



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS  
OF HOUSING SOLUTIONS

## Special 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition



# Streets Ahead

Autumn 2025

In this edition...

-  A message from Orla Gallagher, Chief Executive
-  We've turned 30!
-  Wing View reopens
-  Thank you for showing Pride in your Community!

-  Making homes more energy efficient
-  A word from Your SIT
-  Ready to make a difference in your community?



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## A message from Orla Gallagher, Chief Executive

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Hello!

Housing Solutions is 30 years old and we're celebrating! That's 30 years of homes, help, and community support.

This summer, I joined many of you at our party at Larchfield School, Maidenhead. It was a brilliant day full of sunshine, music, and great conversations. I met lots of residents and heard honest feedback - the good and the not-so-good and I've made sure we're following up on everything you told me.

We also asked what matters most to you.

You told us you want your home to be safe, your neighbourhood to be safe, and to feel satisfied and supported. That's exactly where we're focusing, making sure our work is safe, sustainable, and meets your needs.

In this issue of Streets Ahead, you'll find updates on:

- ✓ Making homes warmer and greener
- ✓ The opening of Wing View - a care home and day centre in Wing village, Buckinghamshire
- ✓ Support with repairs, damp and mould, and money advice

In the months ahead, there will be lots of ways to get involved, meet other residents and share ideas.

Warmest wishes,







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## We've turned 30!

Thank you to everyone who joined us on 12 July at Larchfield Primary School to celebrate our 30th birthday. With the sun blazing and temperatures over 30 degrees, it was a day full of fun and community spirit!

From Fire Service and Police demos to food trucks, ice cream, face painting, a steel band, petting zoo, football, and more - there was something for everyone. We also shared useful advice on damp and mould prevention and making safe, sustainable choices.

This celebration was only possible thanks to the amazing support of our partners, colleagues, and residents. You helped make it a day to remember.

We'll be hosting more events across our communities soon - we hope to see you there - here's to the next 30 years!







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## Wing View reopens



**Wing View - formerly Carey Lodge - has reopened in the heart of Wing village, Buckinghamshire, following a stunning refurbishment.**

**Thanks to a strong partnership between the Orders of St John Care Trust, Buckinghamshire Council, and Housing Solutions, the home has been beautifully refurbished and is once again ready to welcome residents.**

**The finish is top-notch, and the grounds look fantastic thanks to the hard work of our estates team - it's a space we can all take pride in. A big thank you to everyone involved in making this happen. It's a brilliant example of what we can achieve when we work together with our partners.**







If you're a **female** resident at Housing Solutions, this is your chance to share your experience.



**Tuesday 16 September 2025**

**Join our female resident feedback session in the way that works best for you.**



**Come in person to the Maidenhead Office from 12:30–1:30 PM and enjoy a free lunch while sharing your views.**



**Prefer online? Join us on Microsoft Teams from 5:30–6:30 PM – it's quick, easy, and flexible.**

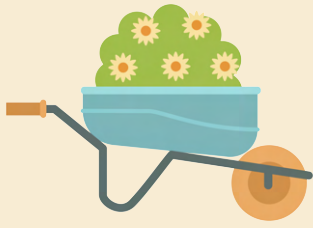


**Want to get involved? Scan the QR code below and register**



**Housing  
Solutions**





## Green and gorgeous

A big thank you to everyone who took part in this year's Pride in Your Community Awards - your efforts to brighten up our neighbourhoods haven't gone unnoticed!

### "Best kept garden" - winners

Lee Jones - 14B Ross Road.



Petter Griffin - 32 Sterling Way



### "Best Community Project" - winners

Carol Purcell- 37 Addington Gardens



Tanya Dycki & Denice Anderson 43 & 44 Greenfields



Simon Bolton - 16 Alpine



"When I received the call to say I had won ...it really lifted my spirits"





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# Making homes warmer, healthier and more energy-efficient

We're committed to providing safe, affordable, and sustainable homes - that's why we've applied for funding under the The Warm Homes - Social Housing Fund.

Over the next three years, we'll be upgrading homes with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of Band D or below to help:



Lower energy bills



Reduce carbon emissions



Improve energy efficiency



Tackle fuel poverty



## What this means for you?

If your home qualifies, you could benefit from:



Wall, roof, and floor insulation



Low-carbon heating systems



Better ventilation



Smart energy controls

## How can you help

- Provide access to your home when needed
- Share feedback to help improve the process
- Ask questions if you're unsure about anything

Need more info?

Just email [contact@housingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:contact@housingsolutions.co.uk) or call us at 01628 543101.



# A word from your Scrutiny & Improvement Team

The SIT Panel - the Scrutiny and Improvement Team – is made up of Housing Solutions residents who work to make sure every resident has access to the best services possible, and feels safe and happy at home while enjoying access to the services they need.



**And we need you!** We'd love to have some more members to join us as we continue to take the panel forward, including leaseholders, tenants and shared owners. It doesn't have to be a huge commitment, and we would love to talk to you about how we could work together. Members scrutinise policies to ensure they will work for everyone, attend regular meetings and generally hold Housing Solutions to account.

We also have a system of sub-groups, looking in depth at issues from communications and events to young residents and more. Additionally, we are represented at the HS Health and Safety meetings.

If you don't feel able to commit to joining, we'd still love to hear a little about you need and how Housing Solutions can improve. Email Nivene Powell (Resident Engagement Manager) [nivene.powell@housingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:nivene.powell@housingsolutions.co.uk) or call us on 01628 543101

## We have a new vice-chair!

Phil Wilde is now our new vice-chair. Phil replaces Alice McDonagh, who has stood down after several years in the role, for which we are extremely grateful.

## Listening and asking questions

We spend quite a bit of time listening to senior HS staff members and asking them often very probing questions, not least about how we can also secure the best possible value for money for residents.

In early August, for example, newly appointed, Head of Repairs, Grenville Hague, joined our SIT meeting, answered questions and explained in detail about his role and that of the in-house repairs team, and their priorities. Together we studied the record of performance, gave feedback and discussed areas for improvement. For example, we asked about how repairs data is gathered and why there can't be more electric vehicles on the fleet.

And we recently attended a special meeting looking at the new Consumer Standards, enforced by the Regulator of Social Housing, and which cover everything from tenant engagement to safety checks, timely repairs and damp and mould. As landlords, we have to comply with these standards.

If you'd like to know about any of these issues in more detail, get in touch with Nivene.

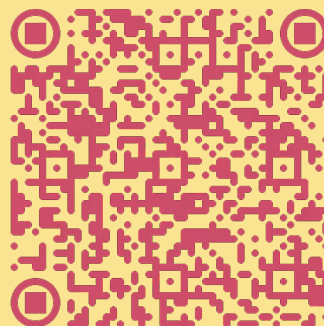
**\*Read about our new panels on the next page**







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## Make a positive difference where you live



**Nivene Powell**  
Resident  
Empowerment  
Manager

### Have your say: join our new Younger Residents Panel

Are you aged 18-30 and living in a Housing Solutions home? We want to hear from you!

We're committed to improving communication with all our residents, including our young people. Our new Younger Residents Panel is your chance to shape our services and our community - your voice matters.

The panel will meet every two months to look at Housing Solutions services specifically from a younger resident's perspective - whether it be our online services, policies or communication.

Be a part of this exciting new initiative - scan the QR code above to register.



### Your home, your say: join our Leaseholder & Shared Owner Panel

Wondering where your service charges go or how policies are decided? Now's your chance to shape the answers.

Housing Solutions invites leaseholders and shared owners to join a new resident panel - an advisory group that helps improve communication, review services, and influence decisions that affect your home.

Share your views to improve our services - scan the QR code above to register.



**Chris Martin**  
Head of Development



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# Preparing for Christmas - giving, sharing and supporting others

After a lovely summer, there's a fresh chill in the air and the first signs of autumn are here - a reminder that Christmas is just around the corner! It's a season for kindness, connection and community, and with a little planning and creativity, it's possible to make it joyful and meaningful without stretching your budget.

Here are some simple ideas to help make Christmas joyful and affordable:

## Plan ahead

Set a budget for food, gifts and activities. Focus on the essentials and try to avoid last-minute spending. Don't forget - your rent and bills still need to be paid.

## Get crafty

Homemade decorations and gifts can be fun to make and cost less. Recycled materials and a bit of imagination go a long way!

## Shop smart

Look out for supermarket deals, charity shop treasures and local swap events. You could even team up with friends to buy in bulk and save together.

## Volunteering

Food banks, shelters and community kitchens often need extra help over the holidays. Volunteering just a few hours can make a big difference.

## Check in on neighbours

Some people may be spending Christmas alone. A friendly chat or small gesture can really brighten someone's day.

## Share what you can

If you have spare food, clothes, or toys, why not donate to local charities.

## Government changes to the Winter Fuel Payment 2025

Keeping your home warm in the winter can be expensive so benefits like the Winter Fuel Payment can make all the difference. This year the payments for pensioners has been revised. Pensioners who have an annual income below £35,000 will be eligible for a payment of £200 if single or £300 per couple.

## Help with money

Our Welfare and Benefit team is here to support you. The benefits system can be complicated, if you are unsure if you are entitled to any benefits get in touch, we can complete a benefit check for you.

Email: [welfare@housingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:welfare@housingsolutions.co.uk) or call our contact centre on 01628 543101







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# Is your home matching your needs?



We understand that your housing needs may change over time. 'Rightsizing' is about finding a home that fits your lifestyle - whether that means more space for family or a smaller, easier-to-manage home. We're here to support you with advice, financial incentives, and tailored options to help you make the best choice for your future.

If your children have moved out or your household size has reduced, moving to a smaller home could bring real benefits:



Lower costs - smaller homes usually mean lower rent, council tax, and energy bills



Less upkeep - easier to manage and maintain, especially if you have mobility issues



Helping others- freeing up a larger home means another family can move out of overcrowded conditions



Access to suitable accommodation - priority access to sheltered or supported housing for over 55s



Financial incentives- we offer £500 for every bedroom you release, plus an extra £500 if you move to sheltered accommodation.

**Need more space? Try mutual exchange**

If you need a bigger home or want to move to a different area, a mutual exchange could be the answer. This is where you swap homes with another social housing resident.

We work with **HomeSwapper**, a free online service that makes it easy to find a match. Once you've found someone to swap with, contact your Housing Officer – they'll guide you through the process.

**Want to know more? Visit our website and search '[Incentives to Move Policy](#)' or speak to your Housing Officer for advice.**





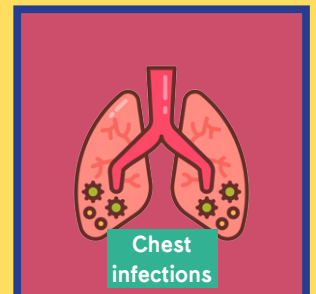
# Don't let mould move in!

Spot problems early, protect your health, and keep your home dry

## How does mould become an issue?

Condensation or humidity can create damp which may lead to mould. Mould can then impact your health if left untreated over time, or if you're already more vulnerable.

## How mould affects your health?



### ✓ Do:

- ✓ Use extractor fans
- ✓ Open trickle vents and windows regularly
- ✓ Dry clothes outside or use a vented tumble dryer
- ✓ Leave a gap behind furniture
- ✓ Wipe away condensation

### ✗ Don't:

- ✗ Dry clothes on radiators
- ✗ Block vents
- ✗ Turn off fans
- ✗ Push furniture tight against cold walls

### What we're doing

- Fixing leaks fast
- Improving ventilation (fans, trickle vents)
- Using anti-mould materials
- Installing humidity monitors where needed

## If you find mould

- For small areas, use a mould cleaner (follow safety instructions)
- Don't dry-brush - it spreads spores
- If mould keeps coming back or covers a large area, report it to us

## Report a problem

Scan the QR code at the top of this page, or call us at 01628 543101.



# Affordable home contents insurance

As landlord we don't insure the contents of your home. It's up to you to decide whether you want to insure your home contents and personal possessions.

Home contents insurance provides cover for items such as furniture, carpets, clothes, bedding, electrical items, jewellery, pictures, and ornaments, against fire, theft, water damage, storms and floods and other risks.

## Why it's worth it?

Your landlord covers the building, but not your personal items. This insurance helps you replace belongings lost to fire, theft, or accidental damage.

## Optional extras

- 1 Personal items away from home
- 2 Wheelchairs and hearing aids
- 3 Garden structures

## What's covered?



Furniture, carpets, curtains, clothes, and bedding



TVs, computers, kitchen appliances



Jewellery, ornaments, and food in your fridge/ freezer



Locks and keys (up to £500), sheds/garages (up to £3000)



Tenants liability (up to 35% of contents sum insured)

## Flexible payments

- 1 Pay-as-you-go  
Monthly or fortnightly via Direct Debit
- 2 Annual  
One upfront payment (usually cheaper)

## Good to know

- 1 No need for special locks - just a lockable front door
- 2 New for old cover (except clothing and linen)
- 3 Let Thistle know if your home is empty for 60+ days
- 4 14 days cooling off period

## How to apply

- Call 0345 450 7288
- Visit [www.thistlehome.co.uk](http://www.thistlehome.co.uk)

- Go on our website and search 'insurance' to find out more
- Email [myhome@thistleinsurance.co.uk](mailto:myhome@thistleinsurance.co.uk)



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## Moving to a new home? Things to remember



### Giving notice

Please make sure to give notice in line with your tenancy agreement and confirm your move-out date with your Housing Officer. Your rent should be fully paid up to the day you leave. Before you return your keys, we'll arrange a quick visit to check the condition of your home - this helps us prepare the property for the next resident.



### Property condition

During the inspection we'll look at:

- Walls, floors, windows and doors - to check for damage
- Fixtures and fittings, such as kitchen units and bathroom suites
- Gardens and outside spaces - these should be tidy
- The general cleanliness of the property - it should be free of rubbish



### Putting things right

You may be asked to carry out small repairs - before you leave.

- Any damage you've caused ( e.g. missing or broken doors) must be put right
- Any unauthorised alterations may need to be removed



### Next steps

We'll let you know what needs to be done before returning the keys, and explain any possible recharges for damage or items left behind.



# Before you go...



Have you signed up for **Housing Perks**? This is a great way of saving money when you shop from a wide range of retailers like Currys, Argos, TK Maxx and loads more!

Just download the **Housing Perks** app from your app store and register using your tenancy reference number, which you can find on your web portal account or tenancy documents.

# JEWSON

Have you heard about your **Jewson discount**?

Housing Solutions residents can get 15% off at Jewson's Maidenhead branch, Reform Road, SL6 8BY. Bring proof of address, a rent or service charge letter, and quote **RESD035** to claim your discount.



We collect and recycle most **large items** you might no longer need.

Mattresses	£15
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Other large items* (e.g. washing machine)	£5
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\*We do not collect fridges or freezers-please contact your local council.

**To arrange collection please call 01628 543101**

## Housing Solutions

Crown House  
Crown Square  
Waldeck Road  
Maidenhead  
Berkshire  
SL6 8BY



We love to hear when we get things right. Please let us know when you have had a positive experience of our services or a particularly good member of staff.

You can get in touch via our Contact Centre by emailing [contact@housingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:contact@housingsolutions.co.uk) or calling 01628 543101.



[contact@housingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:contact@housingsolutions.co.uk)



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