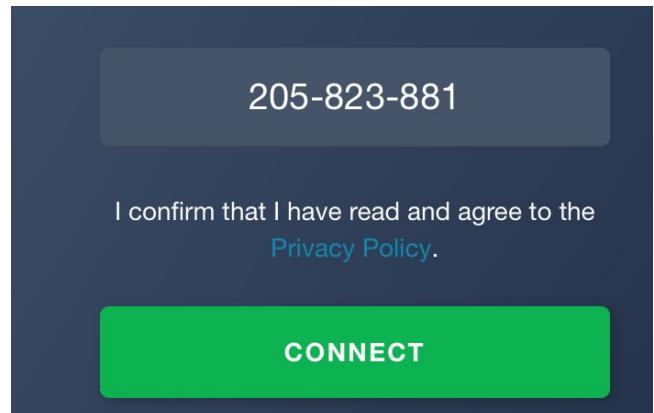
Once you receive the text, please follow the steps below:

1. Open text message.
2. Click on the link in the text message
3. When the box appears, click Connect.
4. You will need to agree to the privacy policy before continuing.
5. Please click Allow for microphone
6. Please click Allow for camera
7. Please click Allow for location (this is optional)

We hope you will assist us as we carry out this innovation.

Text Message
Today 11:22

Odu-Dua Housing Association has sent you a link for live video assistance.
<https://odu-dua.blitz.co/j/#/205823881?m=0&c=0&s=1>



Repairs - useful numbers

Type of repair	Who to contact
All repairs (except for gas related repairs)	Odu-Dua - 020 7625 1799 (During normal office hours) Top Maintenance - 020 8935 5614 (for an emergency repair outside normal office hours)
Gas boiler/ gas central heating breakdown (including an out of hours emergency)	K & T Heating – 020 8269 4500
Economy 7 storage heating system breakdown – for tenants at Banyan House, Iroko House, Mahogany House & Sequoia House	Odu-Dua - 020 7625 1799 (During normal office hours) Top Maintenance - 020 8935 5614 (for an emergency repair outside normal office hours)
Gas leak/smell	National Gas Emergency Service - 0800 111 999
Total loss of gas/ electricity supply	Contact your supplier i.e. British Gas / EDF etc. (Check your bill for details)
Total loss of water / external water leak	Contact your water board (Check your bill for details)