

2021
EDITION

A GUIDE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

RBM 
SOLUTIONS

PREPARED BY

**RBM SOLUTIONS &
ROK MARSH**

Gatcombe House, Copnor Road
02393233267
info@rbmsolutions.co.uk
info@rokmarsh.co.uk

rbmsolutions.co.uk
rokmarsh.com

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Payment Holidays	3
3. Furlough Scheme Extended	3
4. Business Grants	4
5. Moving Home	
5.1.1.Can people still view my property?	5
5.1.2.Will surveyors be allowed to value my property?	5
5.1.3.Will I still be able to buy and move house?	6
6. What you can and cannot do in the second national lockdown	6
7. RBM Solutions & ROK Marsh	7
8. Support Links for Covid-19 from Your Mortgage Lender	8

Introduction

This brief guide will outline several issues which will be in the forefront of most people's minds now that we have descended into a third lockdown. It will include general information in relation to payment holidays, furlough scheme and government grants, and then more specific information around moving home.

Payment Holidays

If you are struggling with your mortgage due to coronavirus, here's what help's available from your bank or building society:

- **Borrowers who have not yet had a payment holiday will be able to request one up until 31 March 2021.** The FCA chose the March date to align payment holiday help with other coronavirus help measures, such as furlough. Generally, you'll be given a three-month payment holiday when you first apply, though you'll be able to resume payments earlier if you don't need that long.
- **Borrowers who have already had or are on a payment holiday will be able to 'top-up' to a total of six months of payment holidays.** In general, payment holidays are given in three-month tranches, so for most people, you'll get an initial three-month payment holiday, and then another three months (whether or not these are taken together).

Yet, if up to now you've only had, say, a two-month payment holiday, you'd be entitled to another four months to top up to the six-month limit (though the lender has to give a maximum of three months at a time, so you may need to take the three months, then ask for an extension for the final month).

- **If you are on your first payment holiday and it ends after 31 March 2021, you'll be able to extend it.** While 31 March is the deadline to apply for new payment holidays, if you are still on your first and it takes you past the deadline, you'll be able to extend it. However, all payment deferrals need to end by 31 July 2021, so if you get into financial trouble in the new year and want to benefit from the full six months of payment holidays, you'd need to apply for your first payment holiday before your February mortgage payment is due.

(Source: MoneySavingExpert, 2021)

At the end of this document will be a list to coronavirus support pages for a variety of mortgage lenders. These can be used to

Furlough Scheme Extended

The chancellor has extended furlough provisions to cover 80% of people's salaries until the end of April 2021. The conditions are the same as those set out by the government in November 2020.

After furlough ends in April 2021, it is not clear whether the government will decide to revisit the Job Support Scheme, a far less generous offering to cover some of the hours of workers in companies still struggling during the pandemic. So far, it has been postponed.

Sunak also confirmed he would be extending the government-guaranteed Covid-19 business loan schemes until the end of March.

Self-employed people will be eligible for financial help during lockdown – but not through the furlough scheme. The UK-wide Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will offer up to 80% of their average trading profits, up to a maximum of £7,500.

Applications for the third grant must be made on or before January 29, 2020. The months of February to April 2021 will be covered by the fourth SEISS grant. All SEIS grants are calculated over three months.

The changes will ensure that self-employed individuals who temporarily cannot carry out their business or have suffered reduced demand due to the outbreak are supported over winter, the government says.

However, you will only be eligible for the extension if you were eligible for the previous grants launched earlier this year, although you do not necessarily need to have applied for them. You must also declare that you intend to continue trading.

(Source: WIRED, 2021)

Business Grants

Chancellor announces one-off top up grants for retail, hospitality, and leisure businesses worth up to £9,000 per property to help businesses through to the Spring. £594 million discretionary fund also made available to support other impacted businesses, this comes in addition to £1.1 billion further discretionary grant funding for Local Authorities, Local Restriction Support Grants worth up to £3,000 a month.

This follows the Prime Minister's announcement that these businesses will be closed until at least February half-term in order to help control the virus, and, together with the wide range of existing support, provides them with certainty through the Spring period.

The cash is provided on a per-property basis to support businesses through the latest restrictions, and is expected to benefit over 600,000 business properties, worth £4 billion in total across all nations of the UK.

The one-off top-ups will be granted to closed businesses as follows:

- £4,000 for businesses with a rateable value of £15,000 or under
- £6,000 for businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
- £9,000 for businesses with a rateable value of over £51,000
- any business which is legally required to close, and which cannot operate effectively remotely, is eligible for a grant

(Source: Gov.UK, 2021)

Can people still view my property?

Where possible, you should use virtual viewings before visiting properties in person to minimise public health risks. If any member of either the household being viewed or the household undertaking a viewing is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or is self-isolating, then an in-person viewing should be delayed.

We encourage buyers and renters to do their initial property searches online wherever possible. Initial viewings should also be done virtually, and in-person viewings should only take place when buyers are seriously considering a property.

To support this, agents may ask home occupiers to conduct virtual viewings. This will help reduce the number of properties people need to visit before finding their future home. All viewings should be by appointment only and no open house viewings should take place. There are unlikely to be physical protection measures in place in homes. In this case we would advise estate and letting agents to wear a face covering.

Members of the public who are viewing a property should wear a suitable face covering as described in government guidance unless they are exempt from this requirement. This should be confirmed with the agent before arrival. Anyone with concerns should contact the agent in advance of their visit to discuss appropriate measures.

If your property is being viewed, you should open all the internal doors prior to the viewing and allow access to handwashing facilities and ideally separate towels/paper towels. We would recommend that you vacate your property whilst viewings are taking place in order to minimise unnecessary contact. When viewing a property, everyone should wash their hands and avoid touching surfaces where possible.

We expect property agents to accompany clients on a viewing and follow social distancing guidance. Where viewings are unaccompanied, agents should make sure viewers and the occupants of the home understand how they should conduct themselves to protect their health and the health of others. Once the viewing has taken place, the occupant should ensure surfaces, such as door handles, are cleaned with standard household cleaning products and towels disposed of safely or washed as appropriate.

(Source: Gov.UK, 2021)

Will surveyors be allowed to value my property?

Your surveyor can undertake surveys of the property you wish to purchase. There are no restrictions on the types of survey that can be carried out and you should talk to your surveyor to understand the most appropriate type of survey for the home you intend to purchase.

Surveyors should not enter a property where a member of the household is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or self-isolating. Where possible, we encourage inspections to take place by appointment only, with one person visiting the property at any time. Surveyors should follow government guidance for professionals working in other people's homes and guidance on social distancing.

If your home is being surveyed, you should ensure the surveyor has access to all the parts of the property they need to inspect and minimise contact with the surveyor, for example by staying in another room.

(Source: Gov.UK, 2021)

Will I still be able to buy and move house?

You can put your home on the market and look for properties to buy or rent. However, if you or any member of your household is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or is self-isolating, then estate agents and potential buyers should not visit your property in person. Everyone should follow the latest guidance for households with confirmed or possible coronavirus infection.

You can market your home and estate agents can visit to take photos/videos of your property. As usual, you can also start to bring together the documentation necessary to sell your property (more information on these documents is available in the government's guidance on how to sell homes).

To help prevent the spread of infection, we recommend that you carry out initial property searches online, and only visit a property in person when you are seriously considering making an offer on it.

You are free to make or accept an offer or reserve a property as normal.

There is a greater risk that home moves may need to be delayed if someone in the transaction shows symptoms of COVID-19 or is self-isolating. You should ask your legal adviser to consider any necessary measures to help make sure that contracts or agreements are as flexible as possible to accommodate this risk.

Prospective purchasers or renters may wish to visit a property again once they have agreed a sale; for example, to measure up. Where this has been agreed to, the above advice on prioritising virtual visits, hygiene measures, always maintaining social distancing and mitigating contact where possible should be followed.

(Source: Gov.UK, 2021)

What you can and cannot do in the third national lockdown

Leaving Home

You must not leave, or be outside of your home except where necessary. You may leave the home to:

- shop for basic necessities, for you or a vulnerable person
- go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home
- exercise with your household (or support bubble) or one other person (in which case you should stay 2m apart). Exercise should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.

- meet your support bubble or childcare bubble where necessary, but only if you are legally permitted to form one
- seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness or risk of harm (including domestic abuse)
- attend education or childcare - for those eligible

If you do leave home for a permitted reason, you should always stay local - unless it is necessary to go further, for example to go to work. Stay local means stay in the village, town, or part of the city where you live.

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable you are advised to only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential. We recommend that you do not attend work

Meeting Others

You cannot leave your home to meet socially with anyone you do not live with or are not in a support bubble with (if you are legally permitted to form one).

You may exercise on your own, with one other person, or with your household or support bubble. This should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.

You cannot meet other people you do not live with, or have not formed a support bubble with, unless for a permitted reason.

Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble.

Education

Colleges, primary and secondary schools will remain open only for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. All other children will learn remotely until February half term.

Early years settings remain open.

Higher Education provision will remain online until mid February for all except future critical worker courses.

(Source: Gov.UK, 2021)

RBM Solutions & ROK Marsh

Here at RBM Solutions & ROK Marsh, we will continue to remain operational and provide support and assistance in relation to mortgage, insurance and estate agency services. We are maintaining our presence at the office, of course abiding by social distancing, to ensure we can still provide a quality service with minimal delays and obstacles which would be guaranteed when working from home.

Should you need any assistance in regard to obtaining a mortgage, whether this be a mortgage for your new home or a re-mortgage, a range of general and protection insurance or if you are looking to sell your property, please feel free to get in touch and see what we can do for you!

Please see contact details in the footer of this document and see below for the links to mortgage provider support pages to find out more on how they can assist you during lockdown.

All the best from RBM Solutions and ROK Marsh.

Support Links for Covid-19 from Your Mortgage Lender:

Accord - <https://www.accordmortgages.com/existing-customers/coronavirus-info/index.html>

Aldermore Mortgages - <https://www.aldermore.co.uk/help-centre/coronavirus/>

Barclays - <https://www.barclays.co.uk/coronavirus/mortgages/>

Bath Building Society - <https://www.bathbuildingsociety.co.uk/mortgages/browse-general-mortgage-information/faqs>

Bluestone Mortgages -
<https://www.bluestone.co.uk/bluestone/media/Bluestone/Download/COVID-19/Covid-19-Customer-FAQ-s.pdf>

Buckingham Building Society - <https://www.bucksbs.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19.html>

Chelsea Building Society - <https://www.thechelsea.co.uk/coronavirus-info/index.html>

Clydesdale Bank - <https://secure.cbonline.co.uk/personal/coronavirus-information/>

Co-operative Bank - <https://www.co-operativebank.co.uk/news/2020/coronavirus-support-mortgage-payment-holidays>

Coventry Building Society & Godiva -
<https://www.coventrybuildingsociety.co.uk/consumer/help/important-updates.html>

Darlington Building Society - <https://www.darlington.co.uk/help/supporting-members-affected-by-covid-19/>

Dudley Building Society - <https://www.dudleybuildingsociety.co.uk/supporting-you-through-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Halifax - <https://www.halifax.co.uk/mortgages/existing-customers/payment-holidays/request-a-holiday/>

Hinckley & Rugby Building Society - <https://www.hrbs.co.uk/mortgage-repayment-holiday-faqs/>

HSBC - <https://www.hsbc.co.uk/help/coronavirus/>

Ipswich Building Society - <https://www.ibs.co.uk/blog/corporate/coronavirus-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions>

Kensington - <https://www.kensingtonmortgages.co.uk/existing-customers/covid-19>

Kent Reliance - <https://www.kentreliaance.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-faqs>

Leeds Building Society - <https://www.leedsbuildingsociety.co.uk/coronavirus-information/>

Leek United Building Society - <https://www.leekunited.co.uk/news/coronavirus-we-re-here-to-help/>

Lloyds - <https://www.lloydsbank.com/help-guidance/coronavirus.html>

Mansfield Building Society - <https://www.mansfieldbs.co.uk/latest-news/coronavirus/>

Masthaven Bank -

<https://www.masthaven.co.uk/MasthavenBank/media/MasthavenBank/PDFs/Coronavirus-FAQs-existing-mortgage-customers-v6.pdf>

MBS Lending - https://www.mbslending.co.uk/information-for-general-public/?__sw_csrfToken=YFlJ01J1jVjpOrTr1p01E4kVGE1Y0ZT1

Melton Mowbray Building Society - https://www.themelton.co.uk/tmbs-content/uploads/2020/03/Cant-Pay-Your-Mortgage-Leaflet.pdf?__sw_csrfToken=RAtTgt4grzcMr9898M91OQxxrLxQOc1r

Metro Bank - <https://www.metrobankonline.co.uk/coronavirus/>

Nationwide Building Society - <https://www.nationwide.co.uk/support/coronavirus/mortgage-payment-holiday>

NatWest - <https://personal.natwest.com/personal/support-centre/coronavirus.html>

Newbury Building Society - <https://www.newbury.co.uk/news-knowledge/news/2020/03/20/covid19-coronavirus/>

Norwich & Peterborough Building Society - <https://www.nandp.co.uk/coronavirus-info/index.html>

Nottingham Building Society - <https://www.thenottingham.com/coronavirus-support/>

Paragon Mortgages - <https://www.paragonbank.co.uk/coronavirus>

Pepper Money - <https://www.peppergroup.co.uk/covid-19-update>

Post Office - <https://www.bankofirelanduk.com/mortgages/existing-customer/coronavirus-support/>

Precise Mortgages - <https://www.precisemortgages-customers.co.uk/>

Principality - <https://www.principality.co.uk/en/coronavirus>

Progressive Building Society - <https://theprogressive.com/coronavirus-were-here-to-help>

RBS - <https://personal.rbs.co.uk/personal/support-centre/coronavirus.html>

Reliance Bank - <https://www.reliancebankltd.com/coronavirus-update>

Santander - <https://www.santander.co.uk/personal/coronavirus>

Scottish Widows Bank - https://www.scottishwidows.co.uk/global/market_update.html

Shawbrook Bank - <https://www.shawbrook.co.uk/coronavirus/>

Skipton Building Society - <https://www.skipton.co.uk/corona-virus-updates>

Swansea Building Society - <http://www.pageflip.uk.com/sbs/pdfforms/sbscoronanotice.pdf>

Teachers Building Society - <https://www.teachersbs.co.uk/mortgages-for-teachers/mortgage-guides-resources/payment-difficulties>

The Mortgage Works - <https://www.themortgageworks.co.uk/payment-holidays>

Tipton & Coseley Building Society - <https://www.thetipton.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

TSB - <https://www.tsb.co.uk/coronavirus/>

United Trust Bank - <https://www.utbank.co.uk/news/covid-19-update/>

Vida Homeloans - <https://www.vidahomeloans.co.uk/intermediaries/contact-us>

Virgin Money - <https://uk.virginmoney.com/virgin/mortgage-payment-holiday/>

Yorkshire - <https://www.ybs.co.uk/coronavirus-info/index.html>