



Opendoor

The magazine for magna housing customers



Last chance to enter our garden competition

**Win £100 in
our garden
competition**

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Welcome

Summer is finally here and in this edition, we're encouraging you to enter our garden competition for a chance to win £100!

Yes, that's right - you could win up to £100 in vouchers. Not only that, everyone who enters will receive a £5 gardening voucher for taking part! So, whether you've got a big or small garden, or just pots on a balcony, there's no reason not to enter. See [page 4](#) for details.

If you're struggling to keep on top of your gardening, and live in West Somerset, we also offer a gardening service - take a look on the page opposite for more information.

We also offer a home help service in West Somerset. One of our recent customers shares her experience of this on [page 14](#).

On [page 6](#), we're talking about repairs in your home. We've made some changes to the repairs policy, which aims to further improve the service for you.

Customer feedback and involvement is really important to us to ensure we are getting things right. [Page 23](#) explains how you can get involved and share your views.

On [page 10](#) we introduce our new executive team. They have a wealth of knowledge and experience to drive forward the changes we're seeking for our customers and our homes. Our brilliant basics strategy helps us to achieve this and on [page 12](#) is a summary of our achievements over the past 12 months.

Finally, we know that money worries are on many people's minds. Our money matters team are here to help with debt advice, budgeting and much more. Read [page 8](#) for more information and how to get in contact with them.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition, and enjoy the summer!



Tanya Churchill

Marketing Manager and
Editor of Opendoor

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Can we email you?

We'd like to contact you by email rather than letters in the post. It means we can get information to you quicker and it's better for the environment. Email us with your name and home address to update your contact details:

contactus@magna.org.uk



Did you know we offer a gardener and handyperson service in West Somerset?

Do you struggle with
managing your garden or
DIY tasks? If you do, then
why not book our gardener
and handyperson service?

We're aware that everyone's needs are different, so we offer a tailor-made service at an affordable cost.

You don't need to live in a Magna home to benefit from this service either, it's available to anyone in the community.

Some of the tasks we can offer help with are:

- **Garden maintenance** - such as grass cutting, hedge clipping, shrub pruning, clearing overgrown paths, tidying flower beds.

- **Small DIY tasks** - putting up curtain rails, shelves and pictures, installing draught excluders, radiator heat reflectors and energy-efficient light bulbs, fitting smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and grab rails.
- **Home security** - fitting key safes, door and window locks, door chains and door viewers.
- **Waste clearance**
- **Carpet cleaning.**

If you'd like further information or would like to book the service, contact us on 0800 3586025 or email contactus@magna.org.uk

Keen gardener?

Enter our garden competition!

You could win £100!

With gardening vouchers to win, even if it's not usually your thing, give it a go this summer!

There's still time to enter our annual garden competition.

Categories:

- Large garden
- Small garden
- Patios/containers/windows/hanging baskets/indoor pots
- Wildlife garden
- Vegetable/and or fruit garden
- Children's creative gardening (this could be fairy gardens, miniature gardens, seed growing—anything at all!)

This year we're also looking for the most ingenious use of objects that are upcycled as planters or for decoration—you could win a special prize!

How to enter:

[Click here to complete the entry form online.](#)

Entries must be received by 24 June 2022.

Judging:

The judging will take place week commencing 11 July 2022. We will contact you in advance to arrange a suitable time to visit.

Winners will be announced on our customer Facebook group and our website in August.

Prizes:

Everyone who enters will receive a £5 gardening voucher for taking part.

There will be one winner in each category. They will each receive gardening vouchers and a certificate:

1st place - £100

2nd place - £50

3rd place - £25

The deadline for entries is 24 June - so get your application in quick!





Repairs to your home

We all want to make sure our homes are safe and secure, and that they are free from damage and comfortable to live in.

We know that over the past year we have struggled to keep on top of the number of repairs which have been reported to us. We are sorry for the delays you have experienced with our repairs service. We knew that this was not acceptable – not to you or to us, so we have spent the last few months looking again at the way we deal with repairs to see where we can make improvements.

We have started with an update to our repairs policy, and we've made some changes which we think will help. We haven't changed the way we deal with those important repairs which may cause an immediate risk to your health and safety or the security of your home – these are PRIORITY repairs and will always be dealt with before any other work. We'll always make sure that that you or your home is safe.

Other RESPONSIVE repairs are any small-scale day-to-day repairs that are reactive to fix single or multiple defects. Generally these repairs should not take longer than five hours to complete and whilst we aim

to fix these first time, we may need another visit to complete the job such as applying a second coat of paint. We will arrange these repairs at a convenient time with you.

There's also some things we ask you to do, to keep your home safe and in good order such as:

- making sure we can get into your home for important safety inspections
- reporting any damage or problems as early as you can
- trying to keep your homes, and gardens, tidy and clean.

We've also added more information on our website. These include some useful guides and some 'how to' videos developed by our in house experts to help try to fix some of the more routine repairs you may need in your home. You can also report your repair on our website and add photos and useful information to help us diagnose this better.

[Click here to visit the repairs section of our website.](#)

Sheltered news

New contract for alarm equipment maintenance

We are partnering with T2 Digital, who will carry out all our routine maintenance and breakdowns of the alarm equipment in your homes and our communal areas.

This replaces Orestone who have provided this service for us previously.

T2 have a huge wealth of experience and have recently been helping us on a few projects. We've received many compliments on the politeness of the engineers and the work they have completed.

They have also been selected as they will be able to provide better value for money.

We look forward to welcoming them on site. If you see T2 around be sure to say hi.

If you have any questions about this change, please speak to your Sheltered Housing Advisor or email us at bst-shss@magna.org.uk

Unacceptable customer conduct policy

Unfortunately, some of our colleagues have been experiencing some challenging behaviour from customers, and this is something that we take very seriously. The safety of both our colleagues and customers is very important to us.

We advised in the last Opendoor that we were working on a policy which clarifies and updates our approach to this to make sure that colleagues can get on with their job safely and without fear of abuse. This new policy has now been finalised.

The new Unacceptable Customer Conduct policy, at its heart, aligns to our 'always safe' value; this states that 'the safety of our customers and our colleagues is always our main priority'.

The new policy defines unacceptable behaviour and sets out our approach to dealing with unreasonable customer demands.

[Click here to view this policy on our website.](#)



Money matters

Did you know, we've helped our customers claim £1.4 million?

In the last financial year (2020/2021), our money matters team helped our customers claim just over £1.4m in additional income. Income that customers didn't know they were entitled to or just needed that little bit of extra support in claiming.

This includes just over £700,000 in housing related benefits and just over £700,000 in other benefits including working age, pension age and disability benefits.

Nearly £15,000 was emergency funding and grants for food bank referrals and utilities.

With the funding for Discretionary Housing Payments being cut by almost £40m this year, and the rising cost of living, the work that our money matters team are doing is especially important at such a tough time for many.

But that's not all!

Our money matters team can also help with budgeting, working with you to get the most out of your income, prioritise outgoings and signpost to debt advisory services.

Dealing with debt

If you're now feeling the squeeze from the increased cost of living, it can be really hard to keep up with existing non-priority debt such as credit cards and unsecured loans no matter how small the minimum monthly payments might be.

You may also be feeling under pressure to make these payments a priority over other costs so as not to incur further fees like interest and default charges, or perhaps you're worried about the impact on your credit score.

We understand this completely but these payments should never come over and above priority debts such as your rent and

council tax as there are much more severe consequences attached to not paying these - worst case scenario is being at risk of losing your home, fines or being taken to court.

Our money matters team work alongside some brilliant debt advisory services who can help you take control of your money again. We've detailed just three of the agencies below that we work with:

- StepChange – 0800 138 1111 plus online debt advice at www.stepchange.org
- CAP – Christians Against Poverty – 0800 328 0006 or online at www.capuk.org
- Citizens Advice Bureau – 0800 144 8848 or get advice online at www.citizensadvice.org.uk

They have a wealth of knowledge on their websites regarding priority and non-priority debts. They can be contacted in various ways and our money matters team can help you recognise the options available to you if you're not sure where to start.

Household Support Fund

Household Support Funds were opened by local authorities earlier this year but due to demand, most of them in Somerset have run out of funding now. However, Dorset Council have extended their scheme until 30 September 2022 with applications expected to be open from 1 June 2022.

The fund can be used for food and basic essentials, energy, water and sometimes housing costs in exceptional circumstances. Get in touch with your local authority to find out if their scheme is still open. Don't worry if the funding in your area is depleted though, there are still other options available and our money matters team will be able to tell you what these are according to your needs.

[To get help from our money matters team, complete the self-referral form online here.](#)

Our new executive team

We've had some changes to this senior team over the last 12 months, but we now have our new directors in place and are working hard to make sure that we are as efficient and effective as we can be and making sure you are getting the best possible service.



Selina White
Chief Executive

Selina White is our Chief Executive. She has been here for over three years now and has overseen some significant changes to Magna. Thanks to her we now have a clear ten-year vision, creating great homes together, and a three year plan to improve and develop our services.

Our newest recruit is Paul Satchwell, who joined us from Northampton Partnership Homes in April 2022. He is our Finance Director and our Deputy Chief Executive. His role covers all our financial activity, as well as how the business is run, supporting our board members and making sure we are continuing to maintain our high standards of performance.



Paul Satchwell
Finance Director and
Deputy Chief Executive

A year ago we agreed we needed to focus on supporting those who work for us, making sure they had the skills and abilities to meet our ambitions for our customers. We welcomed Ami Davis in May 2021 and she brought with her a range of skills and experience from both Sky and the National Trust. As our director for organisational capability, she oversees all our HR functions, as well as IT, communication and marketing and our wider transformation work.

We continue to make sure that customers are at the heart of everything we do. So linking all our customer facing services was a priority and we brought all these under one director – Jo Martin.



Ami Davis
Strategic Organisational
Capability Director



Jo Martin
Director of Customer
Operations

Jo joined us as our new Director of Customer Operations in January 2022, bringing with her a considerable amount of experience, and is committed to making sure we continue to deliver an excellent customer service, for everyone.

Last but by no means least, Paul Read has become our Director of Sustainability and New Supply. He has been with us since 2017, overseeing our ambitious development programme to supply new homes across Dorset and Somerset. He will be supporting our wider sustainability work, making sure our homes are energy efficient, and that how we build our homes and how we work reduces our impact on the environment.



Paul Read
Director of Sustainability
and New Supply

Together our executive team have a wealth of knowledge, experience and importantly skills to drive forward the changes we are seeking for our customers and our homes. They are all committed to delivering the best possible customer service, and making sure that living in a Magna home is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

[Click here to find out more about our Executive and Leadership Teams.](#)

Our brilliant basics strategy



In April 2021 we launched our three-year brilliant basics strategy.

Over the past year we were still dealing with lock downs, supply chain issues, increasing costs and a reducing workforce. However, we are still proud of what we have achieved and one year on we are delighted to share our progress and our achievements as we work towards our ambition of being best in class.

Our approach has been to focus on four main areas of work – customer experience, supply and investment, organisational capability, and performance and results. We have ambitious plans and have spent much of this first year making sure we are ready to deliver.

Customer experience

We have worked hard to improve our complaints process and to improve the overall experience of our customers who need to complain to us. We have invested in our teams and in the way we deal with this to help resolve issues quickly and efficiently.

We've also focused on finding out more about how we are doing from the people who use our services. We're now getting real time customer feedback, so we can

identify if there are any problems and deal with these quickly. We've also asked for comments on Trust Pilot for others to share how we're doing.

We've been making it easier for you to get hold of us and introduced lots more ways through our website or social media. And we've been developing different ways for you to get involved through a new customer involvement framework.

Supply and investment

Our major investment over the past year has been in making sure our customers are safe. We've got a dedicated team who are committed to deliver the highest standards and increasing awareness of the importance of this. This is not just about our buildings but also our people and making sure our colleagues can work safely and that our customers are protected, particularly those who are more vulnerable.

We've also been investing in buying more land so we can build more affordable homes for local people. We've built a number of new homes this year helping more than 100 families to have decent and warm homes.

Organisational capability

We've been busy making sure that our colleagues have the most up to date and robust IT systems to help them deliver their work. This has been ongoing work for us which has included better data security, standard systems across the business and culminated in new smart phones for our trades operatives so they have all the right equipment to support them.

Our people team had a focus on improving our overall colleague experience to help us be a great place to work. Dealing with lock-down, remote working and issues with testing for and contracting Covid-19 has been challenging for many of our colleagues. We had to work differently and supporting our colleagues to adapt has been a major priority.

We have looked to increase the amount of transactions and services we offer either remotely or online with a raft of how-to videos and online reporting forms to support our more digital way of working. Our updated website has been the host for these developments. We have also sought to share more information about our achievements on social media and increase awareness about our successes.

Performance and results

We welcomed many new board members this year as well as new directors into the business. This supports our approach to making sure we are efficient and effective.

We have focused on how we are performing and introducing new ways for us to measure and share this both internally and externally. Understanding our performance has been key to helping us to improve our services.

This represents a snap-shot of our achievements over the past 12 months. We'll be adding more into our annual report and our adding value report which are due out later this year.

[Click here to take a look at our ambitions and our priorities on our strategy website.](#)

Watch our video!





Home help

Did you know we offer a home help service in West Somerset?

The service aims to help with day-to-day domestic tasks, helping people to continue living independently in their own homes.

This is available to anyone living in West Somerset. You don't need to live in a Magna home to use this service.

Recently, we spoke to Sue, who uses the service.

How long have you been using home help services?

"I moved into Silvermead Extra Care Scheme around 2 years ago and have been using the service ever since I arrived. I love living here."

How has the service helped you?

"Without the home help service I would struggle with many of the day to day chores around my home. I like to keep it nice and tidy but the staff help with those jobs that I now find difficult. I really struggle to change my bed, especially getting the duvet into the cover as I find it so heavy and my arms are just not strong enough. They also help with hoovering and mopping all the hard floors."

What do you think of the team?

"They are all lovely. Always happy, I can't fault them, they do a great job. It's also great company for me as it's nice to have a chat while they are doing the dusting in my lounge."

What is the best thing about the home help service?

"All of it! Great staff that do a great job and help me to keep my apartment lovely and clean."

Would you recommend the home help service?

"I most definitely would recommend them to others."

Our home help team are experienced, have completed a security check and have received full training.

The home help service is flexible and can be tailored to suit your own needs.

Some of the support we offer:

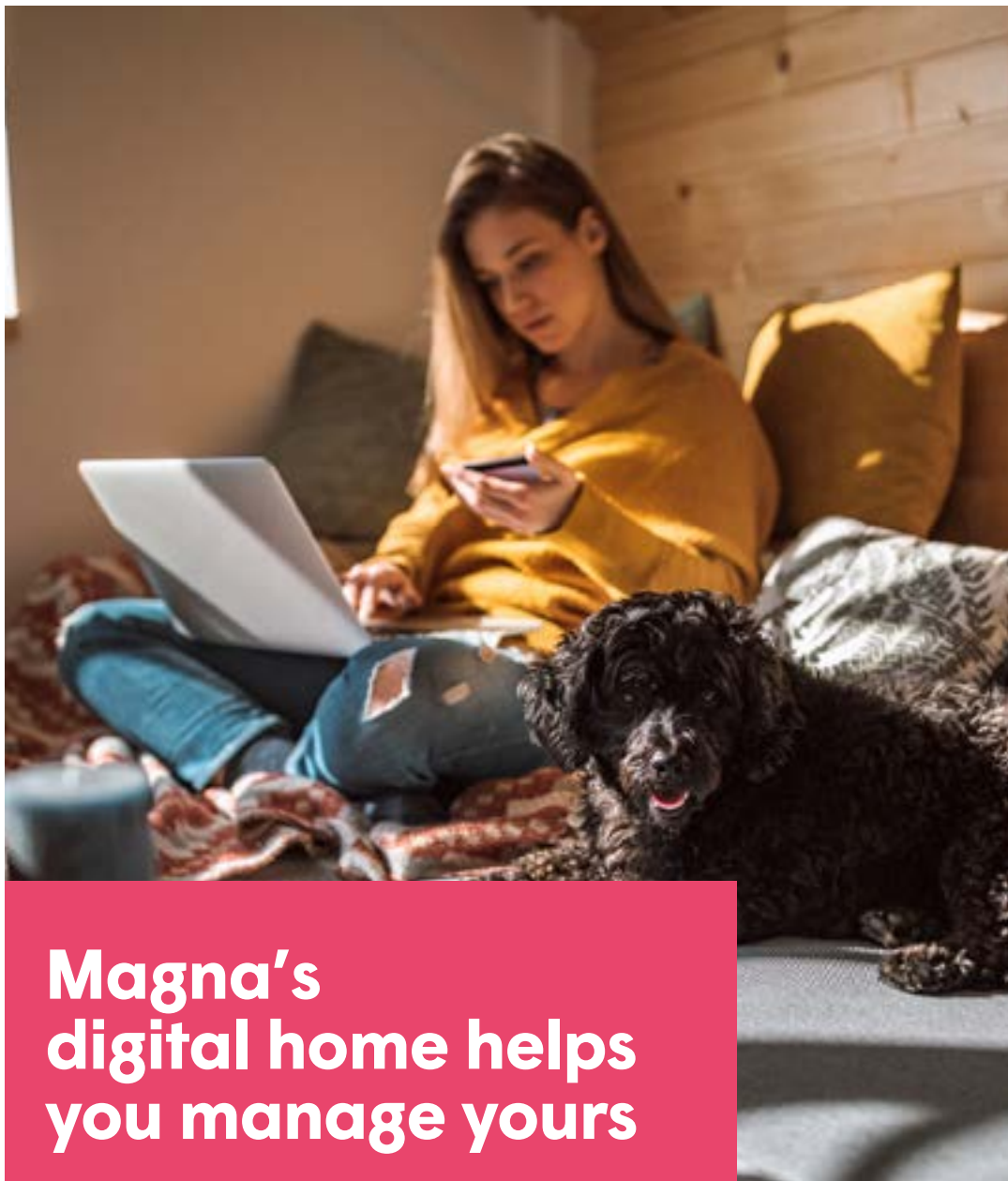
- Housework
- Laundry
- Shopping
- Preparing light meals
- Companionship or just a friendly visit to check all is well
- Running errands e.g. prescription collection
- Dog walking.

Our home help team are not able to support you with personal care such as dressing or bathing.

This is an additional service that we offer, which is chargeable. If you'd like any further information, call us on 0800 999 6130 and we'll be more than happy to have a chat about our services.



Sue Reed, customer.



Magna's digital home helps you manage yours

At Magna, we know how precious your time is. So, we've been busy developing our website so you can access Magna customer services from anywhere at any time, making your life a little simpler.

[Visit www.magna.org.uk](http://www.magna.org.uk)

We've got a new help centre on our website



We're always adding content to our website to help you find the information you need, as quickly and easily as possible.

The latest improvement to our website is our new help centre, which replaces the 'help and FAQs' (frequently asked questions) page.

We've worked hard to make this section of the website as useful as possible, containing lots of information, how-to videos and links to additional information and resources that may

help. We've also improved the search facility, which should make it easier to find what you're looking for.

We'll be adding more useful content to this section all the time, so keep checking back.

[Click here to take a look at the new online help centre.](#)



Do you have a community project that needs funding?

We want to work with people in our communities to create great places where people choose to live. And we know that sometimes local groups or communities need a little extra support to help really make a difference.

We have a community development fund that people in our communities can bid for. This fund is designed to help communities develop and to help projects and programmes that align with what we stand for.

Specifically, we're able to support local not-for-profit organisations, charities, groups, schools or communities with activities and programmes that have

the potential to benefit our customers and/or the communities in areas where we have homes. We'll also need to make sure that any activity aligns with our priorities and our approach, and we'll want to tell other people about it so we can help to promote the impact of the funding.

We've put together some guidance on our website, with an application form, so why not take a look and see if we can make a difference to your community, together. [Click here.](#)





1,000 Homes for the future will benefit South West residents

People across Dorset, Wiltshire and Somerset will benefit from a new partnership to build more energy-efficient homes for rent and ownership.

We have joined forces with Wiltshire Council to address the housing crisis, appointing offsite manufacturing company Rollalong via the South West Procurement Alliance (SWPA) Offsite Construction of New Homes framework, to build nearly 1,000 new homes over the next three years.

At the forefront of this work in the local area, the partners are committed to accelerating the delivery of modular homes in the UK, using offsite manufactured, precision-engineered techniques to deliver much needed homes in the local area, as well as modernising and speeding up the overall process. The latest range of homes are net zero carbon ready and net zero carbon living,

supporting the Government's objective of delivering net zero carbon homes by 2050. They are cheaper to run than traditionally built homes, with better insulation and more efficient heating, and people living in them will be better off as a result.

Designs can flex from traditional to contemporary to suit the towns and villages across Somerset, Wiltshire and Dorset.

The development of these new homes, designed with the end user in mind, supports the local economy by employing local people and using local suppliers. The construction process also reduces any environmental impact as it uses less energy, reduces waste and creates less disruption to local residents, thanks to fewer deliveries to site over a shorter period of time.

With a faster turnaround than traditional methods of construction, as well as a high-

quality, standardised product, they will be available more quickly and will be more cost-effective and safer for occupants.

The partnership has made extensive efforts to make sure that the concept and approach works: Rollalong has already manufactured 120 homes and completed the first three sites at Barton Gardens, Woodlands Way and McCreery Road in Sherborne, Dorset.

Paul Read, Magna's Director for Sustainability and New Supply, said: "We have been on an exciting journey leading this approach to modular homes. I am delighted that we are now seeing our hard work turn into reality with new homes now on site and people being ready to move in.

"Our priority, in addition to creating homes designed for living, is to reduce the amount of carbon in delivery and occupation of homes. So in addition to creating great places to live, and beautiful homes, they are also more sustainable and cheaper to run, providing huge benefits for our customers. This partnership will not only make more homes available for local people but will lead the way in how we can transform the delivery of these."

Steve Chivers, Managing Director of Rollalong, said: "We are delighted to have been awarded the contract by Magna Housing and Wiltshire Council to design and build these modular homes that will provide a range of high-quality, affordable housing for everyone.

"We are building the homes of the future designed for living today. It's another great opportunity to demystify modular housing and champion the benefits that this style of housing can provide in the face of a nationwide housing crisis.

"We are now working with experienced clients in the South West, bringing jobs and

apprenticeships and using our local supply chain partners which demonstrates our commitment to social value.

"Local communities built by local people, using local manufacturers for local people – we are creating systemic change in our transition towards a circular economy in the South West.

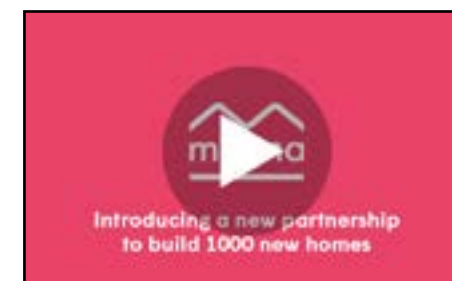
Councillor Phil Alford, Cabinet Member for Housing at Wiltshire Council, said: "One of our key missions within our business plan is to deliver high-quality, attractive homes that provide residents with truly affordable housing, with reduced energy bills.

"The work that has gone into securing this three-year contract with Rollalong will provide long-term benefits for residents and the environment and we are really pleased to be on this journey with Magna Housing. This work has demonstrated that when you collaborate and join forces, collective buying power is greater than working alone."

Mary Bennell, Director of SWPA, said: "We have worked closely for a long time with Magna Housing, and more recently with Wiltshire Council, to provide the innovative procurement solutions required to meet their housing aspirations."

[Click here for more information about the homes we're building.](#)

Watch the video!

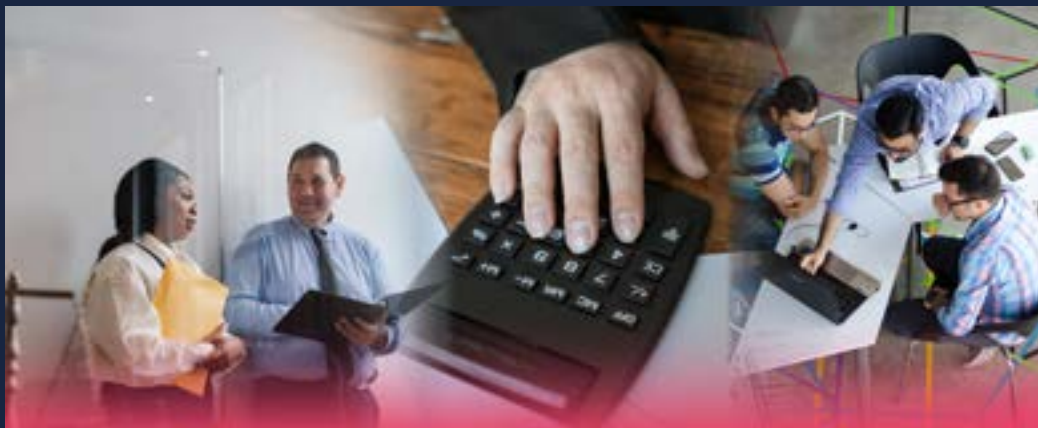


Come and join #TeamMagna!

Ever thought about working at Magna? We've got lots of great opportunities for you to join our team.

From administration to plumbing, accounting to gardening, there's lots of different roles at Magna. We offer lots of benefits, including a comprehensive cashback scheme for things like dental treatments and prescription costs, a generous pension contribution, as well as much more.

[Click here to find out more and apply now.](#)



**We've got lots of opportunities
for you to join our team.**



Customer involvement

Your views matter!



**We want you to feel
listened to and that your
views are acted upon.**

We recently asked for your views on what we should offer to help modernise and strengthen customer involvement, to ensure there is a strong customer voice influencing decisions, shaping services and challenging us to improve. Based on your feedback, we are putting together a new framework for involvement.

This will help you to choose different ways to be involved that suit you, and we'll make sure we feedback the difference your involvement has made—watch out for the next Opendoor and our posts on social media!

[Click here for more information on getting involved.](#)

We also have a page on our website showing our current surveys, and the feedback and outcomes from recently completed surveys. [Take a look here.](#)

Join our Customer Facebook page

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

We have live chats, news items, a chance for you to comment and give your views and unique stories only seen on this page.

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

Want to talk about being involved?

If you'd like more information, or have something to say about involvement, contact Neil Bliss on 01984 635134 or email engage@magna.org.uk

Contact us

We have lots of useful information on our website:

magna.org.uk

Email:

contactus@magna.org.uk

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

0800 3586025

Get #social!

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

