



North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL

COVID-19 Important Information****

Lincs Homefinder Services

During this unprecedented & difficult time we have made changes to our services that affect our usual processes.

Applying for Housing:

Please note that you can still register a Lincs Homefinder application through the Lincs Homefinder website www.lincshomefinder.co.uk but you may experience delays due to the need for us to prioritize those emergency cases who may be homeless or at risk of homelessness at this time.

Allocation of Properties:

Due to the continuing situation NKDC will continue to allocate properties but where possible this will be done through direct lettings and not through the usual bid cycle process. Please note that there will still be properties advertised but these will be limited to those where we have low demand within our area.

Viewings & Sign ups of New Tenancies:

Currently all viewings and new tenancies are suspended until such time as Government guidelines are lifted. If you are allocated a tenancy, provided you are interested and intending to view and sign for the tenancy offered to you, the property will be held and you will be contacted once arrangements can be put in place for you to view and sign your tenancy agreement. Should you be contacted with regard to a potential offer, all current arrangements will be explained to you fully.

Housing Advice & Homelessness Service:

Should you have an urgent housing need and require emergency assistance for reasons such as ...

- Homeless at this time with no accommodation available to you
- Suffering symptoms of Covid-19 & residing with vulnerable household members who are more 'at risk'.
- You are at risk or violence or suffering domestic abuse
- Being threatened by your landlord etc..
- Being asked to leave by family/friends with no accommodation available

You should contact The Housing options Team

T:01529 414155 or email housingoptions@n-kesteven.gov.uk.

Please note that our offices are closed to the Public at this time but our service remains available & our Officers are here to support you.

Please be aware that whilst we are here to assist all emergency & vulnerable cases, there is limited access to accommodation and resources and these are being prioritized for those in the most housing need.

Information for Landlords & those providing accommodation:

We would request that during this difficult time that those accommodating others do not ask them to leave.

Whilst we completely appreciate that this may be difficult & inconvenient due to overcrowding or other reasons, it is important that wherever possible we all comply with Government guidelines to minimize the possibility of cross contamination wherever possible & it is safer for individuals to remain within their present homes to enable this to happen.

There is limited access to accommodation and resources and these are being prioritized for those in the most housing need.

We appreciate fully issues relating to rent arrears & anti-social behavior too but again would request that landlords work with us, to avoid tenancies being lost due to any possible financial impact to their tenant . We will provide all support & assistance possible to resolve issues of this nature over the coming weeks & months and work to avoid any unnecessary action.

For information, Protection from Eviction legislation has been extended until September 2020 which means that you are unable to start official proceedings to evict any tenant due to rent arrears until after this date.

Financial Difficulties:

We know that this is a concerning time for everyone but If your income is affected by Coronavirus (COVID-19) you may be able to claim Sick Pay or benefits to support you through this period. Your income may be affected due to working less, no longer working, self-isolating, or caring for someone who is sick & you may be concerned about possible rent arrears/mortgage arrears etc..

Many employees will be protected during this period as the Government has offered a package of support to businesses to help them to retain staff.

The Government is offering employees grants to cover 80% of employees wages (up to £2,500/month per employee). This support is called the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. It means that you can still get 80% of your

pay even if there is no work or reduced work. Your employer should contact HMRC for further details.

More information can be found on the following website:

[Policyinpractice.co.uk](https://policyinpractice.co.uk)

There is also a free benefit calculator which use can access via this link

<https://betteroffcalculator.co.uk/free>

This will help you to:

- Find out which welfare benefits you could receive
- Know how your income will change with Universal Credit
- Compare your income under the legacy system and Universal Credit
- See how much income will be left after paying your housing costs
- Access links to claim for benefits

Benefits:

Understanding Universal Credit Arrangements

Currently details will be taken on trust from customers for the foreseeable period with no 'Fail to Attend' actions or Sanctions being enforced. The crucial advice is that UC claimants should make enquires via their journals, which is an area that is being substantially resourced and prioritized.

This will allow the service centres to focus on processing and making payments to customers rather than answering phone queries.

Please also be advised if you need additional help, you are able to contact Citizens Advice National Help to claim UC Helpline who are able to guide & support new claimants.

Tel: 03444 113 111 (Open Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm)

Consumer Service Helpline - Tel:0808 223 1133 (Open Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm)

Help to Claim Universal Credit Helpline – Tel:0800 144 8 144 (Open Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm)