REACH MAGAZINE

AUTUMN 2020

Halton Housing



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Meet our 5 new APPRENTICES

PLUS NEW NEIGHBOURHOODS TEAM • SLOW COOKERS GIFTED • WALKABOUTS & MUCH MORE

REACH MAGAZINE

Welcome to the latest issue of our customer magazine, Reach.

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

The coronavirus pandemic came quickly, and we had to respond rapidly to make sure we kept colleagues and customers safe and maintain essential services.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic our number one priority has been your safety. We're still keeping a very close eye on government guidance and have learned from our experience of delivering essential services such as gas servicing during this time.

I'm really proud of the way our colleagues and our customers have worked together during lockdown. We have all had to adapt quickly, and have been able to change to working by telephone, email and video call to provide support and advice to our customers, all whilst delivering essential services.

The coronavirus pandemic helped bring out the best in people and communities and we are proud to have played our part in helping those in need during this uncertain period. We are also extremely proud and thankful of those customers who work for the NHS, carers and other key workers.

While we're making the changes necessary to adapt to this different world, we're determined to ensure that you, our customers, are at the heart of everything we do.

It's thanks to customers and their cooperation and support that we achieved 100% compliance for gas checks in August. We know this is a worrying time but keeping customers safe is our top priority. It's essential that gas appliances are working safely, and customers are not at risk.

We're proud to be supporting the National Housing Federation's *Homes at the Heart* campaign to put social homes at the heart of the government's plan for social and economic recovery from the coronavirus crisis.

Back in July, we restarted our **estate walkabouts** following lockdown. It's been fantastic that the number of customers taking part has increased and we look forward to meeting many more of you on a future walkabout. You can find the updated programme on page 7.

As well as providing support to customers during the pandemic, we have also been busy on a number of exciting projects. Work is underway on a new and **improved website and 'MyHalton' customer area** so you can manage your tenancy with ease. We'll be sharing more details about this in the coming months so watch this space.

We're delighted that **five new apprentices** joined us in September. Helping people back to work and creating new jobs, especially for younger people, is a national priority and we're pleased to play our part in supporting the UK's economic recovery.

New Board Member appointed



We are delighted to welcome our new Board Member Ian Hayhoe. Well known within the business community of Halton, Ian brings over 25 years' experience in the commercial and finance sectors to our Board.

We're also pleased to be sharing our **2019/20 Annual Report** with you inside this edition. The report outlines our performance in a range of key areas, including how we are keeping you safe, how we provide landlord services including day to day repairs, and how we ensure value for money.

Finally, it's important to remember that government guidance on social distancing is still in place, alongside other measures to limit the potential for coronavirus to spread in our communities. If you're in any doubt about what the latest guidance is, check www.nhs.uk.

Best wishes

Liz Haworth

Chief Executive



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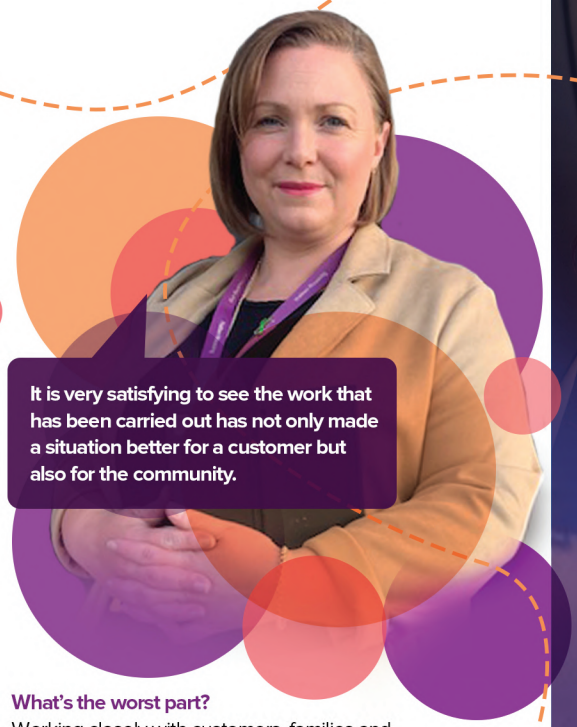
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It's our **15th** birthday in December... More info on the celebrations coming soon!

Meet Lisa

Our Neighbourhood Safety Officer



It is very satisfying to see the work that has been carried out has not only made a situation better for a customer but also for the community.

About you:
I have worked in housing for nearly 8 years. I love cooking and music, especially live performances. My past interests included Taekwondo and art.

Tell us about your job
My role involves investigating and managing serious anti-social behaviour (ASB). I liaise with other service areas within the organisation and external agencies to assist me in identifying preventative strategies to tackle and reduce the ASB within our communities and neighbourhoods.

I identify vulnerabilities and signpost/refer to support agencies to enable me to manage cases effectively.

How did you get into housing?
Like many, I fell into housing. I covered a maternity leave position within the complaints team and never looked back. When an opportunity arose for me to stay working at Halton Housing, I grabbed it with both hands. I love how no two days are the same and there's a whole host of learning and working opportunities within the sector.

What is the best part of your job?
This role has given me a more in-depth insight into the diversity and needs or our customers. Managing complex situations, which result in a successful outcome for our customer is rewarding. It is very satisfying to see the work that has been carried out has not only made a situation better for a customer but also for the community.

I also enjoy the partnership working aspect of the role. The successful outcomes that can be achieved are usually gained through working together with internal support teams and external agencies and are vital to making the role a success.

What's the worst part?
Working closely with customers, families and communities you witness the detrimental impacts ASB can have on them personally. Managing ASB can be a lengthy process and it can be disheartening to see those negative impacts on all involved when an immediate resolution is not available.

What would you change about the housing sector?
I would look to change the Right to Buy policy because of the effects it has had on the supply of social and affordable housing. There is not enough funding or time to replace properties lost let alone meet demand.

If you could be Prime Minister for the day, what would you do?
I would ensure an appropriate amount of resources were placed into rehabilitation programmes/facilities for those affected by domestic abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health and crime, for both victim and perpetrators.

Tell us a secret
Way back in the day I used to be able to do the box splits over two chairs…Oh how times have changed!

Your new Neighbourhoods Team is coming soon

Launched in response to your feedback, the team consists of 7 Neighbourhood Officers and 4 Neighbourhood Safety Officers delivering services in individual patches across the borough.

The team will provide a visible presence in your community, allowing us to get even closer to you. They will also help us build stronger relationships with you and our partners in the community and find a better balance between proactive and reactive work.

Our new Neighbourhood Officers will offer a broad range of services providing one point of contact for customers on things like tenancy management and sustainability, signposting and referring to support services, supporting our estate walkabouts and much more.

Our new Neighbourhood Safety Officers will work with customers to ensure they feel supported to take positive action to address anti-social behaviour (ASB) in our neighbourhoods and improve the overall quality of life for all residents.

We'll also be spending more time supporting and safeguarding our most vulnerable customers and their families, further improving people's lives.

Meet your new Neighbourhoods team...

Neighbourhood Officers:

Widnes

Ditton
Wendy Magee

Upton
Emma Bennett

Halton View/ Fairfield/ Farnworth/ Westbank
Jenny Loboda

Hale/Halebank/ Montgomery Estate/ Widnes Town Centre/ Lugsdale
Leanne Devlin

Kingsway/ Moor Lane/ Stewards Ave/ Runcorn Old Town
Coming soon

Runcorn

Boston Estate
Hayley McCann

Weston/Halton Village /Frodsham/Nantwich
Clare Hyland

Grange Estate
Laura Davies

Neighbourhood Safety Officers:

Boston/Frodsham/Grange Halton Village/Nantwich/Villages
Lisa Temperley

Stewards Avenue/Moor Lane Kingsway/Upton/Hale/Halebank Westbank/Runcorn Old Town
Ste Temperley

Montgomery Road Estate Ditton/Widnes Town Centre Fairfield/Farnworth Halton View
Brian Gill & Paul Norcross



Pauline Jones
Director of Customers

"We are launching our new Neighbourhoods Team in response to your feedback. We recognise that investing in neighbourhoods is about much more than the environment and to make lasting improvements we need to support local residents to improve their lives."

New fleet of vans hits the road!

With our old fleet of vans having reached the end of their life cycle, we have procured vehicles that are more ergonomic, economically viable and more environmentally friendly than their predecessors.

We have also made some improvements to van stocks, allowing us to complete more repairs right first time and improve customer experience and performance.

The new additions to the fleet have been equipped with the appropriate racking, boosting flexibility and performance, while also featuring refreshed livery, including our corporate vision of improving people's lives.

Have you seen one?



Dates 2020/21

Thank you to everyone who has joined so far – we've loved talking to you to find out what matters most to you and what we can do to improve the areas where you live.

We've got lots more coming up over the coming months so why not join us on one when we are in your area - we don't want to be on our own!

If you feel there is a particular issue in your area that you would like us to look at/deal with during the walkabout, you can speak to us face to face, whilst maintaining social distancing. Alternatively, please email **involved@haltonhousing.org** with details of the issue(s). This will help us develop a plan to address the issues and find solutions.

Widnes

- **Halton View (a), Bellhouse** - 8th October
  Starting at Green Oaks path car park - 9:50am
- **Halton View (b), Widnes -** 15th October
  Starting at Norland Street - 9:50am
- **Montgomery Estate -** 29th October
  Starting at corner of Cunningham Road/Montgomery Road - 9:50am
- **Lugsdale** - 5th November
  Starting at Margaret Court car park - 9:50am
- **Fairfield / Farnworth** - 12th November
  Starting at corner of Lancaster Road & Peelhouse Lane - 9:50am
- **Kingsway (a)** - 3rd December
  Starting at junction Henderson Road / Wavertree Avenue - 9:50am
- **Stewards Avenue** - 14th January
  Starting near entrance to King Georges Park, Milton Avenue - 9:50am
- **West Bank** - 11th February
  Starting at Catalyst Museum Car Park, Widnes - 9:50am
- **Hale Bank & Hale Village**
  25th February
  Starting at Clapgate Crescent - 9:50am
- **Lugsdale (a) / Kingsway (b)**
  11th March
  Starting at Cambridge Street - 9:50am
- **Widnes Town Centre**
  25th March
  Starting at Dean Close car park - 9:50am

Runcorn

- **Stenhills Crescent** - 22nd October
  Starting at corner of Stenhills Crescent/Picton Road - 9:50am
- **Queens Close Area** - 19th November
  Starting at Queens Close - 9:50am
- **Weston Village Area** - 17th December
  Start 1: Company's Close car park - 9:50am
  Start 2: The Common - 9:50am
- **Runcorn Town Centre** - 28th January
  Starting at Water Street outside Brunswick House - 9:50am



Estate Walkabouts

Come and talk to us!



Let's stay Connected

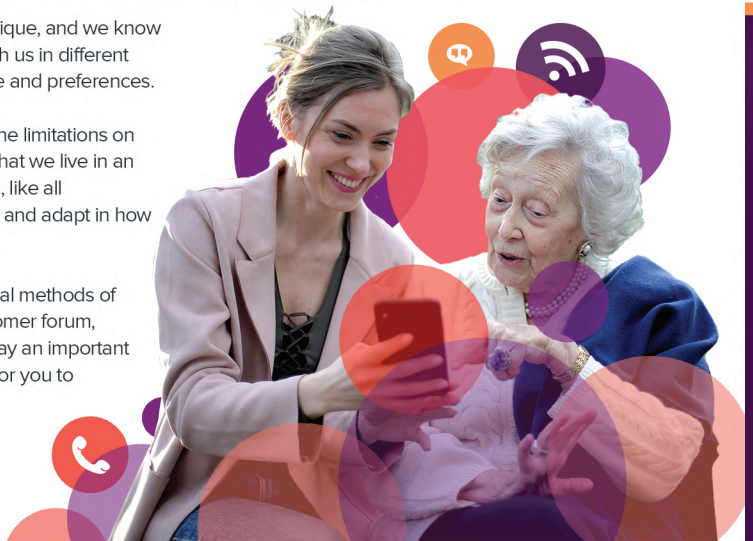
Contact us on 07932 578533

We want to keep the conversation flowing. If we can't see you face to face, we still want to stay connected with you – so if that means more open and innovative ways, then we're up for it!

Every one of our customers is unique, and we know that you may want to engage with us in different ways, depending on your lifestyle and preferences.

The coronavirus pandemic and the limitations on meeting physically, and the fact that we live in an ever-increasing digital world - we, like all organisations need to be flexible and adapt in how we connect with our customers.

As much as some of the traditional methods of engaging with you (e.g. our customer forum, scrutiny panel and groups) still play an important role, we're looking at new ways for you to effectively engage with us.



New ways of engaging

Do you do everything from your phone?
So would a customer WhatsApp group where you can share ideas work best for you?

Would a customer area on our website where we share our ideas for you to comment, be something you'd be interested in?

Would a new virtual forum work for you, one that fits around your family/work commitments and doesn't require a meeting?

Let's keep talking

tell us what you think!

Ways to get involved:

- Estate walkabouts
- Community events
- Customer Forum
- Scrutiny Panel
- Editorial Panel
- Follow us on social media



Customer Forum goes virtual

The coronavirus lockdown didn't stop our customer forum from meeting virtually using Microsoft Teams!

Our Customer Engagement Team provided support to those who needed help, with customers now utilising the software not just for meetings but to also connect with their family and friends.

We are extremely proud of our members who have adapted so quickly to this new way of working!

With meetings now taking place online for the foreseeable - you can now get involved and have your say from the comfort of your own home!

Virtual Repairs

In the same way that we're rethinking the best ways of engaging with you, we are also looking at new ways of approaching repairs.

We're exploring 'augmented reality' video calling that will allow a member of our team to be virtually present in your home. This will allow us to see repair jobs in real-time using video on a mobile device, and diagnose a repair without having to step foot inside your home.

In light of the pandemic, this may reduce the need for face-to-face customer contact and will allow us to bring the parts we need to make sure we get it right first time.

For more info visit:
haltonhousing.org/innovation



100 Slow Cooker kits gifted during summer to support families



As part of our commitment to improving people's lives, we gifted 100 slow cooker kits during August to customers with school age children who receive funded school meals during term time.

The kits, funded by Edsential, contained a slow cooker, an information guide and ingredients for two meals.

The initiative will help families have a sustainable option to make healthy and nutritious meals, especially during the school holidays when time can be limited.

Cheryl McCabe, Corporate Social Responsibility Officer said: "It's vital that we support the health and wellbeing of our customers. Initiatives like this are a great example of how we are bringing our corporate vision of improving people's lives to life. Practical support is very important during these unprecedented times, and these kits will make a real difference to families across the borough."

Slow cookers are simple to use, require little food preparation time, are cost-effective to run and make nutritious food.



HelpingHands

Your Community Resource Bank





Did you know that every year Halton Housing allocates hundreds of pounds worth of funding, materials and resources to help local projects and initiatives across the borough, through our Helping Hands initiative?

We know that now more than ever, there will be groups and community projects that could really benefit from the skills and resources available through Helping Hands. That's why we've just made even more funds available so we can help support what's important to our community at a time when it's most needed.

So, what are you waiting for?
It's really easy to apply, simply email helpinghands@haltonhousing.org for an application form and we'll take it from there. To find out more information about Helping Hands, and the application criteria, visit haltonhousing.org/helpinghands

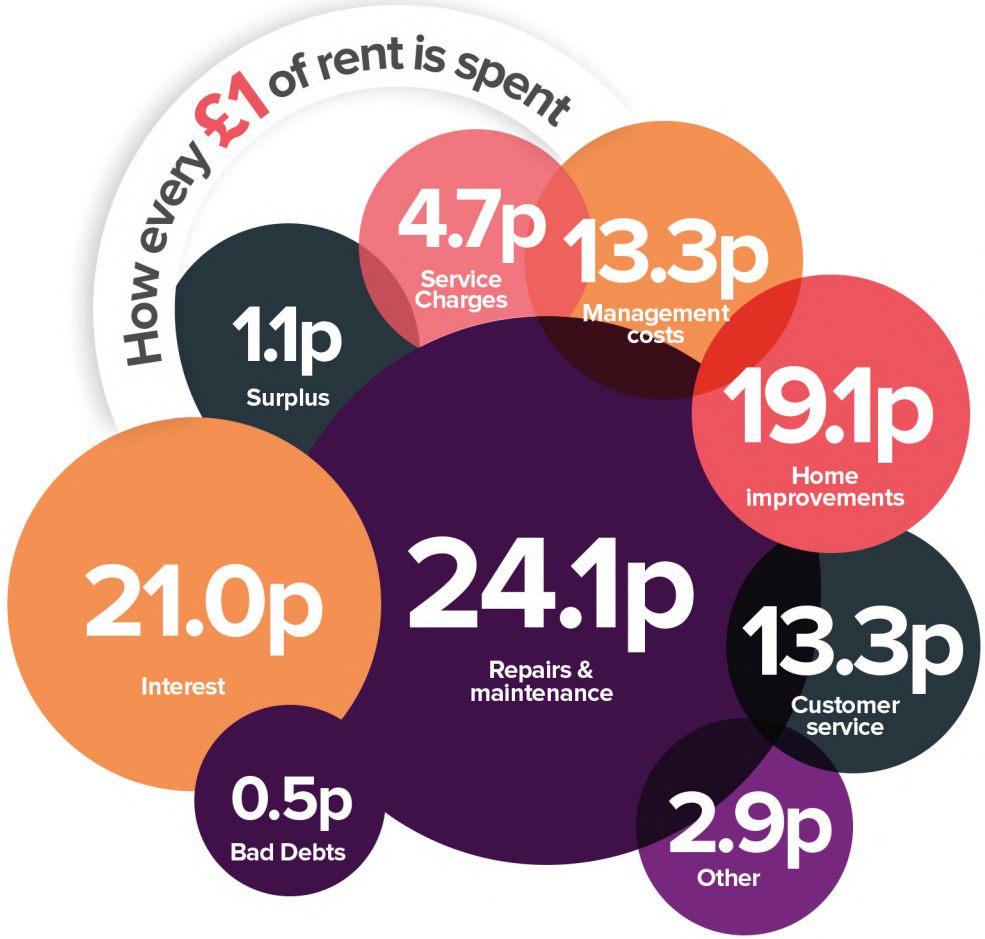
Annual Report 2019/20

Improving people's lives

Welcome to our 2019/20 Annual Report.

As your landlord we are accountable to you for how we spend your rent and how we perform as an organisation. The next 4 pages outlines our performance in key areas against our corporate objectives in 'Our Direction - OD3'. This covers how we deal with customers, how we maintain and repair our homes, and how we deliver value for money.

We are committed to ensuring that our services are easy to use and we are working on innovative ways to make these more accessible. We are increasing our investment and visibility in neighbourhoods and importantly we are continuing to build more homes to meet a range of needs.



All performance data within this annual report is from 1st April 2019 - 31st March 2020

Places to be Proud of



We continue to invest in our existing homes to make sure they are fit for the future and that we minimise our environmental impact. Work has commenced on a project to improve efficiency in planning and delivering our repairs service in 2020/21.

Our work with partners in the borough continues to tackle any challenges in our neighbourhoods. Our estate walkabouts have increased our visibility and allowed you to tell us what you'd like us to work on as your landlord.

ASB & Tenancy Enforcement Cases:	1,320
Joint police raids:	7
Knife sweeps supported:	34
Estate walkabouts:	24
Responsive Repairs completed:	23,970
Planned maintenance spend:	£6.3m
Repairs spend:	£7.1m
Repairs completed right first time:	83.81%

The Big 6

Keeping our customers safe

- **Gas:** **99.89%** of properties had an up to date certificate at the end of March 2020
- **Fire:** **100%** of communal areas have a fire risk assessment (FRA)
- **Electrical:** **99.9%** of properties had an electrical condition survey that met our five year requirement.
- **Water Hygiene:** **100%** of planned legionella inspections were completed.
- **Asbestos:** **61.95%** of applicable homes had an asbestos survey. **100%** of communal areas had an asbestos survey.
- **Lifts:** **100%** of lifts are in working order and regularly maintained.

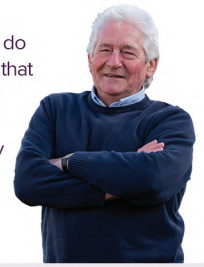
Improvement works completed in your homes

- Rewires: 197
- Doors*: 1,130
- Bathrooms: 67
- Boilers: 288
- Kitchens: 27
- Roofs: 126
- Roof lines: 6
- Heating/ Wet Systems: 187
- Emergency Lighting: 7

*Includes front, rear, side, patio and fire doors

Customer Focus

Customers are at the heart of everything we do and we are committed to listening to you so that we can improve our services. We are proud to report a reduction in the number of complaints in 2019/20 but we are continually striving to further improve on this.



Number of calls answered:	22,571 ⇧	Number of compliments:	172 ⇩
Likely/very likely to recommend us:	81.5% ⇩	Number of complaints:	223 ⇩

We employ over **300** talented people who come together to deliver our services. As an organisation we champion equality, diversity and inclusion and all our staff are committed to displaying our company behaviours. We continue to show a positive pay gap for the fourth year running; with female employees receiving an average (mean) salary **5.7 %** more than male counterparts. The Executive Team is **66%** female led with the CEO post also held by a female. The trade section of the business however is unrepresented by women and is an area of opportunity for us.



Gender pay gap: 5.7%	Number of employees: 318	Colleague satisfaction: 87%
Colleague retention: 91.1%	Colleague engagement: 67.7%	Average days lost through sickness absence: 9.32 Days

Healthy Organisation

Growth & Diversification

We have an ambitious growth and development programme for building new homes for rent, sale and shared ownership. **56** homes were completed in **19/20** and with a very healthy pipeline, we have recently entered into contract on a number of new developments including a scheme for **100** new homes for independent living in Runcorn.

*OSUK (Open Door) is the commercial subsidiary of Halton Housing. The financial returns from which are reinvested back in to Halton Housing.

New Homes Built:	56	Return on Investment from our Subsidiary, OSUK*:	5.23%
Pipeline of New Homes to be built:	78	Unsold Homes:	12



Brand & Reputation

It's important to us that you can access the information you need relating to your tenancy, quickly and easily. Transactions on our digital channels have remained high, and to further improve this, we're launching a new portal, an updated app and a brand new website later this year.

% of customers registered on the app:	63.1%	% of repairs raised online:	26%
Average volume of Live Chat conversations:	547 Per Month	% of rent balance checks online:	99%
% of customer-led transactions online:	75.3%	Average monthly volume of payments made online:	1,871

Financially Viable & Well Governed

Our financial performance remained strong in 19/20. We saw an increase in the number of Universal Credit claims and an improved performance in arrears.

We met all of the covenant requirements for our four funders.



Current arrears: £1.13m

Loan covenant compliance interest cover: 139%

Average weekly rent £91.65

Liquidity: 20 Months

Net debt per unit: £18.4k

Investment* in our subsidiary, OSUK: £26.3m

*Investment in our subsidiary, OSUK to invest in homes for market rent and to build homes for sale.

Our Financial Performance

Turnover: £35,629,000

Surplus: **£2,662,000**

Number of Homes: **7046**

Regulator rating: **V1/G1**

Operating costs: **£28,525,000**

Managing your money during coronavirus.



We know that the uncertainty around coronavirus has had a huge impact on people's finances, employment and access to support services.

Our expert Welfare Benefits and Money Advice advisors are here to help you. Here are some top tips for managing your money during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Check your benefits

It's important to check you're getting all the state benefits you're entitled to. We understand it can feel overwhelming to navigate the benefits system, especially if this is the first time you have needed to make a claim.

You can get information on the benefits you can claim to support you and your family during periods of low income by visiting the government website at www.gov.uk/browse/benefits. Here you can complete a benefits check and begin your applications online, including an advancement of Universal Credit payment to help with immediate bills.

Review your spending

The first step in taking control of your finances is understanding when and where you are spending your money. Take a day to review all your spending and bills, go over your bank statements and make a list of all essential and non-essential payments. Make sure you check for competitive rates with your utility and broadband suppliers by using price comparison websites such as Uswitch.

Talk to your creditors, bank and utility providers

Financial providers want to help so it's always worth speaking to your bank or creditors and asking them about relevant schemes to help.

If you are experiencing a change in your circumstances, contact your utility providers, bank and/or creditors and update them on your situation. Some have payment holidays and other schemes to help during periods of financial difficulty.

Keep up to date with Government guidance

The government has made several changes to both the welfare benefits system and how creditors take action to enforce debts and arrears. These changes have been made to support individuals and families who are experiencing difficulty due to coronavirus. You can keep up to date with all of these changes by checking the latest government advice at www.gov.uk/coronavirus/worker-support

Speak to us for free welfare benefits, money and debt advice

We're here to help you with free money and debt advice. If you would like further support and guidance on any of these topics, or you find that you have fallen behind with your creditors, please contact us for impartial advice from our Welfare Benefits and Money Advice experts.
Call us on 07801 548205 or email welfare@haltonhousing.org and a member of our team will be happy to help.



Lockdown love affair for gardening!

Jacqui from Halebank transformed the space outside her home which her neighbours now enjoy!

With everybody staying at home during the lockdown, we looked at ways to occupy our time and with the weather being so favourable in March and April, many of us spent a lot of our time in any outside space we have.

After being placed on furlough, Jacqui decided to spring into action and spruce up the green space outside her apartment – starting on her 50th birthday!

Jacqui explains: "The raised beds were overgrown, it was a mess and really dull looking, but I've never had the time or money before. So, when I was furloughed I had the time, and I started it on my 50th birthday because I was upset I wasn't going away for it as planned, so all my birthday money got spent on plants, tools, and a garden box to keep things in."

The space now has an abundance of bedding plants and herbs growing, offering Jacqui and neighbours a space to socialise and sit when the weather permits.

Jacqui says: "It's nice seeing it get used. I hadn't seen my nephews for 3 months during lockdown, so when I was allowed to see them again, I spent the time in the back with them. I have been able to invite my friends and family round without them having to come into the flat, adhering to social distancing guidelines."

The lockdown period was tough for everyone, but even harder for those with limited space within their home, so any type of green space became a haven for many. Spending time tending to the space has allowed Jacqui to forge new friendships with her neighbours and escape reality.

Jacqui says: "When I first started it, it was to pass the time, then when things started to grow it felt great, so this is when the addiction started, no matter what has happened during the day, when I am out there pottering around, getting nettles and weeds up, you seem to forget your troubles. It really is a feel-good hobby. I only knew my direct neighbour by name but the rest was just a polite hello, but now there is 4 flats out of the 6 that use it and we have all built a friendship.

The garden is now my escape from reality. I actually get a bit peeved when I open my curtains of a morning and it's raining, it's good because I haven't got to go out watering, but I also can't get out to potter. I spend a lot of time just looking at it, amazed what I have done. Google must be sick of me asking it questions about plants!".

Now back at work, Jacqui is spending time before and after work and during the weekends gardening and using the space recreationally. "I sit out now every morning and as soon as I'm home from work, sometimes I go out and have a hot choc out there of a night before I go to bed, it's lovely sitting there when all my solar lights are on", says Jacqui.

We encourage all customers to take pride in their outdoor spaces. We have been so impressed by the work Jacqui and her neighbours have achieved. We're looking forward to working with them and other customers to further improve the space and provide assistance.

Garden Competition 2020 Winners

For those lucky enough to have access to a garden, the lovely weather during lockdown has given us the opportunity to spend more time in them, with many of us springing into action to spruce up our green space and create an outdoor haven.

Thanks to everyone who entered and well done to our winners. Next year we want even more customers to get involved and show off your beautiful blooms in the garden!



All new MyHalton Customer Area

Coming early 2021!

Your one-stop-shop for managing your tenancy,

- Anywhere
- Any time
- Any device



- Report and manage repairs and see repair history
- Check your balance and pay rent
- Update your details
- News and events in your community
- Help managing your money

And much more!



All new Website

Launching spring 2021!

If your neighbourhood is blighted by the dangerous, anti-social and illegal use of off-road bikes we encourage you to speak out anonymously to help police take them off the streets.



Let's put the brakes on

Nuisance bikes



Anyone with any information in relation to the illegal or anti-social use of motorbikes is urged to contact Cheshire Police on 101. In an emergency dial 999.

Asbestos

Don't worry. Follow this advice

When asbestos is in good condition and not damaged it is not a danger. Once disturbed it may become airborne and possibly be a risk to health.

Banned in 1999, it was used extensively in many products including floor tiles, textured walls/ceilings, firebreaks, flue pipes and cement roof sheets.

If your home contains asbestos, then you need to take extra care when carrying out DIY works.

It is important not to drill, cut, sand, or scrape any material that may contain asbestos.

Asbestos must only be removed, repaired, or worked on by our appointed asbestos removal contractor, they are suitably trained and licensed to do so.

If your home has not had an asbestos survey carried out, then this can be arranged so that any asbestos containing materials can be identified and allow Halton Housing to manage them safely and accordingly.

If you are ever unsure about any materials in your home, please call us on 0303 333 0101.



Our response to coronavirus

Our colleagues worked hard to maintain essential services and support our customers who needed us most during the coronavirus lockdown, bringing our vision of improving people's lives to life.

Back in March, the government asked those who were clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus to 'shield', meaning they were advised not to go outdoors, even for shopping or exercise.

With the lockdown, this meant some people were left with no support network to help with things like food shopping or collecting prescriptions.

Halton Housing stepped up to help provide support, contacting everyone classed as vulnerable and identify what help they needed and to put this in place.

We redeployed colleagues to make calls and deliver food parcels, arrangements were also put in place with local volunteers and with Cheshire Fire and Rescue/Cheshire Police to deliver prescriptions and provide other basic support.

The coronavirus crisis helped bring out the best in people and communities and we are proud to play our part in helping those in need during this uncertain period.

For the latest information on steps we are taking to keep customers safe visit
www.haltonhousing.org/coronavirus

Our response in numbers

- Number of welfare calls: **2,284**
- Number of calls to those in supported housing: **6,894**
- Instances of providing practical support with food shopping, medication, laundry and much more: **761**
- Staff redeployed to support customers: **5**
- Food parcels delivered to our most vulnerable and in need customers: **125**
- Donated to Halton Food banks: **£5k**
- Homes offered to Halton Borough Council's homeless team: **99**
- Number of daily emergency repairs dealt with: **847**
- ASB calls made and received: **3,290**
- Police contacts made and received (emails, phone calls etc): **1,106**



Welcome to our 5 new Apprentices!

Following our highly successful apprenticeship recruitment campaign in the summer, we are delighted to welcome five new apprentices, Ben, Maciej, Daniel, Rhys and Jamie.

The apprentices will learn the skills needed for specific roles by shadowing colleagues and gaining hands-on experience 'on the job'. At the same time, they will also be studying for an academic qualification at Riverside College along the way in their relevant discipline.

The apprenticeships vary in duration from 16 months to 42 months dependent on the specialism, with the aim being that they lead to permanent roles at Halton Housing.

The new opportunities have been possible thanks to efficiency savings which have been reinvested in the futures of young people in Halton in these challenging times, further underpinning our corporate vision of improving people's lives.

Helping people back to work and creating new jobs, especially for younger people, is a national priority and Halton Housing is pleased to play our part in supporting the UK's economic recovery.

The apprentices were appointed following a rigorous recruitment process supported by Riverside College which saw over 265 people applying for the positions.



Maciej, 19

ICT Apprentice

Maciej, from Runcorn has worked in a number of customer service positions prior to starting his apprenticeship. Maciej is looking forward to supporting the ICT Team and contributing to new programmes and projects.



Daniel, 23

Joinery Apprentice

Daniel, from Widnes joins us from a data company in Warrington. Prior to this he worked for BT as a sales advisor. A season ticket holder at Liverpool, Daniel is looking forward to starting his career in joinery and getting hands on in the role.



Rhys, 17

Joinery Apprentice

Rhys, from Runcorn is not new to joinery having completed his level 1 in joinery at Riverside College. Rhys is looking forward to gaining experience on the job and applying skills and knowledge learnt at college and putting them into practice.



Jamie, 19

Electrical Apprentice

Jamie, from Widnes recently completed his level 2 in electrical installation at Riverside College while working at Wilkinsons part-time prior to joining Halton Housing. Jamie is looking forward to shadowing one of our qualified electricians working in customers' homes and gaining experience.



Ben, 18

Business Admin Apprentice

Ben, from Whiston was a student at Carmel College, whilst working part-time at McDonalds. Ben will be working with the Open Door (OSUK) team, our commercial subsidiary. Ben is looking forward to starting his career in business and applying the skills and knowledge he developed at college.

Halton Housing Learning and Development Officer, Karen Lopez said:
"As one of the borough's largest employers, providing local employment and improving people's lives, we place immense value in investing in people. Apprentices make a vital contribution to our business and these new apprenticeship opportunities will make a real difference and help launch exciting careers. We are looking forward to seeing our latest apprentices develop and grow into their roles."

FIRE SAFETY TOP TIPS

We invest heavily in safety precautions and fire preventative measures to help protect our customers from the risk of fire as best we can. There are many ways you can also help to keep you and your home safe. Here are a few simple fire safety tips:

Plan ahead:

- Create an emergency evacuation plan
- Make sure everyone living in the house knows where keys are
- Keep all escape routes clear and show your family your escape route
- Make sure everyone can open doors
- Have a second option escape route in case the first is blocked
- If any changes are made to your home, review your evacuation plan

In the event of a fire:

- Stay calm and act quickly – tell everyone to get out
- Don't waste time trying to take valuables with you
- Close all doors behind you to contain the fire

If your escape route is blocked:

- Call 999 immediately!
- Stay in a room far away from the fire and wait for the fire service to arrive
- If you can't get to a phone, open a window and shout for help and put towels or bedding around the bottom of the door to reduce the smoke getting in

Remember, never try and tackle a fire yourself. If a fire starts in your home, call 999!

Fire prevention tips:

- Regularly (we advise once a month) test your fire alarm is still working
- Never smoke in bed
- Always keep a close eye on your cooking – especially if you use a chip pan
- Keep all appliances and combustible materials such as tea towels and kitchen role away from the cooker when lit
- Never leave burning candles unattended and make sure they are in a suitable holder
- Don't overload electrical extension leads/adapters



Remember, remember 5th November. Have fun, stay safe & follow the firework code

Contact us

Live Chat | www.haltonhousing.org | talktous@haltonhousing.org

0303 333 0101

All information correct at the time of going to print in September 2020. If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact **communications@haltonhousing.org**

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