



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

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Sarah Jones MP  
House of Commons  
London  
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Dear Sarah,

During the Opposition Day Debate on the Financial and Social Emergency Support Package on Wednesday 25 March, you asked questions about lettings agents and estate agents and about evictions during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. I committed to write to you with further information about the measures being taken.

I would clarify that the Government has not ordered that all letting and estate agencies close. However, all businesses must follow the Government's latest guidance for employers and businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19). It is clear that agents should be working from home wherever possible and should not be keeping offices open for the purpose of non-essential trade. The further guidance we published yesterday makes this clear. This guidance can be found on Gov.uk at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/government-advice-on-home-moving-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

On evictions, I would note that, following a decision by the Master of the Rolls with the Lord Chancellor's agreement, the court service will suspend all ongoing housing possession action. This means that neither cases currently in the system nor any about to go into the system can progress to the stage where someone could be evicted.

This suspension of housing possessions action will initially last for 90 days, but this can be extended if needed. This measure will protect all private and social renters, as well as those with mortgages and those with licenses covered by the Protection from Eviction Act 1977. This will apply to both England and Wales.

With our emergency legislation and the suspension of possession cases in force, no renter in either social or private accommodation will be forced out of their home.

I hope you find this information helpful. I am depositing this letter in the House Library.

**SIMON CLARKE MP**