



Streets Ahead Autumn 2023





Welcome to Streets Ahead

We're committed to listening to you. We want to hear what really matters to you and understand how we can provide consistently brilliant services.

You've told us you want repairs dealt with faster and to see more of our staff out and about where you live. In this edition of Streets Ahead you can read how we have responded by developing a new repairs service and increasing our activity in the community. We also share news about improvements we're making to your local area and how we're supporting residents financially.

Of course, we know there's more to do. That's why we want to keep the conversation going in as many ways as possible. Turn to the back page to find out how

to contact us. By talking and working together we can lay the foundations for better services and thriving communities.



Orla Gallagher
Chief Executive

Repairing your homes and communities faster

We have listened; fast, hassle-free repairs are a top priority.

We have introduced a new 3-day target for urgent repairs alongside our standard 4-hour target for emergency repairs and 21 days for routine repairs. Find out more below.

Emergency repairs
4-hour response service

Any issue affecting your health, safety or security. This can include gas leaks, a lack of drinking water supply or no electricity.

Our target is to complete 97% of emergency repairs within 4 hours.

New urgent repairs 3 working days service

Issues causing a loss of services (such as heating/hot water) or that might impact the building, its structure or services.

Routine repairs 21 working days service

General issues that can be undertaken outside of these timescales.

Our target is to complete 94% of routine repairs within 21 days.

Planned works

Large scale works that have been identified from our stock condition surveys e.g. full refurbishment of a kitchen, bathroom, boiler or new roof.



Working hard for you

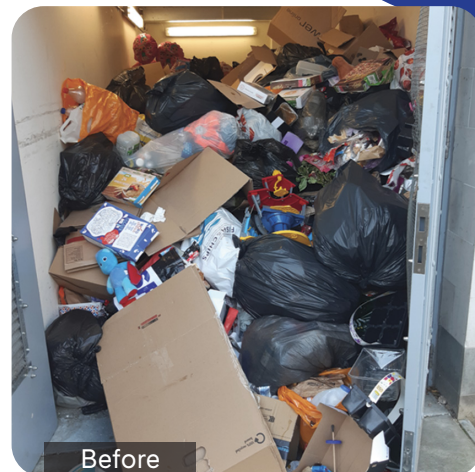
You said you wanted to see us getting more involved on the ground where you live. We listened and we acted. During the summer, teams from across Housing Solutions got stuck into gardening, tidying and cleaning local areas as part of the Summer Shine initiative. It was a great opportunity to chat informally to residents and gather honest feedback, while sprucing up your neighbourhood. A win-win!



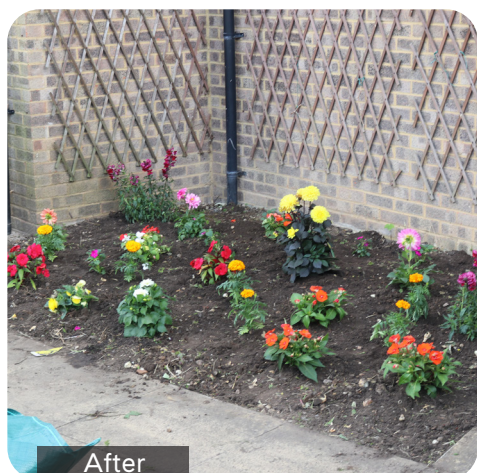
Before



Before

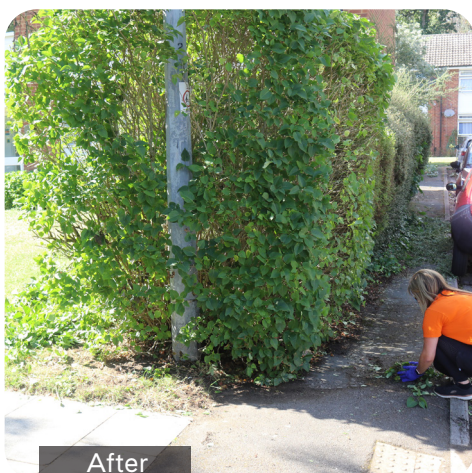


Before



After

Gardening - Neve House



After

Hedge trimming - Brunel Close



After

Bin store clearance - Mistletoe



Before



After

Weeding - Lockwood Court

Thank you to everyone who took part. We'll be visiting more areas in October, follow us on social media to find out where and when. And say "hi" if you spot our bright T-shirts out and about on the day!

Our teams have been busier than ever this year building relationships with residents. They've supported more than 200 resident initiatives, from Summer Shine work to family events and fun days.

Here's a showcase of some of the events across the summer.

Working hard in your community



Litterpicking at Sunderland Road



Soup making at Southgate House



Estate popup at Ellington Park



Summer fayre at Woodlands Park



Resident coffee mornings at the Housing Solutions Offices



King's Coronation party at Neve House



Memorial bench ribbon cutting at The Birches

The fantastic benefits of sheltered living

We provide several housing options for people with different needs and at various stages of life. Sheltered housing is one option that offers a little extra support and a sense of community while enabling people to continue living independently.

Our specialist sheltered housing team Kevin, Tamara, Rachael, Olu, Louise, and George, visit the schemes daily and are on hand to support residents in different ways.



We have nine sheltered schemes across Maidenhead as well as an extra care scheme in Woodley, Reading. They vary in size from 20 to 60 self-contained apartments, with most having sociable communal areas and attractive gardens. Facilities often include:

- Hobby room
- Guest suite for visiting family and friends
- Laundry facilities
- Hair salons



Kevin Rose
Community Services Manager



Tamara Suppia
Team Leader, Sheltered & Extra Care



Sheltered
Housing
Officers

Rachael
Heard



Supported
Housing
Officers

Louise
Tyson



George
Bain



Olu Abati

The sheltered schemes all have a programme of events and activities that residents can get involved in, from BBQs to special celebrations such as the recent Coronation. We are delighted to offer weekly coffee mornings, which give outside partners an opportunity to come along and provide information or a service such as NHS eye tests.



Chris, from Neve House gave us a snapshot of the benefits they enjoy from living in a sheltered scheme.

“I moved into sheltered accommodation in May 2020. I chose the location as I could easily get to all the local amenities including the shopping centre, my GP surgery and the library (I love reading!) I’m also near a bus stop and can get to the train station. I like to remain active so I’m glad I’m close to great places to go walking and swimming, and there are lots of local places of interest to visit.

I was worried that a sheltered flat wouldn't feel like my own home, but I've made my apartment exactly as I wanted it by decorating and furnishing it to my taste. There are some good advantages to living here, I feel safe as there are intercoms for each flat. Plus, I get my annual gas, electricity and safety checks arranged for me by Housing Solutions. Once I had settled in, I was impressed to find that I even got access to free Wi-Fi!

Living in sheltered accommodation also gives me the option to spend time with my neighbours if I want to. We can use the lounge and garden areas. I enjoyed some of the events that have been arranged including a BBQ.

Finally, although I am very independent, I know that Rachael, our Housing Officer is available if I ever need help or have a question.

Rachael is lovely and she's always helpful. She goes the extra mile to make sure that the scheme is safe for residents. I feel very happy in my home."



Improvements to our sheltered schemes

A rolling décor refurbishment programme in communal areas including curtains / flooring and new TVs

Programme of new fire doors on all flats

Continual training and development of the Housing Officers and team

Digital noticeboards to keep residents informed of the latest Housing Solutions updates, plus weather, national news and other scheme information

Your safety is our top priority. We're making significant investment into our properties as part of our asset management compliance programme.

Replacement kitchen and bathrooms starting this autumn in Blandford House

New boilers in some schemes

Refresh of the garden areas and other outside spaces

If you or a family member are interested in one of our properties for over 55s, please contact Tamara at tamara.suppria@housingsolutions.co.uk to find out more.

What does the Scrutiny & Improvement (SIT) team do? We're a group of residents who voluntarily scrutinise and review Housing Solutions' services. We provide valuable feedback that helps continually improve the communities and neighbourhoods we live in.

Working together to improve our services - an update from our Scrutiny & Improvement Team



Since the previous edition of Streets Ahead, we have said a sad farewell to SIT member Abi, who has moved away from our area and Housing Solutions. We're always keen to welcome new members so we are delighted that Juliet and Sam have joined our enthusiastic team. We're looking forward to working with them to shape and enhance the services that effect residents and their homes.

If you'd like to make a difference, why not join one of our residents' groups? After all, nobody knows more about what's best for their community than the people who live in it. We're open to new ideas that will have a positive impact on the local area or help underrepresented groups have a louder voice.

We'd love to hear from you! Get in touch and share your ideas by emailing Nivene at communityengagement@housingsolutions.co.uk



We're also very pleased to welcome Nivene Powell, who has joined us as Resident Empowerment Manager. Nivene will be supporting not only our team, but also championing Housing Solutions' other involved resident groups; the e-Panel, Community Living Panel, Estates Panel, Complaints Panel and Home Owner panel.

Keeping up high standards

Your feedback helps ensure we're providing good quality homes and services.



Our research partner may give you a call

To remain truly independent we have asked Acuity Research* (www.arap.co.uk), to contact you to ask how happy you are with our services. As part of their work, they may contact you by phone or email in October. Acuity will call from the number 01273 093939 between 9am and 8pm on weekdays or 10am and 6pm on Saturdays.

*Acuity Research & Practice Ltd is committed to protecting your privacy. You can read their privacy policy on their website.

What does this mean for you?

The information you provide will help us improve the services you use. We'd really appreciate it if you could spare 10 minutes to take part in the survey but if you don't want to, just let the Acuity researcher know.

If you have any concerns about the Acuity survey, tell us using our website's chat service. Or contact Will Poray (Housing Solutions Business Analyst) at Will.Poray@housingsolutions.co.uk or Heather Metivier (Project Coordinator at Acuity) on 01865 594332, or email acuity@arap.co.uk.



Supporting you with cost-of-living challenges

Don't miss out on financial support you may be entitled to:

- £145 from the **Household Support Fund** grant – a one off payment to help cover food, utilities and wider support.
- **Cost-of-living payment** - to help with the rising costs of inflation if you receive certain benefits or tax credits.
- **Pension credit** – for those who are retired, over 65 and on a low monthly income.



If you're struggling financially, please get in touch – we really are here to help. Our specialist Welfare and Benefits team offer free, confidential advice about benefits, managing your money and keeping up with rent and other payments.



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In September alone our team made more than 120 successful applications to the local authority's Household Support Fund, releasing more than £17,500 in support to residents. In the past year the team has supported over 1,200 residents to unlock a huge £284,656 in additional benefits, in some cases enabling them to keep their homes and continue their tenancies.

"Your team's help has given me peace of mind."
- Housing Solutions resident

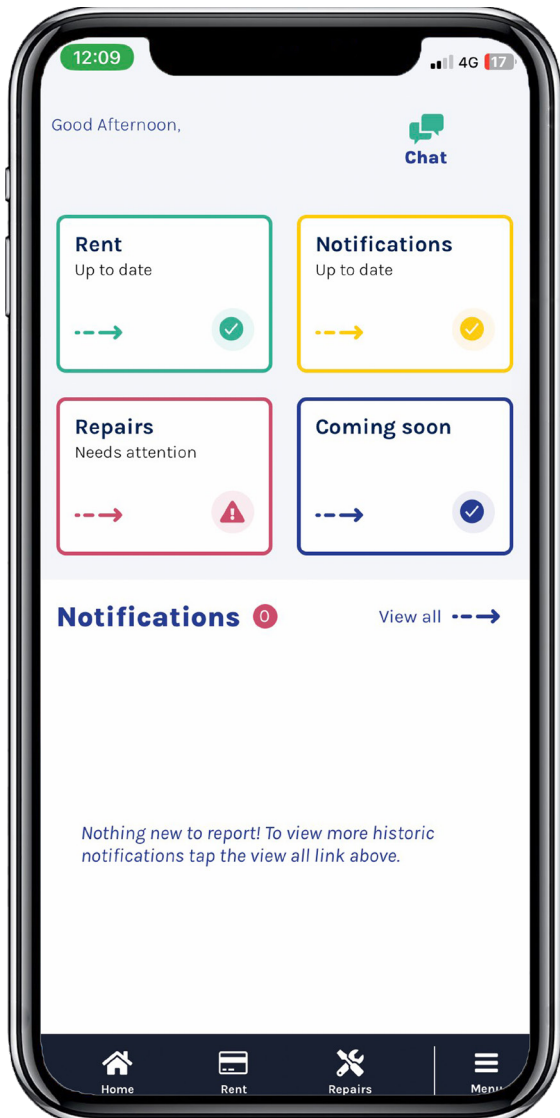
Gaining peace of mind with home contents insurance

Have you got home contents insurance? It covers the cost of possessions that are lost or damaged due to an unexpected event such as theft, fire, extreme weather or an accident. Thistle Tenant Risks Contents Insurance offers a variety of policy types and has been designed specifically for social housing residents, plus it's approved by the National Housing Federation. Search 'home insurance' on our website for more details.

Speedy online services

Many of you value the convenience of being able to access our services at a time and place that suits you, so we've made it quicker and easier to manage your tenancy online.

Through our digital platforms you can check your rent account, make payments, report a repair or arrange an appointment and update your personal information.



Our easy to use website including webchat www.housingsolutions.co.uk

Our customer portal www.housingsolutions.co.uk/portal-home

Our mobile app available on iOS and Android, www.housingsolutions.co.uk/mobile-application-information

Open an online account in 60 seconds!

It's quick and easy to sign up to our customer portal – you just need a few personal details and your tenancy number – you can find this on your rent statement or letters we send you about your tenancy.

Download our app for services on the go!

Take control on your smartphone with the Housing Solutions app. Download it from the Google Play store or Apple store, by searching 'Housing Solutions'.



Download on the
App Store



GET IT ON
Google Play

Calling all budding young artists

Do you have an artist in your home under the age of 16? Could they help us design the front cover for one of Housing Solutions Streets Ahead magazines for 2024?

The theme will be 'Value your neighbour and community' presented in the design.

The winning entry will receive a £50 voucher and the design will be shared with over 6,000 homes.

Open to all children of Housing Solutions residents (up to 16)

To get involved look out for more information in the December 2023 edition.



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