



CELEBRATING 30 YEARS  
OF HOUSING SOLUTIONS





Winter Edition



# Streets Ahead

Winter 2025

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## A message from Orla Gallagher, Chief Executive

Hello and welcome to our festive Streets Ahead,

This year marked our thirty years of working with local people, and we remain focused on doing what local people want us to do. We are glad that people tell us we are reliable and that we are trusted in our communities. We want to keep that trust and build on it every day. We've listened to residents and acted on what you've told us. We're improving our repairs service, making sure we follow things up properly, and ensuring nothing gets missed between teams. There is more work ahead, but we are moving in the right direction and staying focused on the basics.

This year we set out our new Corporate Strategy. It keeps us rooted in our local communities and makes one thing clear. Services need to fit the way you want to live. That is why next year we are putting a big focus on communication. We want to hear how you want us to stay in touch. Text messages, emails, letters, videos, information in another language. Whatever works best for you. We will be asking early in the New Year so we can shape communication around what you prefer.

We are also pleased to share some good news for the New Year. From January, Housing Solutions will become the new landlord for 267 homes that were managed by L&Q housing association. This is an important moment for our organisation and our communities, and we look forward to welcoming new residents. For people already living in our homes, nothing will change. Your tenancy and your services stay the same, and our commitment to providing good homes and support remains strong.

Another important piece of work in 2026 is our programme of kitchen and bathroom surveys. These will help us create a clear plan for future replacement work. By June, we expect to share a timeline so people know what to expect and can plan with confidence.

It has been encouraging to see more residents taking part in panels, events, and conversations. People are sharing views and helping shape our services. This will continue to grow next year with more chances to be involved.

We also know this can be a difficult time of year. If you or someone you know needs support, we are here to help. In this edition you will find simple advice on ways to keep costs down and keep warm this winter.

Wishing you a joyful, peaceful, and safe festive season.

Warmest wishes,







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## Evenlode Winter Festive Event

What a wonderful way to kick off the festive season! A huge thank you to everyone who joined us at the Evenlode Winter Festive Event on Monday 1 December. We were joined by 150 local residents. It was a truly magical evening, filled with laughter, creativity, and community spirit.

From the moment Father Christmas and his reindeers arrived in their cosy grotto, the excitement was contagious. Children got stuck into Christmas card-making-showing off their artistic flair. There were smiles all round as faces were painted, balloons twisted, and families enjoyed fun games together!

This year we ran 418 different residents and community events. If you have any feedback or ideas for future events, let us know. We'd love to hear them!







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## A word from your Scrutiny & Improvement Team



The SIT Panel, your voice at Housing Solutions, has had a busy second half of 2025.

We've reviewed and commented on a number of Housing Solutions' policies on things from access to shared ownership to resident associations. We've contributed to Housing Solutions' new 5 year Corporate Strategy (with input described by Chief Executive Orla Gallagher as 'valuable and insightful') and attended a Board meeting where we asked members anything we liked on behalf of all residents. Our input was incorporated into the Asset Management strategy, plus we reviewed the (excellent) damp and mould booklet, which you can read more on page 13.

Many of us were involved in a mystery shopping exercise for the Housing Solutions Contact Centre and estate services, and we attended an important presentation on Value for Money across Housing Solutions.

At one recent meeting, we were joined by members of the youth panel, Emerging Voices, giving a real sense of residents coming together to contribute.

Additionally, we attended a Service Standards presentation this autumn, at which we were able to put your questions.

Finally, and importantly, a few of us interviewed the incoming chair of the Board, who takes over from Liz Padmore early next year. Happily, we were all in agreement with the official interview panel that the successful candidate was indeed the right one.

We've also recently been delighted to welcome new member Tara McKay, who brings extensive experience in health and safety which we know is going to prove invaluable. You can read more about Tara on the next page.

With so much going on, it's been a busy time for SIT. In fact, we're going to SIT down and have a bit of a breather over Christmas now. We're looking forward to continuing to achieve for you, Housing Solutions' residents, during 2026 and beyond.

Interested in having your say? Find out more about our resident panels and how you can get involved by visiting our website and searching '[Panels](#)', or simply scan the QR code above. Why not think about joining us yourself?





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## Let's SIT down together

### Introducing our new SIT member, Tara

Seeing the summer edition of the Housing Solutions newsletter 'Streets Ahead' and spotting a request for tenants to make a difference, joining the SIT panel was something I felt genuinely inspired to do. For me, it came from wanting to play an active role in shaping the place I live and making sure residents' voices are heard.



I've always believed that real change happens when local people get involved and the panel felt like the perfect opportunity to contribute in a meaningful and practical way.

Since joining I have attended panel meetings and also training courses, which has opened my eyes to many different topics. Alongside SIT, I shall be joining the Health & Safety Panel in the new year, something I am very interested in.

The meetings are held in the evening once a month for a few hours, with a varied topic to be discussed or feedback on previous items - the panel is comprised of lots of other residents, across the areas of all the properties owned by HS and it has been great to meet lots of new people.

By being on the SIT panel, I hope to help improve communication between residents and the housing team, highlight areas that need attention and make sure residents' insights are valued in decision-making. My goal is not only to contribute my own perspective, but also to encourage a stronger community voice overall.

For anyone thinking about getting involved, I'd really encourage it. You don't need any special qualifications - just a willingness to share your thoughts and a passion for improving where you live. Every resident has something valuable to offer and there is no point grumbling about issues when you have this opportunity to have our voices heard.

Warm regards,  
Tara





\*Read our 'Winter Safety Tips' on the next page








Grenville Hague - Head of Repairs

## Streets Ahead - Winter Warmer!

As the colder months roll in, we can help you stay safe, warm, and worry-free this winter. Here are some essential tips and reminders to protect your home and loved ones during the festive season.

### Be water aware - preventing frozen and burst pipes

Cold weather can wreak havoc on your plumbing. A frozen pipe can burst and cause extensive damage to your home and belongings. Here's how to reduce the risk:

- Keep your home warm - even when you're away, set your heating to come on for short periods to prevent pipes from freezing. 
- Open cabinet doors - especially under sinks, to allow warm air to circulate around plumbing. 
- Insulate exposed pipes - especially in lofts, garages, and external walls. 
- Know where your stopcock is - so you can turn off the water quickly in an emergency. 
- Fix minor leaks early - small drips can become big problems if left unattended. 

### Winter Fuel Payments 2025/26

This winter, most pensioners in England and Wales will automatically receive a Winter Fuel Payment in November or December to help with heating costs. You should receive a letter telling you how much you'll receive and which bank account it will be paid into.

#### What you need to know

- If your annual taxable income is above £35,000 and you don't receive Pension Credit or another means-tested benefit, you'll still get the payment - but HMRC will recover it through income tax.
- There's no need to apply - payments are made automatically.

#### Watch out for scams

- The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will never text or email asking for your bank details.
- If you get a suspicious message, forward it to 7726 (free) to check if it's genuine.
- Delete any scam texts and never click on links.

For full details, visit [GOV.UK – Winter Fuel Payment: Eligibility](https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment-eligibility).



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# Winter Safety Tips at home

The festive season is a busy time of year, and with lots going on, it is important to consider how to keep your home and family safe. Here are our top tips for a safe festive season:

## Decorations

### Real trees

Keep water in the stand so the tree doesn't dry out. Put the tree away from heat sources like fireplaces, radiators, and lights.

### Artificial trees

Make sure the tree is flame-resistant.

Carefully inspect Christmas light strings each year before putting them up. Discard any lights with frayed cords or loose connections.

Switch off lights when going to bed or leaving unattended for long periods of time.

Keep decorations and cards away from heat sources and don't leave burning candles unattended.

Use only one extension cord, buy longer cords if necessary

Remember, Christmas novelties and decorations are not toys and don't have to comply with toy safety regulations - place them high up and out of reach of young hands.

Please test your smoke detector weekly. If you notice any issues, contact us immediately so we can arrange a replacement.

For more information, please click on the following link: <https://www.rospa.com/home-safety/christmas-safety>





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## Your guide to safer windows

Your safety is our priority. If you live above the ground floor, your windows should have safety restrictors. These small devices are fitted to windows to stop them from opening too far and help prevent accidents - especially for children, older people, or anyone who may be more at risk.

### Top tips for window safety



Check they work properly and keep the locked (the safety device is engaged).



Only unlock a restrictor to clean the window, and lock it again afterwards.



Never leave an open or unlocked window unattended.



Don't let children tamper with restrictors or climb on furniture near windows.



Shut windows before working underneath them.



Watch out for fingers when opening or closing windows.



Keep tall items away from window ledges.



### What you need to know?



**Before you move in:** We check and fit restrictors for your safety.



**If one is missing or broken:** Report it as an urgent repair and we'll fix it.



**Other non-urgent windows:** Tenants and leaseholders need to arrange these themselves.



**Important:** If restrictors are removed or tampered with, we may charge you for replacing them.

### Do you need windows restrictions?

If you have children, elderly, or vulnerable people in your home and your windows above the ground floor do not have restrictors, please let us know. We can arrange to fit them for you - free of charge. Don't try to fit your own restrictors; our team will do it safely and properly.

### Shared areas

If you spot a damaged restrictor, lock, or frame in a communal area, please report it as an urgent communal repair.

Call us on 01628 543101 or email [contact@housingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:contact@housingsolutions.co.uk)





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## Silent nights, safe homes : reporting an issue to us



Christmas is a time for celebration, but extra visitors, late-night parties, and alcohol can sometimes lead to anti-social behaviour (ASB). At Housing Solutions, we want everyone to enjoy the season safely and respectfully.

### What is ASB?

ASB is any behaviour that causes harassment, alarm, or distress to others. Common examples include:

- Excessive noise or loud music
- Intimidation or harassment
- Vandalism or damage to property
- Drug or alcohol misuse in communal areas



### How to prevent ASB this season

- Be considerate: Keep noise down, especially late at night.
- Manage guests: Avoid overcrowding and keep communal areas clear.
- Drink responsibly: Alcohol can escalate tensions-know your limits.
- Look out for neighbours: Check in on those who may feel isolated and report concerns early.

### How to report ASB?

- Use our ReMOTE app for quick reporting.
- Call 01628 543101 or email [contact@housingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:contact@housingsolutions.co.uk).
- In emergencies, always call 999.

Our Community Safety Team works with local partners to resolve issues quickly and keep our communities safe. For more advice and support, visit our [Community Safety Hub](#) (scan the QR code on this page).







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## If home feels hard this Christmas

Christmas should be a time of joy, but for some, it can bring added stress. Financial pressures, family tensions, and increased alcohol use can make the festive season a high-risk time for domestic abuse. At Housing Solutions, we want every resident to feel safe and supported.



**Sarah Andrews - Housing Solutions'**  
**Assistant Director of Housing and**  
**Resident Engagement**

### You are not alone

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, help is available. We work closely with DASH (Domestic Abuse Stops Here), a local charity that supports people to escape abuse and rebuild their lives.

Domestic abuse affects men and women, and alcohol can often make situations worse. If you're struggling with alcohol-related issues, we can signpost you to local support services.

### How to get help

#### Contact Housing Solutions:

Call 01628 543101 or email [contact@housingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:contact@housingsolutions.co.uk). Our offices are safe spaces, and we can support you confidentially.

#### Reach DASH directly:

Visit <https://thedashcharity.org.uk/what-is-domestic-abuse/> or call 01753 549865 (Mon–Thurs 9:30am–3pm, Fri 9:30am–12 noon).

#### DASH Resources

- <https://www.dashriskchecklist.com>
- <https://safelives.org.uk>

### National helplines

National Domestic Abuse Helpline (Refuge):

- 0808 2000 247 (Free, 24/7, confidential)
- <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>

Men's Advice Line (Respect):

- 0808 801 0327 (Mon–Fri, 10am–8pm)
- <https://mensadvice.org.uk>

Galop (LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline):

- <https://galop.org.uk>

**This Christmas, remember: help is available - you don't have to be alone.**

Scan the QR code to find out  
more and access resources.







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## Awaab's Law: acting fast to keep your home safe

Awaab's Law is a new rule (from 27 October 2025) that means Housing Solutions must act quickly if you report a serious hazard in your home. The law was introduced after the tragic death of Awaab Ishak, to make sure all social housing is safe and healthy.



### What does Awaab's Law mean for you?

If you report a serious hazard-like damp, mould, faulty electrics, or a major leak-we must:

**Investigate within 10 working days**

**Start repairs within 5 working days** if a serious risk is found

**For emergencies** (such as dangerous electrics or severe leaks), make your home safe within 24 hours

**Keep you updated** and provide a written summary of what's being done (for damp and mould, within 3 working days)

**Complete other repairs as soon as possible, and within 12 weeks** if major work is needed

### What counts as a hazard?

A hazard is anything that could put your health or safety at risk, including:

Damp and mould affecting your health

Gas or carbon monoxide leaks

Broken boiler or no water

Exposed wiring or dangerous electrics

Flooding or major leaks

Broken doors or windows making your home insecure

You can see the full list of hazards on the government website-just scan the QR code on this page.

### What should you do?

If you spot anything in your home that could be a risk, please report it straight away:

- Call us on 01628 543101
- Email [contact@housingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:contact@housingsolutions.co.uk)
- Use LiveChat or the portal on our website

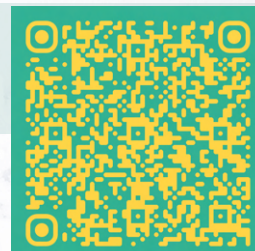


Just say, **"I'd like to report a hazard in my home."** We'll ask a few questions to help us respond quickly, including if anyone in your household is vulnerable or has health needs.

If your issue isn't covered by Awaab's Law, we'll still deal with it through our usual repairs process.

### Want to know more?

Scan the QR code or visit our website to read our helpful booklet and learn how to prevent damp and mould in your home.





# Before you go...

## SAVE BIG THIS FESTIVE SEASON WITH HOUSING PERKS DISCOUNTS!

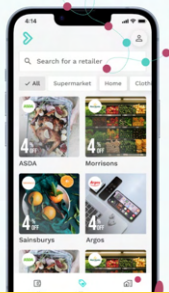
Make the most of your festive season with Housing Perks! Get saving with discounts from over 140 retailers with exclusive discounts including:

4% **TESCO** 4% **ASDA** 4% **Sainsbury's** 4% **Morrisons**  
9% **PRIMARK** 6% **M&S** 6% **bn** 5% **Argos**

Whether you're buying festive groceries or gifts, enjoy these savings both online and in-store.

Join 400,000 tenants nationally who can save on their everyday shopping.

Download the app   and start saving TODAY



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

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

# JEWSON

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

Housing Solutions residents can get 15% off at Jewson's Maidenhead branch, Reform Road, SL6 8BY. Bring proof of address, a rent or service charge letter, and quote **RES035** to claim your discount.



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

Mattresses £15

Other large items\*  
(e.g. washing machine) £5

\*We do not collect fridges or freezers-please contact your local council.

To arrange collection please call 01628 543101

## Festive period opening times

Wednesday 24 Dec 2025	8:45 - 13:00
Thursday 25 Dec 2025 (Bank holiday)	Closed
Friday 26 Dec 2025 (Bank holiday)	Closed
Monday 29 Dec 2025	8:45 - 17:15
Tuesday 30 Dec 2025	8:45 - 17:15
Wednesday 31 Dec 2025	8:45 - 13:00
Thursday 1 January 2025 (Bank holiday)	Closed
Friday 2 January 2025	8:45 - 16:45

### Have an emergency?

We'll continue to be available during Christmas for any emergency. Call 01628 543101 and if we're closed - our emergency service will respond. Our mobile app and the customer portal are always available.



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

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



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