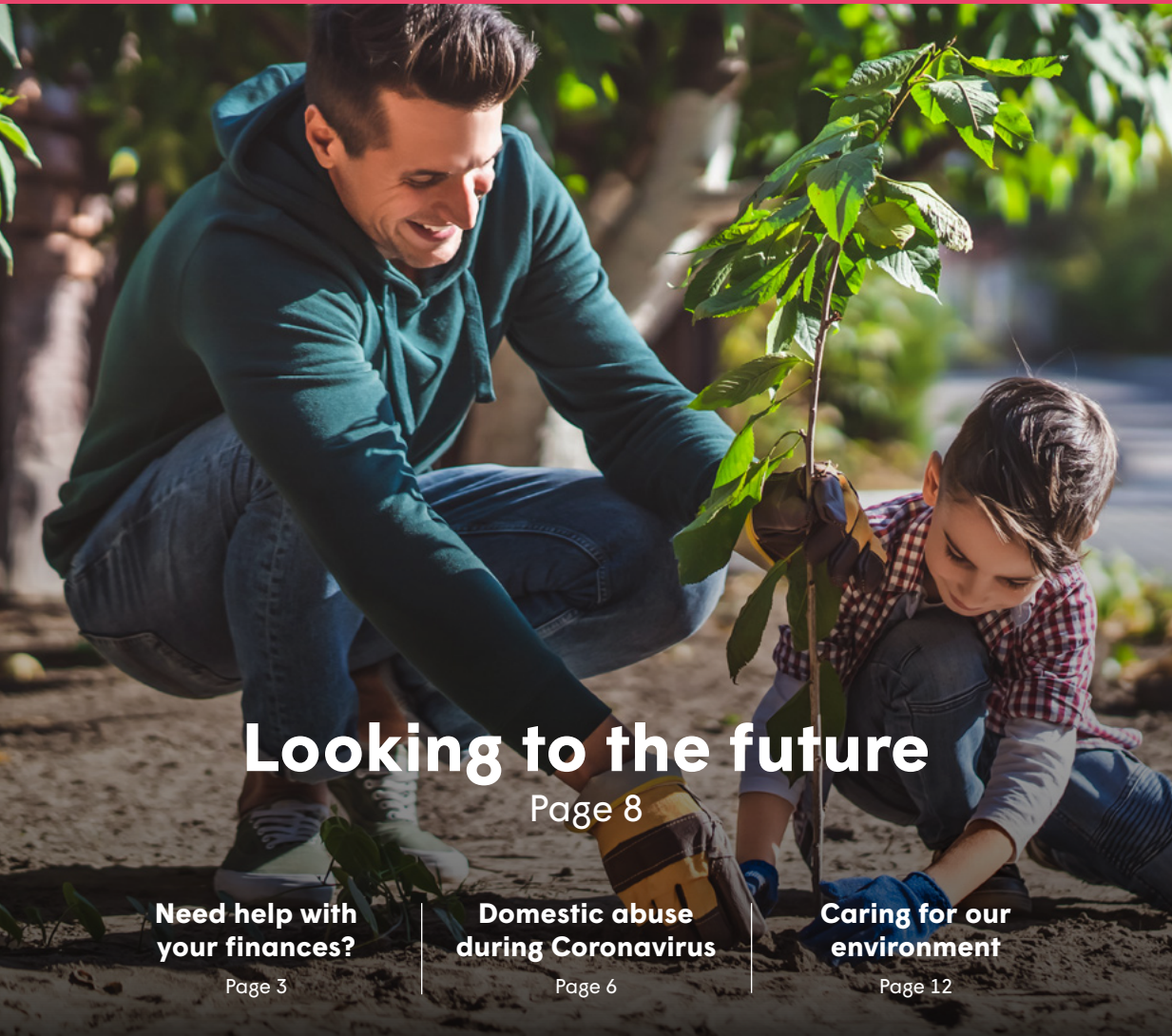




Opendoor

The magazine for magna housing customers



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Welcome

Firstly, I hope you are all keeping well. It has been a very strange few months and Coronavirus has had a massive impact on us all.

We've had to make many changes to our services, and our ways of working with each other over recent months to keep within government guidelines. You can find out more about these changes on our website, which will always contain the most up to date information.

Talking of changes, you'll notice that this edition looks a little different. I'm excited to have created this edition in our refreshed branding, which we have been using on our social media channels for a few months now. We've updated our style to be more modern, warm and friendly we hope you like it! If you have any feedback about the new style, please get in touch we'd love to hear from you.

Get in touch

General enquiries:

customerservices@magna.org.uk

Postal address:

Everdene House, Railway Triangle
Industrial Estate, Poundbury Road
Dorchester DT1 2PJ

Online:

www.magna.org.uk



We've also changed our garden competition this year to virtual judging. This is an exciting step forward for the competition and I'm delighted to say we've received more entries than ever before! We'll be announcing the winners online in August and publishing them in the Autumn Opendoor. Good luck to everyone who has entered!

Finally, in this edition, we are looking to the future. We have lots of exciting plans for Magna in the years to come and on page 8 we share with you some of our plans so far.

Enjoy the rest of summer, stay safe and keep well.



Tanya Head

Marketing Manager

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Would you like to
receive Opendoor by
email or on audio CD?

Email us to change your preferences:
communications@magna.org.uk



Do you need help with your finances?

We know this is a worrying time for many of you with regard to how to pay the rent and other bills. We can offer you advice and support to claim any benefits you are entitled to during this time.

If you are struggling to pay the rent as your income has reduced, please contact the income management team on 01305 216067 who will be able to agree a plan to get you through this difficult time and catch up with any rent payments missed.

If you would like advice or support to claim benefits please contact our money matters team on 0800 999 6130 or email admin-shss@magna.org.uk.

More information about our money matters service can be found online at www.magna.org.uk



Celebrating VE Day

People across the country celebrated the 75th anniversary of VE Day in May, and we were delighted to help our customers in sheltered homes celebrate from a distance.

In Somerset, cream teas were delivered to some of our customers in sheltered homes, and outside decorations of union jack bunting and balloons were proudly displayed. Neighbours were socially distancing on their lawns, from their doorsteps and out of windows, celebrating together the best they could with their community.

In Watchet, our local town crier visited our sheltered customers at Ingrams Meadow and sang some cheerful war time songs, which everyone enjoyed joining in with.

Similarly in Dorchester, the local town crier visited our sheltered customers at Christchurch Court and we delivered VE Day packs containing war time poems, puzzles and crosswords for everyone to enjoy.

Jude Wilkins, Head of Sheltered and Supported Housing, said: "Many of our sheltered customers grew up through the war and whilst this wasn't the big celebrations that we would have all loved to mark the day with, it was important for us to celebrate the anniversary, remember our heroes of the Second World War and reflect on the sacrifices of a generation."

Magna Housing is large enough to influence and small enough to care; because of this, we take pride in knowing our customers behind each front door and sharing their stories. Being involved in the communities we are part of and creating great homes together is what we're here for.



Domestic abuse during Coronavirus

The government's order to stay at home to reduce the risk of people catching coronavirus and to protect the NHS has led to concerns that victims of Domestic Abuse, trapped with their abuser, may not know where or who to turn to.

Calls to the National Domestic Abuse helpline (run by Refuge) were 25% above average in the second week of lockdown and 49% higher than normal after just three weeks.

14 women and 2 children were killed by their abusers in the first three weeks of lockdown.

There was also a 17% rise in calls to Men's Advice Line in the first week of lockdown. Male victims of abuse have been calling in greater numbers.

A recent report by MPs called upon the government to come up with a comprehensive strategy "to cope with the consequences of this violence" and the home affairs select committee said "we will be dealing with serious consequences for a generation". There was also a call to provide more help to allow victims to access support at times when they may be unable to use the phone or ask friends for help. This could see the Safe Spaces scheme expanded from pharmacies to other retail places such as supermarkets.

At Magna we are committed to supporting victims of Domestic Abuse and we are proud to have been an early adopter of the Chartered Institute of Housing's Make a Stand campaign against Domestic Abuse. We have regular training on identifying the signs of Domestic Abuse and all new staff complete training on the subject as part of their induction. We can also offer help for victims of Domestic Abuse to maintain their tenancies and can provide help or signpost you to other organisations so you will feel safer staying in your home. You can call our Community Safety team on 01305 214071 or email communitysafety@magna.org.uk for further information.

Domestic abuse is not always physical violence. It can also include, but is not limited to:

- coercive control and 'gaslighting'
- economic abuse
- online abuse
- verbal abuse
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse

If you believe you are being abused or you are worried that you may commit Domestic Abuse here are a number of services that you can use.



If you suspect your neighbours or those in your community are victims of domestic abuse, please call the police on 999.

Calling for help

If you need urgent police help through the 999 service and you are using a mobile phone but can't speak, then the Make Yourself Heard campaign suggests that you can cough or tap the keys on your phone in response to questions.

If making a sound would put you or someone else in danger, and the operator cannot decide whether an emergency service is needed, your call will be transferred to the Silent Solutions system.

You will hear an automated police message that lasts for 20 seconds and begins with "you are through to the police". It will ask you to press 55 to be put through. If you press 55, the operator will transfer you to the police

but if you don't press it, your call will be terminated. Please note, pressing 55 does not allow the police to track your location.

When transferred to your local police force, the call handler will attempt to communicate with you by asking simple yes or no questions. If you are not able to speak, listen carefully to the questions and instructions from the call handler so they can assess your call and arrange for help.

As 999 calls made from a landline are less likely to be made by accident, the Silent Solutions system is not used. If, when an emergency call on a landline is received

- there is no request for an emergency
- the caller does not answer questions
- only background noise can be heard and BT operators can't decide whether an emergency service is needed, you will be connected to a police call handler as doubt exists. If you replace the handset, the landline may remain connected for 45 seconds in case you pick it up again. If you pick up again during this 45 seconds and the BT operator is concerned for your safety, the call will be connected to police.

Looking to the future

The past few months have seen such a lot of change for us all. We've all had to adapt to a different way of working and living and some of these changes will become more permanent for many of us.

This has been no different for us here at Magna. We've not been able to open our offices and have not been able to offer the level of support that we'd like as the government guidelines have meant we can't enter homes, unless in emergencies. We're now starting to bring back some of our services where it is safe to do so, and you'll be seeing more of us around and about.

We've been taking stock over the past few months and we've been planning what the future looks like. We're further developing our 10 year strategy which will give us a clear direction for our services in the future. We had a great response to our survey in the last Opendoor, so thank you for taking the time to respond. We will be using all the views and comments to shape our future activities and we'll feedback on what we heard and what we are doing soon.

As you may remember one of our strategic priorities is about customer experience, and making sure that for everyone their experience is excellent. This is what you have told us, and it is what you should



expect from us. We'll be working over the coming months, with many of you, to agree what we mean by customer experience, how we need to be different and how we can make sure that this is consistent across the organisation. We already know a lot about what you want from us, not just excellent service and responsive repairs, but also how you expect to be treated and how you think we should behave. This is important information for us and certainly something that we'll be using to shape our work over the coming months.

You will see some changes as well. We're looking a bit different now as we've

updated our identity and how we present ourselves. We've got a new website coming and with this a new customer system, where you will be able to look at your account, book and review repairs and visits as well as share feedback and comments about us. They should both be live in October, but we'll be letting you know more about this soon. To reflect our new approach, we also want to work more closely with you to design some of our services and standards and to talk more about our plans and what you want from us and your homes in the future.

Over the coming months we hope to see more of our services come back, when it is

safe to do so. We want to talk with you about this to make sure that we're still getting it right, so we may be in touch with you more frequently to get your thoughts and views about how we're doing and what ideas you have to improve our work.

There's been a lot of change over the past few months and we'll be seeing a lot more positive change in the future as we start to implement our ambitious and customer focused priorities. We're looking forward to working with you on this and making sure you can be engaged and help us on our journey.



Customer engagement

We have lots of great ways for you to get involved with us to help us improve your customer experience!

Customer Facebook

We have a new Customer Facebook page just for our existing customers. You can feed back to us about topics we are currently focussing on, see the latest news, ask questions, chat with other customers and take part in polls and live Q&A's.

We already have over 270 people in the group so come and join us! It's a private group, so you will have to ask to join. Simply search for 'Magna Housing Customer Group' on Facebook.

Click 'Join Group' at the top, and then click 'Answer Questions'. Please make sure you answer all 3 questions so you can be accepted quickly.

This will send a notification to us to confirm your acceptance as a member.

Our main Facebook page will continue for general updates.

MORE: Magna Online Resident Engagement group

Give your views to improve the services we provide and join our Magna Online Resident Engagement group (MORE). You can comment via email or come to a meeting or do both! The choice is yours.

If needed we provide travel expenses, arrange transport and child care expenses.

Every time a topic comes up in your preferred service, we'll email you with details and you can decide if it's for you.

If the answer is YES, I'd like to know what areas of service you are interested in and how you want to be involved going forward.

Fill in the short form on our website and you're good to go: <https://www.magna.org.uk/my-community/get-involved/>

Please note physical meetings are currently suspended.

Customer Scrutiny Group

Over the last year we trialled a new scrutiny group co-created by staff and customers. The group was set up to work together to help improve our services using evidence-based feedback from our customers.

After completing training and coaching they completed their initial scrutiny topic on the drop in satisfaction in repairs and maintenance the results will be shared with you very soon.

We all agreed that the group worked well and was ready to move to the next phase. We decided the first step is to increase membership and we are working with Tpas (tenant engagement experts) to make this happen. Watch this space for more details!

Mystery shoppers

We have 48 mystery shoppers all with different skills which can be called upon when needed. This year so far some have been looking at our website, reviewing the Opendoor magazine, looking at policies that are going to Board and providing feedback on the virtual tours of void properties.

If you would like more information on what the mystery shoppers do, please contact Lisa Holmes, Customer insight Officer on 01305 216086.



Community Engagement Fund (CEF)

The CEF is your budget for improving the areas where you live. Last year we had over 50 applications for a range of improvements across Somerset and Dorset.

There is a wide range of areas we can support so apply today! Some of them were for improving areas by providing:

- Benches
- Communal equipment
- Planting
- Cycle racks

Anyone can make an application via our website www.magna.org.uk

If you'd like to know more about customer engagement, contact Neil Bliss, Resident & Community Engagement Officer, on 01984 635134 or email neil.bliss@magna.org.uk

Caring for the environment

Here at Magna, we care about our planet and its future. That's why we're working hard to supply greener, safer, healthier and better homes.

We're doing this by furthering our investment in the right research, partnerships and innovation so we are able to continue to blaze a trail in developing modern methods of construction and home maintenance.

This is why, in partnership with Dorset-based housing manufacturer, Rollalong, we are building new homes within a factory setting using modular construction.

So, why are these homes better for the environment?

- Less waste materials than homes built on a traditional site
- Less traffic to and from the construction site reduces pollution and less nuisance for neighbours
- A 'fabric first' approach to construction which means the walls, floors and roof are the things that make a home well insulated and properly ventilated without the need for extra 'kit'
- Some homes are already being built without a reliance on gas and with integral solar 'photo voltaic' panels providing energy
- Home to wildlife 'lodgers' our factory built homes include integral bat and bird boxes and bee bricks to support the local environment

As well as helping the environment, there are also great benefits for our customers as their new home will be

- Warm and efficient to heat because it has been designed with sustainability in mind
- Easy and efficient to maintain because of the quality of its factory build
- Better quality getting it right first time.

We are passionate about building new affordable homes across Dorset and Somerset, but we don't believe this should be at a detriment to the local environment.

Louise Davidson, our Development Manager, said 'We can't stress enough the importance of our environmental impact and the role we all have to keep working on new and cleaner, greener ways to build new homes. That's why we're aiming for our new homes to be delivered using off-site, modular construction and to incorporate integral wildlife measures such as bat and bird boxes. We are looking at the options for our sites to include the planting of native species, productive trees and are incorporating bee-bricks to support the local insect population. We have also just started talking to Dorset Wildlife Trust about reviewing and improving the environmental impact of our developments.'

Working with our partners, we will continue to be innovative about how we create, adapt and offer the right homes that people choose to live in and that are environmentally friendly, so we can continue our vision of creating great homes together.



We're aiming for our new homes to be delivered using off-site, modular construction and to incorporate integral wildlife measures such as bat and bird boxes.



Helping our local NHS and community

Everyone needs a place to call home, now more than ever a place to feel safe, comfortable and look after their health and well-being. That's why we are proud to be working with Somerset County Council and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust to provide short-stay accommodation for people leaving hospital across the county.

With Coronavirus putting huge pressure on NHS resources, there is an urgent need to discharge patients, and support them to continue on their road to recovery within the community. This is vital to reduce their risk of exposure to the virus in hospital, but also to free-up bed spaces for new patients who need round the clock specialist medical care.

To help, we are leasing one of our larger homes to Somerset County Council, to provide a 'Step-Down' House for people leaving hospital, who need a safe and supportive place to stay while they wait for a more permanent home.

Christine Boland, Head of Housing Services at Magna, said: "We're proud to support the NHS and to provide a home for those that need it during such a difficult time. The Government guidance on moving home rightly makes it

clear that people should only move if absolutely necessary. This presents extra challenges for people who desperately need the comfort and security of a home and puts additional pressure on them at an already difficult time. Working together with local communities and organisations we're pleased to be able to make a positive difference to people's lives."

Redeployed colleagues at Somerset County Council carried out their own 'DIY SOS' to help decorate and prepare the property, transforming it into a comfortable home, all while following social distancing guidelines.

Candy Worf, Senior Commissioning Officer for Adult Mental Health and Dementia at Somerset County Council, said: "I am immensely proud to be launching this well evidenced, essential provision. It's been an exciting and rewarding experience, working collaboratively with our health care colleagues, partners within the voluntary sector, and social housing. Our new Step-Down House will offer people a safe, recovery focused, guided transition back into their communities."

Magna Housing is large enough to influence but small enough to care; because of this we see the faces behind every front door and the genuine care and commitment for our customers has meant #TeamMagna have been able to work so swiftly with our partners, Somerset County Council and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, to make this happen.

Contact us

Not sure who to contact? Here's some useful phone numbers at Magna.

Housing services

0800 1386107

tenancy@magna.org.uk

Estate services

01305 214027

estateservices@magna.org.uk

Repairs

0800 3586025

repairs@magna.org.uk

Right to buy enquiries

01305 216008

legal@magna.org.uk

Sheltered housing & supported services

0800 9996130

admin-shss@magna.org.uk

Formal complaints

Repairs & maintenance issues 01305 214071

Housing services issues 01984 635131

customerservices@magna.org.uk

Home ownership team

01305 216153

homeownership@magna.org.uk

Get #social!

Get in touch through our social channels!

