

The Venmore Group

Risk assessment COVID -19

In line with Government policy The Venmore Group has carried out risk assessments on all branches which have opened and provide below guidance on areas relevant to our industry. This covers opening branches, performing house valuations, viewings and key releases. We believe that following the guidance identified below The Venmore Group is fulfilling the objective to reduce risk to the lowest possible level by taking all reasonable and workable preventative measures.

In branch guidance:

Hand washing facilities will be available and all staff to be encouraged to regularly wash hands, specifically on entering the office and before leaving. Signs will be posted to encourage staff and customers about the need for social distancing and regular hand washing.

The general public and staff working in public facing areas are currently required by law to wear face coverings on entering Estate Agencies, Auction houses and Letting agencies and must keep it on until they leave unless they are exempt or have a reasonable excuse. If a member of the public or contractor is in the office for an appointment, we must ask that they wear a face covering at all times unless exempt. All staff in the same office area must also wear a face covering for the duration of the visit.

When the office is closed to the general public, or in areas that are not open to the public, we encourage staff to continue to wear face coverings although this is not legally required while branches have a locked door, appointment only policy.

Staff doing viewings/ valuation will be provided with face coverings and anti-bacterial gel in case there are circumstances where social distancing is not feasible. Detailed guidance on how to use face coverings safely will be made available to all staff.

The company understands the importance of mental wellbeing during this period of uncertainty and will aim to keep in touch with staff and provide updates to staff.

The company actively encourages employees to discuss with their manager, or a senior manager, any concerns they have regarding their safety or wellbeing.

Weekly cleaning to be scheduled.

Cleaning materials to be provided so work surfaces can be wiped down at start and end of each day, and when required. Staff to regularly clean their own work space & equipment, managers to ensure communal areas are wiped down twice a day.

With reduced staffing, social distancing guidelines of keeping 2m apart in branch is feasible. Staff will have their own desk space which will not be shared and desks will be 2 meters apart. Controlled access to communal areas will again allow for social distancing with staggered lunch breaks. If staggered start times are required, these will be implemented.

Branches will remain locked and customers will only be allowed in to branch on an appointment only basis having confirmed that they are not showing any symptoms of the virus and have not been asked to self-isolate. Appointments will only be made if phone or email communication is not feasible.

In line with Govt guidance we have reviewed the feasibility of enabling staff to work from home but being a service company operating out of branches which are open to customers there is limited scope for allowing staff to work from home. All staff who are in work or on appointments must comply with Govt guidance and if showing any symptoms or have been asked to self-isolate must stay at home and notify their manager as soon as possible. Anyone who is required to self-isolate will be supported as much as possible to be able to work from home. If an employee tests positive, the office will temporarily close until a deep clean has been carried out.

If documents are required to be signed or copied this should, where possible be done remotely by e-signature, scanning etc During this time ID checks should be done on-line if ID cannot be checked safely.

Each branch will follow a procedure for the drop-off and collection of keys, so there is no contact and keys are cleaned before being collected/released.

As agents, we should strongly encourage clients to view properties virtually in the first instance and then only physically inspect properties they have a strong interest in. We can accompany physical viewings following guidance below. Open house viewings are not allowed. Valuation visits should also follow the guidance below.

Guidance to be provided to all Vendors/Landlords/ Tenants before a visit is confirmed:

- If you, or anyone in your household, are showing symptoms of the Covid 19(as updated on the NHS website as new variants emerge) – please contact the office immediately so that this appointment can be rescheduled for after your period of self-isolation.
- During the viewing, please ensure you maintain the recommended 2 metres distance from anyone visiting your property. If this can't be done safely or there are any enclosed spaces, we would ask you to ensure that you are wearing an appropriate face mask.
- All parties viewing a property should wash their hands with soap and water (or hand sanitiser if soap not available) immediately after entering the property, with internal doors opened and surfaces having been wiped down before they enter. Separate towels or paper towels should be used if possible and washed or disposed of safely after use.
- We will be asking anyone attending your property to ensure that they bring their own hand sanitiser (should washing hands not be possible) and also that they bring with them an appropriate face mask in case it should be necessary.
- Please note that if we are carrying out an accompanied viewing, we will ensure that we follow these guidelines with our staff wearing face masks and having hand sanitiser so that they can act in a socially responsible way whilst visiting the property.

Guidance to provide to all Applicants/ Tenants before a visit is confirmed

- If you, or anyone in your household, are showing symptoms of the Covid 19 (as updated on the NHS website as new variants emerge) – please contact the office immediately so that this appointment can be rescheduled for after your period of self-isolation.
- Please ensure no more than you plus 1 other person from within your household attends the viewing.

- During the viewing, please ensure you maintain the recommended 2 metres distance from the person showing you around the property. We are asking all viewers to bring their own face masks in case the recommended 2 metre distancing is not possible or there are any enclosed spaces.
- All parties viewing a property should wash their hands with soap and water (or hand sanitiser if soap not available) immediately after entering the property. We have asked the Vendor to ensure internal doors remain open and surfaces have been wiped down before you enter. Please bring your own hand sanitizer to the viewing in case washing hands with soap and water is not possible.
- Please note that if we are carrying out the viewing, we will ensure that we follow these guidelines so that our staff can conduct the viewing in a socially responsible way.

If an offer is accepted on a sale to proceed, as good practice, we will ask all party to advise us if any parties are shielding/ vulnerable and we will ensure protocols are followed and solicitors informed so protections can be put in place.