

INCOME COLLECTION STRATEGY

PURPOSE

The coronavirus pandemic is having an impact on all our lives.

Right across Wales. Local authorities and registered social landlords have agreed everyone should be treated fairly. They will:

- Keep customers safe and secure in their home.
- Help customers get the financial support they need.
- Support customers and find solutions if they are having difficulty paying their rent.
- Do everything they can to support customers wellbeing.

This strategy focusses primarily on how ateb will do everything it can to help customers get the financial support they need and support customers and find solutions if they are having difficulty paying their rent.

CURRENT POSITION

ateb has taken the decision to suspend all legal action regarding the non-payment of rent which means that no Notice of Seeking Possession orders will be served, no court action will be taken, and no evictions will be processed during the current crisis.

Staff will no longer visit customers following government advice on social distancing, to ensure the safety of customers, staff and contractors. Contact will continue to be made through phone calls, texts, and emails.

ateb will aim to provide a support service to those now experiencing financial hardship through loss of employment, reduction in income etc, and signpost them to the appropriate agency for advice and assist in completing applications for welfare benefits.

PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE

Current Tenant Arrears

These will continue to be reviewed on a weekly basis by Money Solutions Officers (MSO). Where it is identified that a customer has not paid the rent due only individually tailored letters offering support and advice will be sent rather than the usual automated letters. We will in most instances try and telephone the customer to find out how we may be able to help them.

Customers will receive support with welfare benefit applications and where to apply for any financial assistance given any Government advice that has been issued.

Customers will always be reassured that ateb will not take any enforcement action and will provide support and advice. We will encourage customers to pay what they

can afford in the short term without causing hardship and advise that in the longer-term payment plans will be agreed once a customer is able to start rent payments again in full. These repayment plans will be based on what is affordable for the individual household at the time.

Rent Payments

We will no longer be taking cash payments as the office is closed but have added the 24-hour automated payment line which can be accessed by dialling 0330 041 6497.

Customers will need their 19-digit reference number from their ateb payment card. If they have any query about their reference number they can email us at moneysolutions@atebgroup.co.uk or telephone us through the normal office number.

If the customer requires a balance, then Customer Service Advisors (CSA's) can deal with this, but if a customer needs advice or support, they will be referred to MSO's who are contactable on their normal lines as they are diverted to their mobiles.

Should a customer wish to amend a Direct Debit then details should be taken on the amendments wanting to be made and emailed to rent@atebgroup.co.uk and moneysolutions@atebgroup.co.uk.

CSAs and MSO's will be able to take rent payments directly over the telephone.

Current Tenants Giving Notice

Customers will be strongly advised not to give notice on the property at this time unless essential. Customers will be advised not to give notice due to inability to afford rent payments.

Former Tenant Arrears

The number of tenancies terminating should become quite minimal although some may well occur. We will not actively chase any debt owed at this time.

We will temporarily suspend following up any historical former tenant arrears so that the team can prioritise supporting current tenants.

Service Charges

Where we have had to withdraw services due to Government social distancing measures, we will ensure customers are not charged or refunded where payment has already been made.