

# REACH

AUTUMN  
2021

MAGAZINE



Halton  
Housing



See  
Page 4

A lift to happiness  
& independence for

# CAMERON

PLUS - ANNUAL REPORT • NEW RECEPTION AT WATERFRONT POINT • DEVELOPMENT UPDATE



# REACH

## MAGAZINE

### Hello and welcome to the Autumn 2021 edition of Reach magazine!

I hope you and your families are well as we continue to stay safe and work together to help reduce the spread of coronavirus. As we enter the winter months it is important that we continue to be alert to the risks of Covid-19 and we will continue to prioritise the safety of our customers and our colleagues during this time.

It's been a busy few months for us at Halton Housing. In May, we celebrated a decade of building new homes. This development milestone has seen us deliver almost 1,000 much-needed homes, with a commitment to building a further 1,000 by 2024.

Our Destination Ditton programme has been a great success. Working alongside our partners we have created lasting improvements, brought communities together, and created opportunities for customers in Ditton. We will continue to roll out our neighbourhood plans, with Halton Lodge being our next priority area.

In June, we welcomed our first intake of Kickstart recruits. The Kickstart Scheme, part of the government's Plan for Jobs, aims to create hundreds of thousands of job placements for 16 to 24 year-olds on

Universal Credit, who are at risk of long-term unemployment. All three of our Kickstart recruits are settling well into their roles and are enjoying an opportunity to gain valuable work experience and earn a salary during these difficult times.

Last month, we celebrated the doors opening to our brand-new customer and visitor reception area at Waterfront Point. We have listened to your feedback and created a reception area that's welcoming, giving you the opportunity to come and talk to us face to face if you need to. Find out more on page 8.

We've also welcomed four new members to our Board. Jennifer Halliday and Leigh Wylie are two highly experienced accountants. Meanwhile, Halton Borough Council Councillor's Marie Wright and Norman Plumpton-Walsh joined us as new local authority nominees.

In this issue you can also find our 2020/21 Annual Report. The report outlines how we are performing in key areas such as safety and compliance and how we ensure value for money.

Finally, this is the fourth edition of our new look Reach since we relaunched in spring 2020. Do get in touch with our Communications Team if you have any feedback or have an idea for an article at [communications@haltonhousing.co.uk](mailto:communications@haltonhousing.co.uk).

*Liz Haworth*

Chief Executive



Front cover and contents page pictures by David Jones Photography

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## Contact us



Live Chat (10am - 5pm)



[www.haltonhousing.co.uk](http://www.haltonhousing.co.uk)



[talktous@haltonhousing.co.uk](mailto:talktous@haltonhousing.co.uk)



0303 333 0101

All information correct at the time of going to print in October 2021. If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact [communications@haltonhousing.co.uk](mailto:communications@haltonhousing.co.uk).



# A lift to happiness & independence for Cameron



Cameron's mum, Leanne said:

*"Cameron is a completely different person; his mood is up, and he is a lot happier. We're really grateful for the lift, it means that he will be able to live more independently, and enjoy improved conditions. It has completely transformed our family's life. He even brings his washing and dishes down now!"*

Thanks to the installation of the lift, Cameron is spending a lot more time downstairs with his family.

James Clark, Contracts Manager at Halton Housing said:

*"We are committed to improving people's lives and making a lasting difference to the day-to-day lives of our customers by supporting them to live independently and making the best use of the facilities within their home. I am sure this property adaptation will go a long way to improve Cameron's quality of life."*

If you or someone living with you has a disability or is struggling to live independently, we may be able to help you adapt your home to make everyday tasks easier. We work in partnership with Halton Borough Council's Occupational Therapy Team and Social Services to find solutions that are appropriate to the person and to the property. Find out more about aids and adaptations at [www.haltonhousing.co.uk](http://www.haltonhousing.co.uk).

A teenager's life has been "transformed" thanks to the installation of a through floor lift in his home.

16-year-old Cameron suffers multicentric carpotarsal osteolysis syndrome - an extremely rare condition. Cameron is the only known person in the UK to suffer from the condition which results in the progressive loss of some of the bones in his hands and feet.

Cameron, who lives in Halton View, had to crawl up the stairs on his bottom following surgery on his knees, with his parents often carrying him up – which became unfeasible and affected his quality of life.

The past 18-months have been particularly difficult for Cameron as he spent most of his days in his bedroom due to the struggle of the stairs, gradually leaving him more depressed and fed-up.

So, in a bid to combat his daily struggles, a purpose-built through floor lift has been installed.

The compactly designed lift cuts through the ceiling between the kitchen downstairs and Cameron's room directly above, offering him the opportunity to live more independently.



# UC Universal Credit

So, the £20pw Covid uplift within Universal Credit has ended ... now what?

If you're claiming Universal Credit, you may have already received a reduced payment from October due to the end of the £20pw 'uplift' that was introduced in response to Coronavirus.

We understand that the removal of this Covid uplift, alongside the increasing gas prices and pressure to stock up for Christmas may impact your budget. We are here to offer you support, should you need it, through our Welfare Benefit & Money Advice team.

Last year we maximised customers' income by over £2m – helping them receive Personal Independence Payment; challenging additional bedroom tax exemptions and helping secure hundreds of Council Tax reductions and Discretionary Housing Payments, with an average gain of £2,816 per annum per customer.

## The team offers the following support:

- Completing quick benefit checks to identify benefits you could be entitled to.
- Sourcing the best deals for gas and electric costs.
- Supporting you to challenge deductions taken from your Universal Credit that are causing hardship.
- If you do have rent arrears or other debt worries, they can help get you back on track, signposting to support services who can help with one off costs and expenses.
- Any debts you are repaying may need to be reviewed due to the drop in income and they can help refer you to an agency to find a solution to any problem debts.

## Get in touch

On our customer App select 'Rent – Request Benefits or Money Advice', call the Welfare Benefits and Money Advice Team on **0151 510 5024** or email [welfare@haltonhousing.co.uk](mailto:welfare@haltonhousing.co.uk).

# Customer Charges Explained



As a landlord, we are responsible for carrying out essential maintenance and repairs to your home.

But, if you live in one of our homes, there may be occasions when we need to charge you in part, or in full for services or repairs that we have carried out in your home. These are called 'customer charges'.

Where the charges are passed on to a customer, in most circumstances, these will relate to works for which the customer is contractually responsible such as replacing electric fuses, light bulbs, sink & bath plugs, lost keys, and batteries. In some circumstances we may need to charge for works arising from negligent behaviour or deliberate misuse.

It is important that you are familiar with our customer charges policy and what is covered under your tenancy agreement, and when you may be charged for repairs carried out in your home. This will help avoid any unexpected surprises if you do need to call us out.

We will always advise you of the charges in advance of the works being carried out and will request that a payment is made to allow us to carry out the work.

We do recognise that every customer and their situation is unique and, as a responsible landlord, we will always carefully consider the details of each repair case before recharging a customer – for example, we would not charge a customer with dementia who has locked themselves out of their home and needs our help to get back into the property.

We will always work with our vulnerable customers to ensure that they are safe and secure in their home.

Our customer services policy can be viewed on our website [www.haltonhousing.co.uk/about-us/corporate-documents/our-policies](http://www.haltonhousing.co.uk/about-us/corporate-documents/our-policies) or through your online customer account 'MyHaltonHome'. If you need a printed copy of the policy, your Tenancy Support Officer can arrange this for you.



We regularly hold estate walkabouts in Widnes and Runcorn where colleagues from across the organisation (alongside partners like the police and the council) will be in your area to meet with you, and talk about issues affecting your home or neighbourhood.

Come and talk to us - we want to hear from you and make any improvements we can.

**All walkabouts start at 9:50am.**

For full details of the roads and streets our walkabouts will cover visit [www.haltonhousing.co.uk/get-involved/events](http://www.haltonhousing.co.uk/get-involved/events).



## Estate Walkabouts

TELL US ABOUT YOUR AREA ON AN ESTATE WALKABOUT

**Widnes**  
Lugsdale (B)  
4th November  
Starting from Margaret Court

**Fairfield / Farnworth/ Peelhouse Lane**  
18th November  
Starting from corner of Lancaster Road and Peelhouse Lane

**Kingsway (B)**  
16th December  
Starting from Junction of Henderson Road and Wavertree Avenue

**Runcorn**  
Queens Close Area  
2nd December  
Starting from Queens Close

**Weston Village / Halton Village**  
6th January 2022  
1st meet at Company's Close car park  
2nd meet at the Common

**Runcorn Town Centre**  
3rd February  
Starting from outside Brunswick House





Welcome  
Waterfront

Reception  
opening times:  
Monday - Friday  
9am - 5pm

# New reception at Waterfront Point welcomes its first customers and visitors

The doors to our brand-new customer and visitor reception area at Waterfront Point have officially opened.

The new area has been designed to create a bright, airy, and open plan space offering a more welcoming environment for visitors and customers to our head office.

Customers and visitors can take advantage of comfortable seating and free WiFi. Private interview rooms are also available to discuss matters privately.

A member of our Customer Service Team will be on hand during the opening hours to deal with general enquiries and advice.

Our new reception is part of our ongoing commitment to listening to customers and acting on feedback so that we can improve customer experience and how satisfied you feel with us.

During our customer research, as well as wanting dedicated Neighbourhood officers in your area (see page 26), you told us you wanted to see a reception area at our head office with someone to talk to in person when you needed them. Whether it be dropping off keys, asking a tenancy related question, or speaking to one of our antisocial behaviour team, you felt this was really important.

Hopefully you'll agree, it is a fantastic space for everyone!

If you have been to see us at Waterfront Point recently, let us know what you think. Send an email to [communications@haltonhousing.co.uk](mailto:communications@haltonhousing.co.uk), we'd love to hear from you.



# Ridsdale residents' delight following rejuvenation of communal space

Ridsdale in Ditton, Widnes has received some much-needed rejuvenation as part of our Destination Ditton programme.

The communal space outside homes was previously overgrown with trees, weeds, bushes, moss and discoloured pathways.

As part of Destination Ditton, local Widnes based contractor, ACS has carried out a transformation of the space. This has included a full jet wash of pathways and walls, overgrown hedges and trees cut back, along with the removal of fly tipping, much to the delight of residents.

**Halton Housing Social Impact and Engagement Manager, Cheryl McCabe said:** "We are really pleased to see the area once again looking clean and fresh."

A special thank you to everyone who has been involved in making this project a success."

**Ridsdale resident Helen said:**

*"It's improved the Ridsdale area. Before it was a mess and now it's brilliant. All the paths have been jet washed, all the alleyways have been cleared, trees cut back, it's just a big improvement. Thank you very much."*

Not stopping there, we'll be returning to Ridsdale to paint the metal fencing around the planting beds.

Destination Ditton is the first in a series of neighbourhood -focussed programmes, aiming to create lasting improvements in our neighbourhoods, bringing communities together and creating opportunities for customers in Ditton.



Our annual Garden Competition has yet again failed to disappoint by creating another beautiful selection of gardens across the borough that would give the Chelsea Flower Show a run for its money! From colourful potted plants to blossoming patches, features spaces and pockets of fun, it is wonderful to see what our customers make of their outside space.

Mr & Mrs Cocklin from Ditton, Widnes have been crowned this year's green fingers with an outstanding entry of their beautiful garden. Brunswick House took the communal garden top spot with their stunning entry – residents should be very proud of the finished garden!

Well done and thank you to all customers who took part in this year's competition which received a high number of entries!

## Garden Competition 2021 Winners



# LIVE IN A FLAT? CHECK YOUR ENTRANCE DOOR IS FIRE SAFE

It's as easy as 1-2-3



**1** Check you have a self-closing device and it is working. The door should close firmly onto the latch without sticking to the floor or the frame.



**2** Check fire strips (usually a plastic strip with a fuzzy brush) are around the top and sides of the door or frame. Check they're intact with no signs of damage.



**3** Check your door fully shuts into the frame and has no damage or holes. Open it six inches and make sure it can fully self-close.

Fire doors help create a barrier from fire and smoke and prevent it from travelling around a building, keeping the damage to a small area and allowing for evacuation and safe access for the emergency services. If your door does not pass all three checks, call us today to report it.

**We will check your door periodically - please allow us access to perform these safety-critical inspections.**

- Fire doors must be kept closed and not propped open
- Please do not paint your door as they are pre-finished, and painting isn't required
- Please do not put holes in the doors to hang festive decorations or doorbells
- Please do not install additional locks and handles as the doors are secure by design

**IF SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT, CONTACT US STRAIGHT AWAY ON 0303 333 0101.**



# Have you booked a repair online yet?

Earlier this year we launched our fully refreshed digital platforms, with a brand-new website [haltonhousing.co.uk](http://haltonhousing.co.uk) and our app and customer portal **MyHaltonHome** being given a full makeover and added functionality.

As part of our programme to fully revamp and refresh our digital platforms one key area we've improved to make your life easier is booking a repair through 'Active Repairs' which can be done via your online tenancy **'MyHaltonHome'**.

Thanks to 'Active Repairs' the process for booking a repair online is now even easier.

## Key benefits include:

1. Ability to book a repairs appointment at a day and time to suit you.
2. Increased list of repair categories and types of repairs to select from - ensuring the job can be completed right first time.
3. Improved technology for a more seamless experience.
4. A range of self-help videos to complete minor fixes at home.
5. Signposting to other services which might help you
6. Clearer information about yours and our responsibilities.

## Have you registered on **MyHaltonHome** yet?

If you're a customer and haven't registered yet on either **MyHaltonHome** or our customer app, what are you waiting for? Get online today - there's never been a better time to go digital with us!

It's not just the improved repairs features that you can enjoy - but a range of services to manage your tenancy online from paying your rent, setting up a direct debit, reporting anti-social behaviour, seeing what's going on in your community and much more!



- Anywhere
- Any time
- Any device



## Three young People get a **KICKSTART**

Earlier this year we welcomed our first intake of Kickstart recruits.

The Kickstart Scheme, part of the government's Plan for Jobs, aims to create hundreds of thousands of job placements for 16 to 24 year-olds on Universal Credit, who are at risk of long-term unemployment.

We have welcomed three recruits who will embark on placements across the organisation which are designed to give them the opportunity to build their skills, confidence, and gain experience with the aim of improving their chances of finding long-term work.

The recruits will undertake a 25 hour a week work placement over six months whilst being paid.

Each Kickstart Scheme placement will involve a core curriculum of career-based training, including behaviour and professional competency development, as well as technical, on the job experience.

We're working with Power in Partnership (PIP) who are providing initial training for the recruits prior to them joining, whilst our learning and development team will provide workshops and sessions on job application interview skills and housing.

We've already had success with one of our Kickstarters finding full-time employment as a "Shunter" with a local haulage company. It's his dream job and will lead to him gaining his HGV license.



## New board members take up post

We recently welcomed Jennifer Halliday and Leigh Wylie, two highly experienced finance professionals to our Board.

Their skills and experience, particularly from outside of the sector will further strengthen our governance and financial foundations whilst bringing a fresh perspective to decision making.

Meanwhile, we have also welcomed two new local authority Board members. Halton Borough Council (HBC) Councillors Marie Wright and Norman Plumpton-Walsh were appointed as local authority Board Members at our Board meeting in September.

Marie and Norman replace outgoing local authority nominees Mike Fry and Mark Dennett at the conclusion of their tenure. We would like to thank Mike and Mark for their dedication and enthusiasm during their time on the Board.



Jennifer Halliday



Leigh Wylie



Marie Wright



Norman Plumpton-Walsh

# 2020/21 ANNUAL REPORT

## Welcome to our 2020/21 Annual Report.

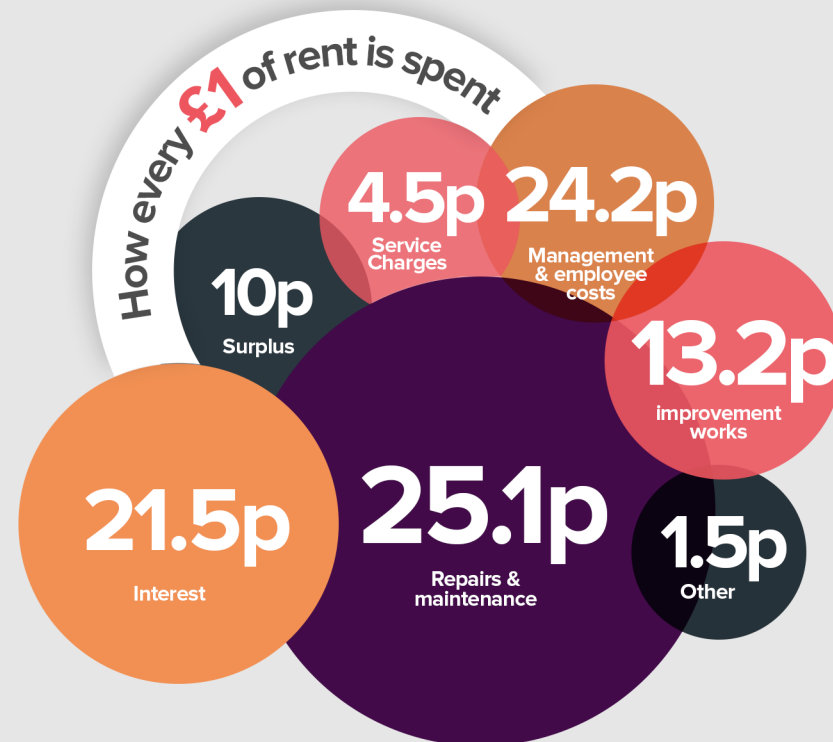
This annual report outlines our performance across the objectives within 'Our Direction' – our corporate plan. Looking back over 2020-21 it has been a year of unprecedented challenge, but with real pockets of celebration and hope along the way also.

Throughout the pandemic our priority remained keeping our homes safe and compliant and we launched our online repairs and maintenance booking system. We successfully relaunched our digital platforms allowing customers to manage their tenancy online during a time when it has been needed most.

We have continued to build new homes and are delighted to see construction work begin on our largest-ever independent living scheme at 'Hazlehurst' in Runcorn.

As we publish this Annual Report we will be taking the learning from the past year and the increase in remote working and reduction in the use of our office and miles on the road, to help shape our sustainability strategy and our goal of achieving net zero carbon.

We would like to thank customers and colleagues for their patience, support and tenacity during a year when adjustments have had to be made to the way we live and work. We have enjoyed rich, joint-working opportunities with partners in the borough to keep residents safe and deliver vital services during the pandemic.





**NUMBER OF CALLS ANSWERED: 31,706**

**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION** with Overall Service **77.4%**

Number of complaints: **127**

**120** Number of compliments

**NEIGHBOURHOOD**

Safety Cases **1108**

**JOINT POLICE RAIDS 6**

**8 KNIFE SWEEPS SUPPORTED**

**15 ESTATE WALKABOUTS**

**19,738** Number of responsive repairs completed

Boilers 252 Heating 187 Kitchen 32 Bathroom 28 Rewires 30  
Doors 286 Roofing 204 Roofline 57 Throughlift 1 Other - External works 15

**£4,429,000** Amount spent on planned maintenance  
Amount spent on repairs **£6,622,000**

**THE BIG 6** KEEPING OUR HOMES SAFE

**Gas: 99.99%** of our properties had an up-to-date certificate at the end of March 2021

**FIRE 100%** of our communal areas have a fire risk assessment (FRA)

**ELECTRICAL: 99.5%**

of our properties had an electrical condition survey that met our five year requirement at the end of March 2021.

of planned legionella inspections **100%** were completed.

**ASBESTOS: 66.67%**

of applicable homes had an asbestos survey. 100% of communal areas had an asbestos survey.

**LIFTS** 100% OF OUR LIFTS ARE IN WORKING ORDER AND REGULARLY MAINTAINED.

**REPAIRS RIGHT 1ST TIME 83.63%**

**GENDER PAY GAP 1.3%**

**316** Number of employees

**9** Average days lost through sickness absence

Colleague Satisfaction **78.9%**

Colleague Turnover **9.93%**

**CURRENT ARREARS £878K**

**LIQUIDITY: 36 MONTHS**

**159.87%** Interest Cover

**NET DEBT PER UNIT £18.91K**

**AVERAGE MONTHLY VOLUME OF PAYMENTS MADE ONLINE: 2221**

Return on Investment in **6.02%** OSUK

**UNSOLD HOMES 13**

**NEW HOMES COMPLETED: 92** INVESTMENT IN NEW HOMES: **£18,324,451**

**404** Pipeline of New Homes Secured

**£26.6M** OSUK Investment

**AVERAGE WEEKLY RENT £94.34**

££££££££££££££££

**TURNOVER: £38,117,000**  
**NUMBER OF HOMES: 7,117**  
**REGULATORY RATING: V1/G1**  
**OPERATING COSTS: £28,450,000**

**64.98%** Percentage of customers registered on the app

**AVERAGE MONTHLY VOLUME OF LIVE CHAT CONVERSATIONS FOR THE LAST 12 MONTHS 455**



# Get your home Winter ready

## Handy hints & tips to help you prepare

By checking the important things now, there still is got time to carry out the repairs before the weather turns, so start preparing now for a cold snap.

We've pulled together some handy hints and tips to help you prepare....

### Check your pipes

Burst pipes can cause a huge amount of damage when your home is being battered by the weather. It's a good idea to know where the stopcock is to enable you to turn the cold water system off and limit further damage.

### Keep your heating on a timer

Set your heating to come on with a timer setting. This could prevent the water in your pipes from freezing if it gets really cold, which could lead to burst pipes, flooding and even subsidence.

### Help with heating costs

You may be able to claim financial and practical help with heating your home. Grants available include the Winter Fuel Payment and the Cold Weather Payment.

For more information on how to reduce your bills and make your home more energy efficient, go to the government's Simple Energy Advice website, or call the Simple Energy Advice helpline on **0800 444 202**. You can also find out about heating and housing benefits on **GOV.UK**.

It's worth claiming all the benefits you're entitled to as soon as winter begins.

### Get your outdoor space ready

Making sure your garden is clear, clean and ready for winter is a good idea. Secure anything that could be swept away by the wind such as greenhouses, plant pots and wheelie bins.

### Ventilate your property

As well as drying washing properly, there are some other things you can do to prevent damp during the colder months. For example, to prevent warm air and steam entering colder rooms, close the kitchen door whilst cooking, and use extractor fans in the bathroom etc.

### Make sure your home is insured for contents

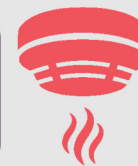
Halton Housing DO NOT cover your contents insurance as part of the tenancy agreement. It's a good idea to consider what a home contents insurance policy would include to help you make an informed decision on whether you need one or not.



The recent rise in fuel prices can be a worrying time for many - especially as we head towards Winter. Georgina Patel, our Decarbonisation Strategic Lead has written an easy-to-understand and practical blog, called **'What is going on with Gas?'** explaining the situation and signposting to support which our money advice team can provide.



# SMART SMOKE ALARMS GIVES HARD OF HEARING CUSTOMER PEACE OF MIND



A hard-of-hearing customer now feels safer in her home after some out-of-the-box thinking from two Electrical Maintenance Technicians who identified and installed specialist smoke alarms for those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Mrs Kirby, who lives in Hale Bank was recently visited by two of our Electrical Maintenance Technicians to install the specialist alarm system.

Following a periodic electrical installation condition report (EICR) carried out by our Electrical Maintenance Technician Lenny, concerns were raised over Mrs Kirby's ability to recognise if, and when her smoke alarm was going off.

After looking into what could be done to help Mrs Kirby, a specialist alarm kit was sourced and installed by Lenny and Lee, another of our Electrical Maintenance Technicians.

The specialist alarms which are linked to smoke detectors offer strobe lighting and vibrating pad alarms within Mrs Kirby's home, including under pillows so when the alarm goes off she will be aware.

Mrs Kirby said:

*"I'm really grateful for this installation and the peace of mind it now offers me. My old dog Sunny was my smoke alarm beforehand but he sadly passed. He would howl every time he heard the smoke alarm and come and find me frantically to tell me whenever it went off. I would like to say a special thank you to the two gentlemen who came out to install my new alarm."*

Electrical and Mechanical Manager, John Mercer said:

*"This simple but effective alteration to Mrs Kirby's home vastly improves her safety. At Halton Housing we're all about improving people's lives and installing this new alarm system will do just that. I would like to thank Lenny and Lee for a great job going the extra mile for Mrs Kirby."*

Our Electrical Team received external recognition earlier this year after undergoing an annual inspection from the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC). The assessor was very complimentary of the works inspected and the samples of certification reviewed.





Over the past six months we have introduced some innovative technology into customers' homes to improve the quality and delivery of maintenance services.

## Introducing the Jepp Valve, the Vericon device and Condensate Pro.

### The Jepp Valve

Gas engineers have begun installing an innovative push button 'combi' boiler-filling valve – the 'Jepp Valve' that prevents over pressurising the system and stops gallons of fresh water from being wasted.

Loss of water pressure is one of the most common faults that will stop a boiler from working. In most instances the problem can be resolved by repressurising the system. However, this may not be practical for every customer and can risk the system being over pressurised, if not done correctly.

With the new valve, customers will be able to instantly self-fix their boiler if it loses pressure, with a preset maximum pressure (1.4 bar) so it can't be over pressurised.

The Jepp Valve is Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) approved, recognising its water-saving properties and engineers will initially be installing the new valve where there has been an issue in the past, and also to all newly installed boilers.



# Innovative Home solutions



### Vericon

Last month, we began a new smart technology trial with partners Vericon Systems as part of our wider repairs insight project.

The trial involves 50 devices being fitted to customers' boilers which will allow our Gas Team to report on, predict and rectify a number of common boiler issues remotely, armed with real time data.



The Vericon kit monitors the boiler, can top up low pressure and alert our maintenance team to any issues so they can arrange for the boiler to be repaired, before the customer may even know, or has to log the issue.

The Vericon trial is anticipated to last until March 2022.

### Condensate Pro

A common cause of boilers not working during the winter is down to a frozen condensate pipe. The main job of the condensate pipe is to transfer the wastewater that gets produced from the boiler, into the drain.

Ideally, this pipe is connected to the internal waste/water system, but there are situations where this is not possible and instead the pipe is fitted externally. This means it can be more vulnerable to becoming frozen in low temperatures and can cause a boiler to unexpectedly stop working.

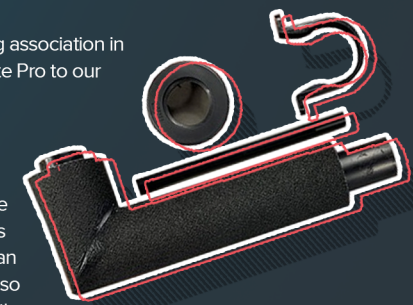
Although condensate pipes can be unfrozen with something like a hot water bottle or heat pads, this is not always feasible or practical for many customers.

The Condensate Pro is an ideal solution to help stop the problem.

This new product provides maximum protection from frozen condensate pipes. Fitting neatly into the wall, it ensures customers aren't left without heating or hot water when it's needed most.

We are the first housing association in the UK to fit Condensate Pro to our homes to protect customers and their boilers.

Engineers will initially be upgrading condensates where there has been an issue in the past, and also to all newly installed boilers.





# £5,000 donation to Citizens Advice

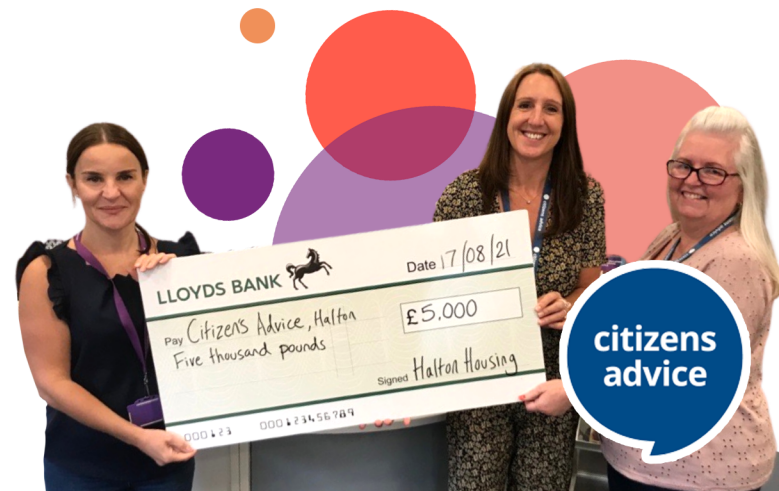
In August, we proudly made a £5,000 donation to Citizens Advice (Halton) to support the relocation of their purpose-built advice centre.

The service is hoping to relocate into new premises in Runcorn Shopping City enabling them to continue to provide vital support services to the people of Halton and surrounding areas.

In response to their fundraising campaign for support with the move, we donated £5,000 to help fund the centre.

Pauline Jones, Director of Neighbourhoods says "We have enjoyed a longstanding and rich partnership with Citizens Advice Halton so we are proud to be making this donation to help ensure it remains accessible to as many people as possible in the future."

Last year, Citizens Advice Halton supported over 5,000 people with over 17,000 issues. They also helped local people secure over £4 million of additional income through benefit applications and appeals, debts managed or written off and resolved consumer problems.



## A day in the life of... Estate Services Team

Our Estate Services Team (also known as the Caretaking Team) undertake a cleaning schedule for over 150 flatted blocks with communal areas each week. The customers within these blocks pay a service charge for the team to look after the blocks. It is our responsibility to keep the communal areas which includes the pathways and bin store areas clean and clear and free from any hazards. We also carry out a weekly inspection for these blocks and report any repairs or hazards. In addition to these tasks, we also remove fly tipping and graffiti from our land and buildings. The team works closely with our neighbourhood, repairs and grounds teams to keep our estates a clean and safe place for our customers to live in.

Although we have set schedules of work each day, no two days are the same and we are often called upon in emergencies to help with access for contractors to our blocks, removal of items from communal area such as paint tins etc. from a communal area which are combustible and a fire hazard. Community clean up days, litter picking events and our weekly Estate Walkabouts. The teams will attend several blocks each day according to their rotas. Here is a snapshot of a typical working day for the team.

**8.00am** Commence work and check our van suppliers for the day before commencing our daily rota.

**9.45am** During the clean we receive a call at from our friendly Neighbourhood Officer who advises that a customer has a Sky Engineer who needs access to the utilities cupboard. We finish what we are doing then call around to the block to arrange access for the engineer to the cupboard. During the visit we notice a nasty lingering smell in the block. On investigation it appears there is a large dog faeces on the first-floor landing of the block. We clean up the dog mess, disinfect and sanitise the area, leaving the block clean and hazard free. We also inform our Neighbourhood Officer of the incident and ask for this to be further investigated with the customers within the block to trace the owner of the dog.

**11.20am** Returning back to our scheduled rota we notice a problem with a communal door which is isn't closing properly. We immediately call our Customer Service Team and ask them to raise a repair order to rectify the problem.

**1.15pm** A customer approaches us within the communal area of a block advising us that a neighbour is behaving in an anti-social manner. We take the details from her. We post letters through every door in the block requesting that the behaviour stop. Anti social activities can be many things from littering and fly tipping to dog fouling, noise, vandalism, drug use and much more.

**2.50pm** A customer has left a washing machine in the communal area of her block. We call at the customer's home to advise her that the machine needs to be moved. We explain that Halton Housing operates a zero-tolerance policy regarding items left in a communal area. The placing of items in the communal area is in breach of Fire Regulations. We operate this for the safety of our customers, staff and others who visit our blocks. We listen to the customer and will try and offer help where we can. The customer understood and advised that she was waiting for it to be collected. The machine was moved that day.

**4.00pm** Our day ends with the team cleaning the cloths and equipment and checking the supplies in the van.

**Message from Pauline Bibby,  
Estates Services Manager to  
customers who live in a block:**



"Please remember that the communal area within flatted blocks should be kept clear of items at all times. This includes all types of furniture, bicycles, buggies, prams, plants and door mats. We apologise if this causes an inconvenience to our customers, Halton Housing is committed to the safety of our customers, staff and visitors to our blocks. Your safety is a priority to our team."

Ken - Estate  
Service officer





# Development Update

Since the last issue of Reach was published there has been incredible progress across our new developments. We've welcomed customers into all nine three-bedroom homes at Okell Street in Runcorn, work is well underway at Orchard Meadows in Warrington, and Hazlehurst, located in Sandymoor Runcorn, which is our third Independent Living Scheme is now seeing the start of internal fit out of this impressive scheme.

We're also on site with three other developments; Hazel Brook in Sandbach, Warrington Lane in Middlewich and Three Sails Point in Widnes.

These developments offer a fantastic mix of homes for Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership. Affordable Rent homes are made available through our choice-based letting systems. Depending on the location of the development, this could be Property Pool Plus, Cheshire Home Choice or West Cheshire Homes. For more information, visit our website [www.haltonhousing.co.uk](http://www.haltonhousing.co.uk).

Shared Ownership homes (a form of affordable home ownership), are available through Open Door, the commercial arm of our organisation. If you're interested in one of our Shared Ownership properties, contact Angela or Stacey on **0333 00 44 777** or visit [www.opendoor-properties.co.uk](http://www.opendoor-properties.co.uk).

Development	Location	No. of Homes	Type of Homes	Tenure
Hazlehurst	Sandymoor	100	1 & 2-bed apartments	56 x AR 44 x SO
Hazel Brook	Sandbach	31	2 & 3-bed apartments	11 x AR 20 x SO
Orchard Meadows	Warrington	111	2 & 3-bed homes	55 x AR 56 x SO
Three Sails Point	Widnes	69	2,3 & 4 bed homes 3 & 4 bed bungalows	41 x AR 28 x SO
Warrington Lane	Middlewich	84	2-bed apartments 2-bed bungalows 2 & 3 bed homes	43 x AR 41 x SO

AR = Affordable Rent  
SO = Shared Ownership

For all the latest updates on our developments visit:  
[www.haltonhousing.co.uk/about-us/our-developments](http://www.haltonhousing.co.uk/about-us/our-developments).



# Celebrating 12 months of our Neighbourhoods Team



Pauline Jones - Director of Neighbourhoods

In October 2020, following customer feedback in which you told us you wanted a direct point of contact with someone from Halton Housing in your area, we introduced our new Neighbourhoods Team and the word on the street is that you're happy to see us back!

Through our Neighbourhood Support Officers, Neighbourhood Safety Officers, Tenancy Support Officers and Neighbourhood Coordinators, we've ensured customers now have access to a dedicated person who can deal with a whole range of issues such as tenancy management and sustainability,

support, and anti-social behaviour.



*"We want to build a strong and healthy relationship with our customers so we can be there for you when you need us, helping us achieve a 'right first time' resolution. Our Neighbourhoods team helps us to do just that. I'm really proud of what the team has achieved over the last 12 months but we won't stop there, we've some really exciting projects coming up across Halton which I know will really make a difference to the communities we serve and we're looking forward to involving our customers in shaping where they live".*

The re-introduction of our Neighbourhoods Team is just one of the improvements we have made to our services following customer feedback. Check out page 8 for a look at our brand-new reception area.

## Aged 16-25? Our Young People's Forum needs you!

Are you looking to enhance your skills? Learn something new? Meet new people? If your answer is yes and you're aged between 16 and 25 then we've some great opportunities for you to work with our Customer Engagement team and have a say on projects and activities happening near you.

Working alongside our Customer Engagement team will also give you the opportunity to share your own ideas and opinions on what you or your friends would like to see in your area, as well as give you the chance to work on some exciting projects.

### What's in it for you?

Not only is it a great way to meet new people and add a new skill to your CV or school or college personal statement, we also offer incentives such as Love2Shop Vouchers and discounted gym memberships.

Sound interesting? If you'd like to find out more, email: [involved@haltonhousing.co.uk](mailto:involved@haltonhousing.co.uk) or call Hannah Ireland on 07903 594 957. We hope you can join us!

Over 25? There are loads of ways you can have your say and share ideas. Check out how you can make a difference by visiting [haltonhousing.co.uk/get-involved](https://haltonhousing.co.uk/get-involved)





# Who you gonna call?

## Halton Housing or Halton Borough Council?

When it comes to ordering a new wheelie bin or reporting a problem with a public footpath or noise pollution, reporting anti-social behaviour or fly tipping, do you know who to contact?

For some customers, particularly those who have been with us since we were formed back in 2005, there may be times when you're unsure whether to contact us or Halton Borough Council.

Full details of all the services we each provide can be found on [haltonhousing.co.uk](http://haltonhousing.co.uk), and [www3.halton.gov.uk](http://www3.halton.gov.uk) but for an at a glance overview of the services we provide, here's a summary.



If you're ever unsure who to speak to, or need advice, your local Neighbourhood Officers are on hand to provide support. Details of your dedicated Neighbourhood Officer can be found online [www.haltonhousing.co.uk/your-home/our-neighbourhoods](http://www.haltonhousing.co.uk/your-home/our-neighbourhoods)