

# Edinburgh's rental market and the easing of lockdown restrictions

We asked the Edinburgh Solicitors' Property Centre what the effect of the easing of lockdown restrictions will have on the capital's rental property market.

As at 29 June 2020 some of these were changed so that property viewings can take place again.

What does the easing of lockdown restrictions mean for Edinburgh's rental market?

On 29th June, the Scottish Government relaxed restrictions on house moves that had been put in place due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The relaxation of restrictions applies to the rental property market and the [Scottish Government has issued guidance](#) on the activities that are now permitted. In this article, we take a look at the latest guidance and what the future holds for the Edinburgh rental market.

## Rental property viewings

In person viewings for rental properties are now permitted, allowing tenants to find a new rental home and landlords and letting agents to market properties more easily.

However, all parties involved in a viewing must follow government guidelines on social distancing, hand washing, respiratory hygiene and face coverings. Private landlords and

letting agents should not conduct viewings in properties where tenants are showing symptoms or self-isolating, or where it has been determined that they are shielding.

The Scottish Government has advised that virtual viewings should be carried out where possible, with physical viewings only where there is a strong interest in letting. ESPC Lettings has continued to offer virtual viewings for all properties in the first instance and these are proving to be popular with tenants.

### **Moving into a rental home**

During lockdown, house moves were only permitted if they were “reasonably necessary”, but the easing of restrictions on the 29th June meant that property moves could go ahead in most cases now.

Tenants should ensure that they follow government guidance on social distancing during the full moving process.

ESPC Lettings noticed an increase in enquiries from tenants looking to move to a new rental property in the run up to and since the 29th June.

### **Repairs and maintenance**

The Scottish Government has advised that, where possible, essential repairs, gas and electrical safety checks and energy performance assessments should be conducted in the period between a property being vacated and a new tenant moving in.

If this is not possible, and visits are needed to an occupied property, this should be done by appointment with measures put in place to ensure physical contact is minimised, for example with residents staying in another room during the visit.

### **The future of the Edinburgh rental market**

Nicky Lloyd, Head of [ESPC Lettings](#), said: “At the start of

2020, the Edinburgh rental market remained on trend with mostly consistent rent and demand levels. COVID-19 had a significant impact on the market, with short term let investors switching to the Private Rented Sector in March and lockdown restrictions preventing activities such as physical viewings and house moves.

“Throughout June we noticed increasing enquiries from tenants looking to move rental home once the restrictions were eased and they were able to do so. It is likely that priorities for tenants have changed, with more people working from home and gardens being higher on the wish list. We therefore expect a number of tenants to be looking for new rental properties that meet their new requirements better.

“We’ve also noticed a few more enquiries from landlords looking to get properties on the market. These are generally from landlords who already have buy-to-let properties rather than investors.

“Despite receiving an influx of enquiries from short term let landlords at the start of lockdown, we have not seen more enquiries from this group as restrictions have eased.

“While these are uncertain times, we believe there is a reasonable amount demand from tenants looking to move in and around the city which should help to foster stability in the Edinburgh rental market.”

WHEN WILL PHASE 3 BEGIN?

This will be announced by the First Minister in parliament tomorrow 9 July 2020.

[su\_spoiler class="my-custom-spoiler" title="10 July 2020"]People can meet in extended groups outdoors (with physical distancing) Households can meet indoors with up to a maximum of two other households[/su\_spoiler]

[su\_spoiler class="my-custom-spoiler" title="13 July 2020"]Organised outdoor contact sports can resume for children and young people (subject to guidance)

All dental practices begin to see registered patients for non-aerosol routine care.

Work will begin to return aerosol generating procedures to practice safely

Increasing capacity within community optometry practices for emergency and essential eye care

Non-essential shops inside shopping centres can re-open (following guidance and with physical distancing)[/su\_spoiler]

[su\_spoiler class="my-custom-spoiler" title="15 July 2020"]All holiday accommodation permitted (following relevant guidance)

Indoor hospitality (subject to physical distancing rules and public health advice)Hairdressers and barbers – with enhanced hygiene measures

Museums, galleries, cinemas, monuments, libraries – with physical distancing and other measures (e.g. ticketing in advance)

All childcare providers can open subject to individual provider arrangements[/su\_spoiler]