

# Futures in focus

## Get to know Futures



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# Welcome

to your summer edition of

# Futures in Focus!

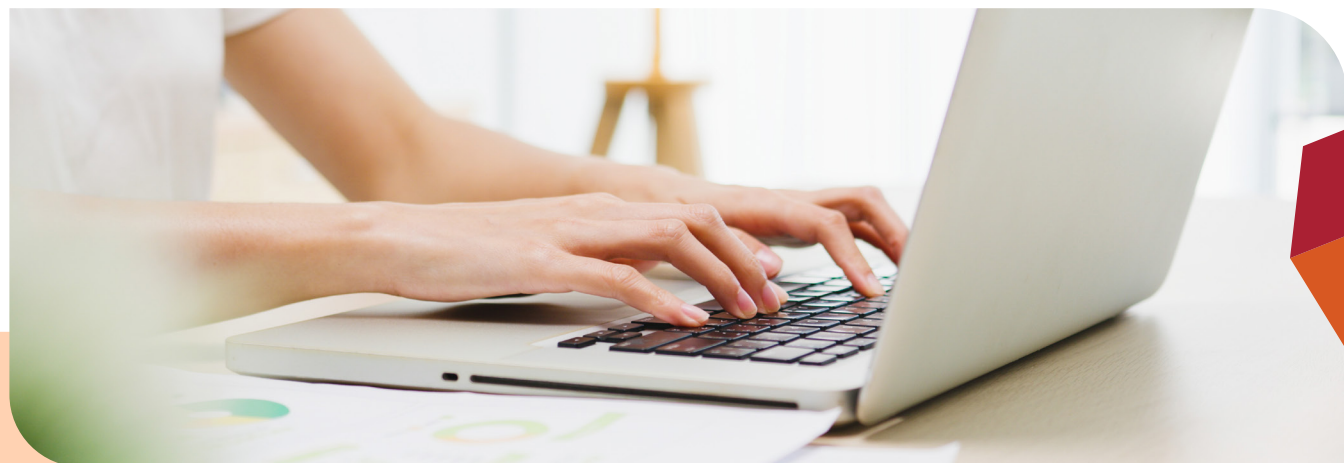


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In this edition we're inviting you to get to know Futures – featuring just a handful of the amazing people working in our services to give our customers the best possible experience.

We know that times are tough, and many of us are feeling the pinch, so it's important to know that your landlord is continuing to do everything we can to make life easier. Keep an eye on our website and social media for more information about the cost of living crisis, and resources that could help you.

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If you've got a story you'd like to tell us about for our magazine, you can email us at [communications@futureshg.co.uk](mailto:communications@futureshg.co.uk). We'd love to hear from you!



# Get to know... our employment advice team

We've got some new faces in our employment advice team and they've already hit the ground running, getting out in our communities and making a difference to customers who are looking for work, training and volunteering opportunities. Find out more about them below, and contact them by emailing [employability@futureshg.co.uk](mailto:employability@futureshg.co.uk) or filling in the online form at [futureshg.co.uk/employment-advice](https://futureshg.co.uk/employment-advice).

## Meet Daniel

Daniel has been working at Futures as an Employability Officer since December 2021 and covers our Derbyshire region.



An average day is tough to describe in my role because there are so many different parts to what I do! I'm often found out and about meeting our customers – whether that's in their home, at a café, or on the phone – and talking to them about their goals and what they want to achieve. From there, I'll work with them on their CVs and help with job searching, which might look like conducting a mock interview or contacting employers to see what's available that might be suitable. It's all based on what the customer is looking to do – we know that a job isn't always the best outcome for everyone, and that each of our customers has a different situation. With that in mind, sometimes I'll also be helping with finding a voluntary position, or an appropriate training course that will get someone on the right track to where they want to be in a few years.

I also visit schools to share information with young people about careers in social housing, and visit jobs fairs and other events to spread the word about what we're up to and encourage people to reach out.

**I love the variety my role has and how flexibly I'm able to work – I need to be where our customers need me, and I have the technology to make it happen!**

If I could tell our customers one thing about the job I do, I'd let them know that they can get in touch straight away – whether you're just about to leave a job that's not worked out or you think you're ready to take your next steps, there's no need to struggle by yourself. We're here to help, and especially in the current climate, we know how stressful and confusing job-hunting can be!

## Meet Sophie

Sophie has been working at Futures for ten months as our Employability Officer in the South – working across Northamptonshire.



I usually start my day at home, catching up on emails or preparing for appointments. Most of them take place in our customers' homes, and I work with them to help achieve their goals – whether that's preparing their CV with them, helping them to find a training course, or linking in with local community groups to arrange volunteering opportunities. I work closely with the Daventry Job Centre, so I often visit them in the afternoons, holding drop-in sessions for new customers or meeting current customers for their appointment. Once I'm back at my desk at home, I'll write up any notes and take care of any actions from my meetings.

**My favourite thing about working for Futures is the difference I can make to a customer's life. I also love working for an organisation that genuinely cares about people and wants to support them to achieve their best!**

I wish more customers knew that there's such a wide variety of support we can offer. We're not just here to help you find paid work – we can help you find volunteering, training, or just support you to build your confidence and work out what your next steps might be!







## Get to know... our My Voice community

My Voice is our online community for customers, with over 200 members. We're always looking for customer insight on how we're doing, what's going well and what we can improve.

My Voice gives us the opportunity to speak directly with people living in our homes to find out what matters to them. It's also a friendly social space where customers can share their recommendations, get advice on different issues and find out more about what's going on at Futures. But don't just take our word for it – here's what My Voice means to some of our members...



*"To me, being a member of My Voice means having an opportunity to be part of a community."*  
– Helenm

*"I feel like I really belong to the Futures community and it allows me to comment and interact with other tenants across a very broad spectrum of the country. Other opinions matter whether we agree or disagree with them. We need to encourage more to join so they too feel like they belong to the Futures community."* – Jolliejoy



*"I've enjoyed my participation in My Voice. I look forward to my emails and collecting points"*  
– Jim121

*"To me it means I feel that I can participate in the discussions you have and have received some really insightful information and support. I find socialising with others difficult but that is just me and past demons that hinder that, so sometimes having interactions with others does help that. I have felt supported and was surprised how much care was shown towards me."*

*I really enjoyed getting involved in the project you are currently running and I hope more people take the opportunity to get involved and I hope that this community grows as I believe you gain some great hints/tips etc. and knowing you have a voice and are being listened to."*  
– Michmoo



*"The people in this community have helped answer my questions, given me handy suggestions, shown all the lovely things they make and create. This community has given me a voice. So I am very glad I was asked to join. So thank you all so much, I no longer feel so alone."*  
– EbonyJewel

*"For me My Voice is a fantastic way of learning about what Futures has to offer its customers and also an easy way to get clarity on policies etc."*  
– Liesa



We're so proud of the community we've built, and there's always room for it to grow. If you want to have your say, sign up by visiting <https://myvoice.cmnty.com/>



# Get to know... a neighbourhood officer



We spoke to Corinne, one of our neighbourhood officers, to talk about what a day looks like for her – and we caught her on a great one, as she was out and about on one of our recent community visits!

Corinne has worked for Futures for two and a half years, and there's no such thing as an average day for her. She might be involved in safeguarding vulnerable people, dealing with antisocial behaviour, meeting other agencies and organisations or even visiting abandoned properties to find out what's going on. She likes working in an agile environment, sometimes out in the community and sometimes in one of our touchdown points or offices, so Futures suits her really well!

We've recently been running community visits in our neighbourhoods and estates, aiming to get out and speak to our customers about things they'd like us to be aware of in their neighbourhood. We've worked with other agencies, like the police, fire & rescue and local councils, to give us the best chance of resolving any issues as we became aware of them – making our communities as nice to live in as we know they can be.

During a recent visit, Corinne was made aware of an abandoned sofa in someone's front garden that had been there for a little while. Knowing the customer, she recognised that this was very out-of-character and decided to pay a visit to the resident – to address the sofa, but also just to make sure that everything was going okay for them. During this visit, Corinne noticed that our customer was having a tough time, and in need of some extra support to manage at home. Speaking to our money advice team, she was able to get the customer the support she needed, and even recommended that the customer's daughter speak to our employment advice team – so she could get some extra help with finding work in a very difficult climate. The family is now doing better and feeling more secure in their home.



**What started as a community concern about an abandoned piece of furniture has resulted in someone being able to get the support they needed to manage their home and get back on track – a great example of how our neighbourhoods team can help when things have gone a little astray.**



## Steph's tips for a sustainable summer!

We asked our sustainability assistant Steph for her top tips for a more sustainable summer. Here's what she had to say...



Summer is here. Whether you are working throughout the summer holidays or have time to rest and recoup, there's plenty of simple steps we can take to enjoy our summer a little more sustainably. With warmer months and extra daylight hours, now is a great time to start changing habits to save energy and support the planet.



### Keep cool at home

A super simple step to save energy and water is to fill up bottles of water to keep in the fridge rather than running the tap to cool – and on those really hot days, keep drinks in the freezer or make home-made ice lollies!



### Make the sunshine work for you

During the summer months, the natural sunlight should do most of the work to brighten up the rooms you're using, so you can rely on indoor lighting less and save energy at home. Curtains and blinds can reduce the amount of heat transferred through your windows so closing them in rooms that you aren't using during the day can help to keep your home cool without using a fan.







## When to water

If you're in an area that doesn't have a hosepipe ban, water grass or plants at dawn or in the evening when it's cooler to prevent lots of the water from evaporating. Even if hosepipes are allowed, they use huge amounts of water so using a watering can or bucket where you can helps to make best use of this precious resource.

## Bring the outside in

Similarly, bring the outside in and keep your home cool naturally. If it's breezy, open windows and internal doors so natural ventilation can flow through before relying on fans. However, during a heatwave, it's best to leave windows shut when temperatures are high to keep your home cool. It might be tempting to keep them open, but when the air outside is warmer than it is inside it'll make you feel even hotter. It's best to open them early in the morning or later in the evening and close them during hotter times of day.



## Laundry day

For anyone with outdoor space, drying your laundry outside rather than in the tumble dryer will help to save energy and your clothes will smell lovely and fresh.

## Go green in the garden

Create a nectar café by planting flowers for pollinating insects like bees and butterflies. The Wildlife Trust has lots of information on wildlife friendly gardening including information on **wildflowers**, **the best plants for bees** and **how to make a bee hotel**.



## Beware of vampire devices!

Switching appliances fully off rather than leaving them on standby is another simple step to save energy at home. To make it even easier, it's worth looking into a standby saver or smart plug so you can turn all your appliances off standby in one go.



## Ice ice baby

Summer is a great chance to give your fridge some TLC. Typically, fridge-freezers account for around 12% of the average household's energy bill as they're always on and using energy. Cleaning and defrosting fridge-freezers helps to keep ice under control and helps them work as efficiently as possible.

## Tips for getting out and about

- It's important to stay hydrated during hot summer days. Remember to carry a reusable water bottle rather than buy bottled water when you're out and about to avoid plastic waste and save money!
- Summer is a great time for picnics or family barbecues. While plastic utensils and disposable plates may seem easy, they end up in landfills and emit greenhouse gases when they are broken down. Instead, opt for reusable containers and cutlery – make the most of the stuff you already have at home.
- Make the most of summer by exploring your local area and look up popular attractions nearby. There's lots of free or low-cost places to visit local nature and heritage - check out museums, nature reserves and parks.
- Cycling and walking are cheap and eco-friendly ways to travel as they reduce air pollution and perfect ways to enjoy the outdoors in summer. They also build up strength, are good for the heart, lungs, and overall circulation, plus exercise can support our mental health.
- Leave nothing but footprints! When we're out and about in open spaces, it's important to leave no trace. Remember to plan ahead, dispose of waste properly or take it home, respect wildlife and be considerate of others.
- Volunteering for a conservation group or project is a great way to support your local environment, be active in nature and meet new people. For suggestions check out The Wildlife Trust, National Trust, Groundwork and The Conservation Volunteers online.





# Katey's corner – what's going on in digital?

Katey, our knowledge co-ordinator, shares an update about what exciting new projects are on the horizon to make our customers' experiences even more effortless thanks to the latest technology!



It's been a busy year with the launch of our online repairs checker, our live chat and lots of exciting enhancements to our customer platform, My Account. In October we also launched our Help Hub which has been a great success – and don't forget, we're always looking for feedback, so use the thumbs up and thumbs down buttons at the end of each article to tell us about your experience!




**We've now got another exciting update for you about some technology on the horizon to make your life easier... we're introducing our repairs checker to our phone system!**

Our new voice bot means that you'll have the option of joining the queue to speak to customer services or using this new automatic tool to check the status of your active repairs when you call us. If you pick option one when you call, you'll be asked for some basic details like your address and date of birth, and our clever system will tell you what kind of repair you have booked, the type of tradesperson attending, and your appointment date and time. If you need to speak to us further about your repair, to make any changes or because you need some more information, our bot will transfer you through to an agent. Easy!

By introducing this to our phone systems it means you don't have to wait to speak to a member of our team to find out what's going on – so you'll get an answer quickly and without sitting on hold. It also frees up our customer services agents to help with those more complicated queries that can't be resolved without a good chat.



It's easy to access our digital services:

-  **My Account:** [futureshg.co.uk/myaccount/](https://futureshg.co.uk/myaccount/)
-  **Repairs checker:** [futureshg.co.uk/repairs](https://futureshg.co.uk/repairs)
-  **The Help Hub:** [thehelphub.futureshg.co.uk/](https://thehelphub.futureshg.co.uk/)

You can also live chat with us Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 4.45pm, and 8.30am to 4.15pm on Fridays by clicking the orange button on the homepage of our website.



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