



# Opendoor

The magazine for Magna Housing customers



## Winning gardens

Take a look at the amazing gardens that won this year's garden competition

Plus...

**Exciting changes to the way we work**

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**Preparing for winter**

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**Book to meet with Santa!**

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# Welcome

In this edition, we've got some exciting changes to share with you as well as opportunities to get involved with what we're doing. Sound interesting?

We've been busy reviewing the services we provide for you and finding ways we can improve them. On [page 6](#) Alice Bagg, our Head of Customer Experience and Home Services, shares the news of some big changes to how we deliver repairs, increase our housing officers' visibility in the community and working as new regional teams.

Following your feedback, and help from our involved customers, we've also produced a new set of service standards which will help us to deliver our services and for you to know what you can expect from us. Find out more about this on [page 8](#).

Sustainability is another key area we'll be looking for your involvement with in the future. Ailsa Exley, Sustainability Business Partner, shares more on this subject on [page 26](#).

You can also get involved with us, and other customers, by joining our growing Customer Facebook Group. We love seeing the photos of where you live and the events that are

happening in communal areas - keep sharing them! [Page 28](#) has some great examples of what's being shared, along with how you can join in.

Talking of getting involved, I'd like to say a massive thank you to everyone who entered our garden competition this year. Our judges loved visiting them and were so impressed with each and every one of them. The winners of this year's competition are on [pages 12 to 17](#). Take a look and get some inspiration for your garden.

Finally, dare I say that Christmas is just around the corner?! Santa will be visiting in Minehead and Dorchester again this year. Details of the free events are on the next page and you'll need to book to make sure you get to meet Santa.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. As always, if you'd like to give any feedback or suggestions for future editions, please do get in touch.



**Tanya Churchill**

Marketing Manager and  
Editor of Opendoor

## Get in touch

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## Our online help centre

Our online help centre has lots of useful information, including answers to the most frequently asked questions, how-to videos for some basic DIY tasks and forms for you to submit at a convenient time for you, such as reporting a repair or ASB, requesting permission for a pet or booking a community room.

Take a look here:  
[www.magna.org.uk/help-centre](http://www.magna.org.uk/help-centre)



# Ho-Ho-Hop on down to Santa's Grotto!

We're holding two **FREE EVENTS** for Magna customers to visit Santa in his Grotto to spread some festive cheer!



**The Hub,  
Minehead**

Saturday 25 November  
10:30 am - 1:30 pm



**The Dorford Centre,  
Dorchester**

Saturday 2 December  
10 am - 4 pm

Children 0 - 10 years can visit Santa in his grotto and receive a free small gift from him, and we'll donate an additional gift for children in the family under 18 to open on Christmas Day!



Spaces are limited and by appointment **ONLY**, so make sure you book early!

To book your place, get in touch with us by 20 October.



[engage@magna.org.uk](mailto:engage@magna.org.uk)



**01984 635 134**

Part sponsored by Aico, CHG South West, CJ Lynch & Sons (Minehead) Ltd, Sara Barrie & Associates, Shakers Catering Supplies, G & A Commercials (Bridport) Ltd, Roger Locke Consulting Ltd, John Todd Refrigeration Ltd, Two Rhodes Ltd and Kevin Heaphy Building & Surveying Services Ltd.



# Supporting local community projects

We work with people in our communities to create great places to live and we know that sometimes local groups or communities need a little extra support.



We've donated a new set of goals to Maiden Newton Youth Football Club – nicknamed the Hawks.

Maiden Newton Youth Football Club Chairman, Steve May, said: "As a small community club, we're reliant on the generosity of local businesses to ensure we can maintain the first-rate experience for all our young members."

Every year we have a pot of money to improve the areas where you live, developing our local communities through funding, donations or sponsorship for a variety of local events, projects, groups, organisations, charities and services.

Anyone in the community can apply for funding, but the application must meet some specific criteria.

We've put together some guidance on our website along with an application form. Take a look and see if we can make a difference to your community, together: [Community Improvement Fund](#)



At the start of summer, we donated £500 from our Community Improvement Fund to **Dorchester Family Support**, a charity that provides nutritious weekly food parcels to families with children who usually receive free school meals in term-time.



The group holds drop-in sessions at Thomas Hardy School during the school summer holidays. Families that have applied for the scheme through their children's school can make an appointment to pick up a parcel to see them through the week.

John Weir, treasurer of Dorchester Family Support, said: "We started in 2012 helping just 12 families. We now help around 230 local families who come through the doors. Our aim is to end holiday hunger in the DT1 and DT2 postcode areas. We rely entirely on donations from local people, community groups and trusts."

"As a community-based housing association, we're always keen to support local projects in the areas where our customers live."

Alice Bagg, Head of Customer Experience & Home Services



# Exciting changes to our Home Services

To improve the service we provide to you, we're changing the way we work, creating new regional teams and getting closer to our communities.

Last year, we received feedback from over 4,000 households through surveys and meetings. Three areas were highlighted as needing improving: our repairs service, community safety, and how easy we are to deal with.

We have listened to your feedback and have created a new way of working that will enable us to be closer to our communities and deliver improved services.

**Our new Home Services function includes the following teams:**

- **Response repairs** - this is the team that deliver the day-to-day repairs in your homes.
- **Housing services** - these are the housing officers helping you to maintain your tenancy.
- **Estates services** - the caretakers and cleaners that help keep our communities safe and clean and our grounds maintenance team who look after the outside areas.
- **Surveyors** - when you report issues in your home that aren't quick repairs, or if you have damp and mould in your home, our experienced surveyors visit your home to diagnose any issues and arrange for repairs to take place.

Previously, each of these teams worked separately. In our new ways of working, we have brought them together and created three regional areas to work together to deliver excellent customer service.

We want housing officers and repairs teams to have local knowledge and really understand what is going on in those communities, get to know their customers and for customers to get to know them.

From September, the majority of customers will start to see the same housing officer, the same repairs team, the same people in their neighbourhood where possible, building familiarity and increased knowledge and understanding of local areas.

Previously, our housing officers had around 1,000 homes to look after which made it hard to have that personal connection and local approach and our repairs team travelled long distances in some cases. This will now be reduced to around 500 homes per housing officer.

The following page shows our three new regions and the areas that they cover. This will let you know what region you are a part of.





# New Service Standards

As well as changing the way that we work, with the help of our involved customers, we have also updated our Service Standards.

We want you, our customers, to be clear about the service you receive from us. Listed below are our overall commitments to you.

Check out our website for full details of all of our service standards, explaining what you can expect from us for each service we provide: [Our Service Standards](#)

In the next edition of Opendoor we will be reporting on our performance against these standards.

## We make it easy

- We'll be clear, knowledgeable and friendly.
- We'll aim to resolve your enquiry first time.
- We'll give you ways to self-serve through our website and portal.
- If things go wrong, we'll be there to help and will keep you updated every step of the way.

## We fix it

- We'll deal with emergencies 24/7 and always prioritise these.
- We'll offer you an appointment for repairs when you report them.
- We'll aim to complete all your repairs first time, at the right time.

## We always prioritise your safety

- We'll work together to prevent and tackle nuisance and anti-social behaviour
- We'll always keep you and your home safe by carrying out regular tests and inspections
- We'll make sure every home has at least one working smoke detector per floor
- We'll inspect communal and estate areas regularly to ensure they comply with health and safety standards.

## We'll listen to you and care about what you say

- We'll ask you for your input in shaping our services and how we work
- We'll regularly ask for your feedback and share how we're doing
- We'll treat you as an individual and be interested in what you say
- We're part of your community and will work with you and others to improve where you live.



## Looking after the trees in our communities

Trees are important in bringing the areas surrounding our homes to life, both visually and environmentally, and they're important to our health and wellbeing.

We're currently working with contractors to help keep the trees in our communal areas in tip-top condition.

We've got 346 jobs ongoing in Dorset at the moment on trees that were identified as needing attention in a tree survey carried out last year. We carry out work to make sure that our trees are being looked after properly and don't pose a risk to the surrounding area.

We try to avoid cutting down our trees if possible and will do our best to preserve them as best as we can. Trees will generally only be cut down if it's

absolutely necessary, and we do lots of different types of work to try to avoid this such as raising, reducing, cleaning, and thinning out the branches and leaves.

We generally have our trees surveyed by a consultant once every two years to identify recommended works that any trees might need. This year, we're having every tree in our communal areas in Somerset surveyed - that's 1,417 trees in total!

You can learn more about how we manage our trees in our [tree management policy](#) on our website.

# Our annual financial statement and how we add value

Adding value and achieving value for money is at the heart of our business and is central to the delivery of our strategic objectives. We consider this all the time: what we need to do to achieve it and to assess all other initiatives against it.

We publish our official financial statement online every year at the end of September. When available, it will be on this page of our website:

[Annual report and financial statements](#)

Customer experience is at the heart of our strategy and it's important to us that what we do adds value for you, our customers.

We therefore also produce an 'Adding Value' report which gives examples of how we added value

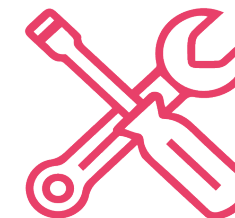
in 2022/23 through our services, our colleagues and our customer-focused approach.

The Adding Value report will also be available online by the end of September, but we've included some of the key highlights on the opposite page. The full report will be published on this web page: [Our Adding Value Report](#)

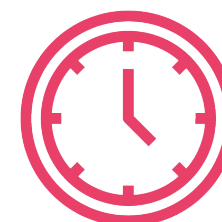


**85 new homes built**

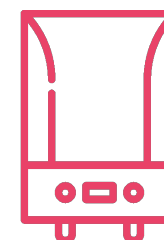
54 for social rent &  
31 for shared ownership.



**23,833 repairs completed**



**85% of repairs completed within target**



**£7.2m spent on home improvements**  
including new boilers, kitchens, bathrooms and windows.



**Supported 643 customers** to access  
**£1.9m of welfare benefit** gains and backdated payments.



**100%**  
of our homes meet the  
**Decent Homes Standard.**



# Winning gardens!

Thank you to everyone who entered this year's gardening competition. We had lots of entries from across Dorset and Somerset for all six categories this year.

Our three judges, Alice Bagg, Gavin Barker and Nick Brown, visited the gardens of everyone who entered and were really impressed by the colourful displays and the hard work everyone clearly put in to them.

The standard was very high and judging it a month earlier this year, following your feedback, meant so many plants were still flowering which gave some amazing displays. Our judges had a very difficult job picking the winner, but, after careful consideration, they decided on the best of each category.

Well done to the lucky winners and thanks to all our entrants for their hard work. On the following pages we've pictured the winner of each category. Prizes were all gardening vouchers. First prize in each category received £100, second prize £50, third £25 and all non winning entries received a £5 voucher for entering.

## Vegetable and/or fruit garden



**First prize:**  
**Rebecca Brake**  
**in Sherborne**

Second prize:  
Lisa Boyland in  
Lyme Regis

## Large garden category

**First prize:**  
**Steve Sully in Minehead**

Second prize:  
Debbie McCarthy in Lyme Regis

Third prize:  
Richard Butler in Weymouth



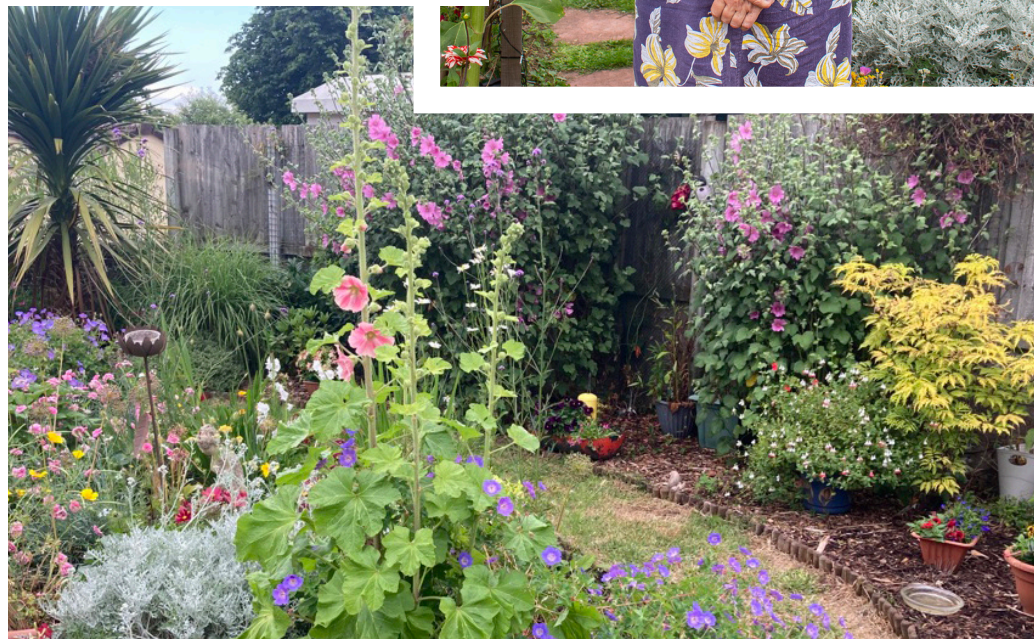


# Small garden

**First prize:**  
**Gillian Hurley in Minehead**

**Second prize:**  
**Jenny Shepard in Puddletown**

**Third prize:**  
**Jack Potten-May in Sherborne**



"It was a pleasure to be asked to help judge the garden competition again this year. We saw some amazing gardens, some we'd seen in previous years and it was great to see them maturing, and some new ones too. Seeing the variety of garden styles and meeting the gardener's really opened my eyes to people's personality and styles, and how that inspired some unique gardens and amazing ideas. It was great to see that the formality of years gone by are history, and nature and children now play a big part."

Nick Brown, Grounds Maintenance Operative.

# Children's creative gardening

**First prize:**  
**Arya & Edyson Boyland**  
**in Lyme Regis**

**Second prize:**  
**Aurelia Pettegree in Shaftesbury**

**Third prize:**  
**Alba & Lincoln McDonald**  
**in Dorchester**



"It was fantastic to see the pleasure that people were getting from being outside and hear the stories behind so many of the beautiful gardens this year."

Gavin Barker, Grounds Maintenance Supervisor



"Thank you to everyone who let us visit their amazing gardens. I was so impressed by the time and effort taken to make your outside spaces so wonderful and unique."

Alice Bagg, Head of Customer Experience & Home Services



## Wildlife garden

**First prize:**  
**Helen Mandy in Beaminster**

**Second prize:**  
**Terri Payne in Brushford**

**Third prize:**  
**Mike Hale in Chickerell**

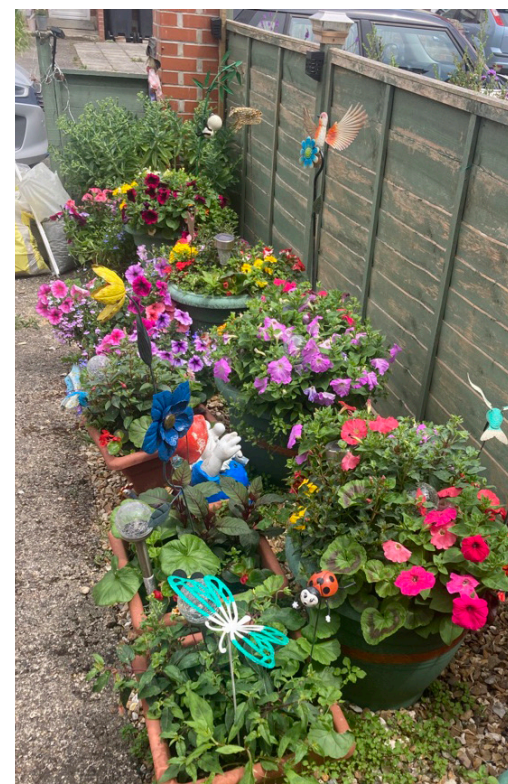


## Patios containers, window boxes, hanging baskets & indoor pots

**First prize:**  
**Andrew Hodder in Lyme Regis**

**Second prize:**  
**Janice Ford in Martinstown**

**Third prize:**  
**Alyson Mead in Dorchester**



A big thank you also goes to Countrywide Grounds Maintenance for part sponsoring this year's competition.





# Tenant Satisfaction Measures

In the last edition of Opendoor, we let you know about changes to the way we capture your views, replacing our existing Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) with the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) survey, which the government now requires all housing associations to carry out.

The TSMs have been designed through research with housing association residents and so ask questions on subjects that really matter– overall satisfaction, keeping properties in good repair, maintaining building safety, respectful and helpful engagement, effective handling of complaints and responsible neighbourhood management.

## What's happened so far?

A sample of our customers received the TSM survey during May and June. The results as a whole represent the types of Magna homes our customers live in and where they are.

We worked with HouseMark and Service Insights to carry out the survey. Some people received a questionnaire by email or through the post and others got a phone call to ask the questions. We successfully reached the number of responses we needed and will ask another sample of customers the questions again in November.

## Sharing the results

We are currently finalising the analysis of the results, which will be shared with you in Opendoor and on our website. When available, they will be published on this web page:

[Our Tenant Satisfaction Measures](#)

## Further consultation on the Consumer Standards

The TSMs form part of wider work the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) is doing to improve housing standards.

Currently, the RSH are seeking views on the standards they are proposing. You can find out more and [take part in their consultation here](#).

You can read more about the [TSMs on the Government's website](#).







## Want to learn something new?



Our help centre has lots of easy-to-follow videos where our expert colleagues can help you learn how to do things around your home to keep it in tip top shape.

We've got videos for things like how to repressurise your boiler, wire a plug top, unblock your toilet or sink, or top tips for painting your home.

You can also find answers to our most commonly asked questions by browsing the categories or typing your question into the search box, such as how to change your appointment time, where to find information about your tenancy, how to find out who your housing officer is, and much more.

**There's lots to see and do, so take a look and discover our help centre**



Come and join our

# scrutiny group



We want to grow our scrutiny group and particularly want to hear from customers whose views are under-represented.

We know that the views of young families, and people aged between 35 to 45, are not represented. But we understand that everyone is busy and often juggling multiple jobs as well as raising children and other commitments too. That's why we offer a variety of ways to get involved. As much or as little time and feedback you can give is really appreciated.

Not sure if it's for you?

5 reasons why you should join our scrutiny group:

1

### To make sure your voice is heard

Joining a scrutiny group allows you to have a direct say in the decisions that affect your home and community.

2

### To improve the quality of our homes

By scrutinising the services we provide, you can identify areas that need improvement and work with us to make changes.

3

### To learn new skills

Scrutiny groups provide training and development opportunities that can benefit your involvement in the group, but also in other things you do.

4

### To get to know other customers

Being part of a group helps to build relationships with other customers where you live, which can improve your sense of community and wellbeing.

5

### To hold Magna accountable

By scrutinising our actions and decisions you can be sure that we're operating in a transparent and accountable manner.

For more info about the group, click here



# Preparing for winter

Cold, wet and windy weather can cause problems for your home. Here's some handy info to help look after your home through winter.

## Fencing

When we have strong winds and constant rain making the ground wet, it creates perfect conditions for fences to be blown over.

If the fence has blown over onto a public right of way, contact us straight away.

If your fence has blown over in your garden, report it to us and if possible, stay away from the affected area until we are able to attend.

When we attend, we'll make the fence safe. This might mean that we will remove the damaged fence and you may be left with a gap where this once was. Where possible, we will mark the boundary with temporary orange mesh.

If you have pets that need access to the garden, we advise you put them on a lead to avoid them escaping.



## Heating

**Test your heating system before you need it!**

It's a good idea to turn your heating on and run it for a short time - just enough to let the radiators warm up - so you know it's working as it should before you need it.

We've got [how-to videos on our website](#) if the radiators aren't warming up enough, and if you're still stuck get in touch with us and we'll send someone out to look at it for you.

## Flooding

**Top tips to help prevent your home from flooding**

High rainfall, especially over a short period of time, can cause flooding. We can never predict what weather we're going to have; however, you can help reduce the impact the weather has on your home.

Here are a few simple checks which you can do to prevent flooding in your home, especially if you live in an area that is susceptible to flooding:

### Check your gutters.

If you have a blocked gutter or downpipe, let us know and we can come and clear it for you.

### Check your drains and gullies.

Check if they are blocked or covered with leaves or dirt. If you live near trees or have lots of vegetation in your garden, please keep on checking your drain covers and clear leaves and dirt that may get there.

### Check the road drains or gullies.

If you notice that the road drain is blocked or starting to get blocked, please report this to your local council. This is their responsibility to clear and the earlier this is picked up the less likely it is that flooding will happen.

## Roofing

You may get issues with your roof, like a tile which has blown off or dropped, following strong winds. If you start to see water coming through your roof then please notify us ASAP. Before we attend, there are a few things you can do to help:

- Put a bucket or container under the leak to catch the water. This will reduce damage to your home.
- If you're able, move any furniture or contents away from where the leak is. This will help keep your belongings undamaged and allow us to easily access the affected areas.
- Have a look outside at the roof to see what has caused the issue. Is there anything that looks out of place? This info will help us when you report the repair.

**[To report a repair online, click here.](#)**



**If your repair is an emergency, call us on 0800 3586025**



# Repairs and maintenance for homeowners



Homeowners have different responsibilities for the repair and upkeep of their homes. Below, we outline some key areas to help provide guidance.

## Repairs & Maintenance

Where we're the freeholder of the building, communal area and/or communal system, we would generally have responsibility to carry out repairs, maintenance and renewal.

If you live in a house, you are responsible for all repairs, maintenance and renewal both internally and externally. If your home is a flat, you are responsible for all internal aspects.

Specific repair responsibilities are detailed in the lease agreement. You should consult your lease agreement before reporting any repair issues to us.

## Buildings Insurance

Where Magna has an obligation to provide buildings insurance, homeowners' contributions are collected through service charges. This insurance covers damages to the property's structure, including elements like the roof and walls. It also provides cover for future damages caused by events such as flooding.

## Contents Insurance

While buildings insurance covers the structure, arranging contents insurance is your responsibility. Contents insurance covers items within your home, such as fixtures & fittings, furniture, electronics, jewellery and other valuables, from damage and theft. This cover can be invaluable in

helping you repair or replace these items without incurring substantial costs.

Although you don't have to have contents insurance, we strongly recommend considering it to protect your belongings.

## Gas Safety Checks

Homeowners are responsible for organising gas safety checks in their home. We recommend you have your boiler serviced on an annual basis.

Since 1998, a government law has mandated landlords to employ registered gas

engineers for annual gas safety checks on all gas appliances. If you're a leaseholder renting out your property, this law applies to you, even if you're not a landlord.

When requested, you should be able to provide a certificate to prove that your gas appliances are serviced.

With winter approaching, we advise scheduling a service for your boiler and other gas appliances. This proactive step can reduce repair costs and ensure the safety of your home and appliances.

[Click here for further information about homeowner responsibilities.](#)





# Sustainability and the environment

**Ailsa Exley recently joined Magna as our Sustainability Business Partner, a new role which sees her shaping and developing our approach to sustainability.**

Historically, sustainability has been seen as a purely environmental consideration. But this doesn't reflect what sustainability truly is.

True sustainability is about growing and developing, while ensuring we manage pressing environmental challenges that could hinder future growth, and seeing positive and long-lasting changes to the sustainability in our communities. It's about looking after our planet, but it's much more than just being 'green'.

At Magna, we're committed to sustainability. For us, it means building new homes for people with less waste and carbon, making homes more

energy efficient, being a business that creates jobs and grows skills and helping build communities that thrive.

In the last couple of years, we've started to develop our sustainability priorities and ambitions for the future. Ailsa has joined us as the new Sustainability Business Partner and it's her role to help bring these together into a forward-looking plan to make Magna and our communities sustainable, improving our environmental and social outcomes.

Ailsa said: "The housing industry has a responsibility to the communities that it operates in.

"Construction is one of the largest emitters of carbon emissions worldwide, and we can expect further and faster regulation in the future, meaning that we must recognise the challenges we're likely to face and be proactive, rather than reactive."

We're already making great progress, with work about to start on a number of homes to improve their energy efficiency, making them cheaper and easier to heat and run.

Many of our new homes are being built using a modular system that makes them highly efficient and able to use significantly less energy, but while feeling just like a traditional home to live in.

We're also doing great work to bring biodiversity back into our communities,

with our estates team working hard to improve the natural environment around our homes.

But sustainability isn't just about the environment. It is also about creating social benefits for our customers and their families and communities. Our Community Improvement Fund supports local initiatives that benefit our communities, and our Money Matters team have worked especially hard to help our customers manage in a very challenging cost of living crisis.

We'll be looking at ways we can involve you, our customers, in our future sustainability plans and will be sharing more on this in the next edition of Opendoor.





## Have you joined our Customer Facebook group yet?



As well as our main Facebook page which anyone can follow, we have a closed group which is for members only - you, our customers.

We have live chats, customer information, a chance for you to comment and give your views and competitions just for our customers to enter. Join the conversation and share your stories and pictures with us!

If you're not a customer Facebook member, [join us today by clicking here.](#)

Thank you to everyone who shared photos with us recently - we love to see them!

The weather may not have been on their side for a BBQ, but everyone at Healeys sheltered scheme still had a great time getting together.



Gillian Deadman shared pics of the beautiful lillies she's grown in her garden.



How amazing is this little caravan?! This has been handmade by Mike at Healeys.



## Money matters

Our expert money matters team are here to help.



Our money matters advisors can help to support you with claiming benefits, reducing household costs and more.

If you need help with your situation, [complete our online form](#) and our money matters team will be in touch.

We also have lots of money matters tips and advice online - [have a read here.](#)

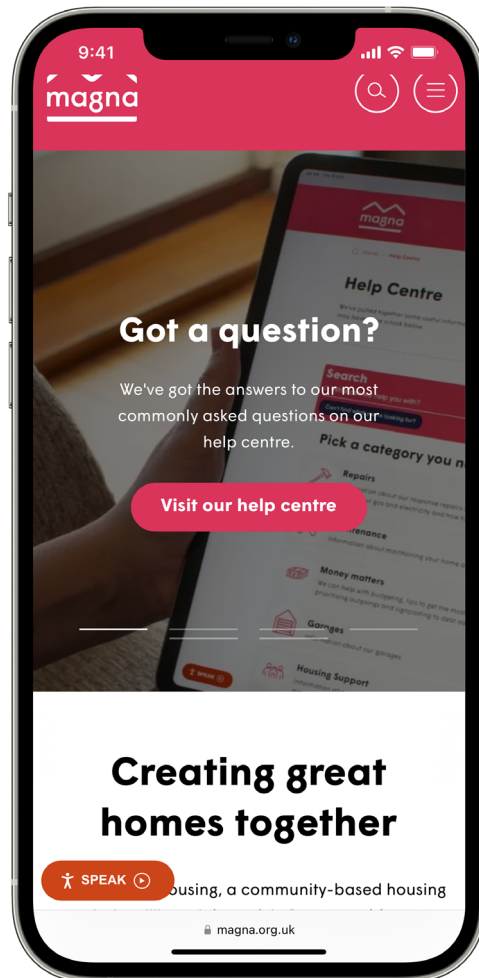


# Our website is built with accessibility in mind

Did you know we have accessibility features on our website that you can use?

Simply press the 'speak' button at the bottom of the screen.

Inclusion is really important to us, which is why we try to make our website as accessible as possible so that everyone can use it and find what they're looking for.



Pressing the speak button opens up a toolbar which gives lots of options to make the information on our website accessible, such as:

- Text-to-Speech reads on-screen text out loud with read along highlighting
- Translation allows words to be translated into multiple languages
- MP3 maker converts online content into MP3 files for easy listening
- Screen Mask with reading pane reduces visual stress and improves focus.

Give it a go - click the speak button on your screen now!



## Come and join #TeamMagna!



Whether you're just starting out in your career, or you've got lots of experience under your belt, there's an opportunity for you to join our team.

We're looking for people for all sorts of roles, so whether your passion lies in plumbing, electrics, admin work, IT, housing support, or supporting our elderly customers in their homes, there's a role for you.

We offer lots of great benefits too, including a comprehensive cashback scheme for things like dental treatments and prescription costs, discounts on your favourite brands, a competitive holiday allowance, and much more.

**Interested?**

[Take a look at our current vacancies](#)





# Got a question?

Visit our help centre to find the answer, and watch some of our how-to videos and learn something new while you're there!

**[magna.org.uk/help-centre](https://magna.org.uk/help-centre)**

## Or get in touch with us



**[contactus@magna.org.uk](mailto:contactus@magna.org.uk)**

**0800 358 6025**



Our phone lines are open Monday to Thursday,  
8:30am to 5pm and 8:30am to 4:00pm on Friday.

## Get **#social!**

You can also get in touch and keep up to date with the latest news through our social channels!

