

£75 shopping
voucher!
Competition
on page 19

New
customer roles!
See page 8 for
details.

Edition two, 2025

Futures in focus

Customers first issue



@futureshousing



Futures Housing Group



www.futureshg.co.uk

Welcome to your latest edition of Futures in Focus

We have an important question to ask you! We call the people who live in the homes we own and manage ‘**customers**’, but we’re aware that might not be the most suitable phrase to use. So, what better way to decide than to actually ask our ‘customers’.

Go to **futureshg.info/preference-survey** or scan the QR code to answer the following question.

How should we refer to the people who live in the homes we own and manage?

-  Customers
-  Residents
-  Tenants
-  Other



For now, we’ll continue to use the word customers as normal until we receive enough feedback to let us know if we should change our wording. We’ll share the results in the next magazine which’ll come through your letterbox in March next year.



Stand-up Sharon

Futures’ resident comedian is back, and she’s been working on some new material to share with you. Hecklers are allowed. Email **communications@futureshg.co.uk** with your best (family friendly) jokes and join Sharon in our next magazine.

“Why can’t you trust stairs? Because they’re always up to something!”

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Want the latest breaking Futures news? ▼

Follow us on social media to get regular news and updates.
We're on Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, plus our own online community
My Voice (futureshg.info/join-MyVoice).



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Futures Housing Group



www.futureshg.co.uk



FuturesHousingGroup

'Futures in the community' news

■ We love giving back to the community and thinking of new ways to give support.

Meet Maggie's Den

When retired Maggie Reed and her husband Kev moved into a Futures home in Heanor, Derbyshire in 2021, it wasn't long before she set herself the task of bringing people together to use our nearby community centre.

What originally started as less than a handful of people having a cup of tea in Gladstone Avenue community centre, has blossomed over the last two years and turned neighbours that didn't know each other into a large, close-knit group of friends - now known as Maggie's Den.

We had the pleasure of getting to film Maggie's Den earlier this year, so we could share with others just how important the group is to our customers. Some of the group kindly opened up to us and shared the difference it's making to their lives – go to **futureshg.info/Meet-Maggie** to see how valuable having a close community and safe space is.



Maggie's Den would love for more people to join them! They meet every other Tuesday, 10am until 2pm, at Gladstone Avenue community centre, Gladstone Avenue, Heanor, Derbyshire, DE75 7PU - everybody is welcome!



Taking a stand against ASB

Litter picks, community catch-ups and lots of partner events were on the menu for Futures and our customers during this year's Antisocial Behaviour Awareness Week.

We took part in the national campaign in July to show our commitment to helping prevent, manage and solve antisocial behaviour (ASB) across our communities.

Throughout the week we hosted or joined events with partners, including local councils and police services. At one event, we met young and keen litter picker Cooper, a 12-year-old boy from Langley Mill, Derbyshire who along with a neighbour goes out each week to collect rubbish on his street and a nearby green space where children play.

Cooper said: *"My neighbour got some litter pickers a while ago so every now and again we'd go and clear rubbish, but over the last few months we've been going out every Sunday."*

"There were a lot of people who littered here and just left it to other people to clear, but now they're even helping as well. I just like making the environment better – and it's easier to play football too!"

Carl Harper, Communities Manager at Futures said: *"It was great to see colleagues out in the community with customers and our partners across the East Midlands. We all have different responsibilities and powers, so by working together we're better placed to raise awareness and support our customers and their community."*



Customers' garden helps raise money for charity



When retired husband and wife George and Susan first moved into their home with Futures in 2021, they never expected to one day transform their garden of gravel and weeds into one fit for 250 visitors.

Every two years the village of Braunston, West Northamptonshire, hosts an open garden show to raise money for charity, and due to the colourful transformation of George and Susan's front and back gardens they were asked to take part.

George said: *"When we first moved in the back garden was totally bare, nothing but gravel, weeds and an uneven patio, and the front garden was just a lawn with even more weeds. I started by taking the patio out, and underneath was tonnes of sand. I got rid of all the rubble, made it level and put some borders in before putting down some astro turf."*

Susan said: *"It's quite funny as everyone else is out with their lawn mower and George is out with the Hoover!"*

Their garden has lots of large, colourful plants and flowers, as well as a raised vegetable patch at the front of their home where they grow and eat cauliflowers, tomatoes, courgettes, cabbages and runner beans. George also built an amazing summer house from scratch, which he uses to read books and as a space to join meetings with Futures, as he's a customer member of our Insight Committee. George said: ***"It took me two months to build and I'm very proud of it."***

George, 77 and Susan, 73 will celebrate their 54th wedding anniversary this November.

Susan said: *"I'm the plant lady and he's the digger and 'throw-it-awayer'. George has done the donkey work and created the garden and now it's my job to keep it going. I enjoy plotting a plant, and if it grows it grows. I'm not regimented with it, so I sometimes just put them all in together, as I don't mind them intertwining with each other."*



The open garden event raised a grand total of £2,500 for Macmillan Cancer Support!

Bringing in the money to build new homes

As a not-for-profit housing association, it's important we keep our finances strong so we can keep on building new affordable homes.

To do this we often take advantage of funding opportunities and we've recently had the great news that the government's Homes England agency has awarded us £16.5 million.

The money will help us build more new affordable homes across a mix of tenures, including social rent and shared ownership.

 **28 homes in Hucknall, Nottinghamshire.**

 **114 homes in Daventry, Northamptonshire.**



To keep up to date with where we're laying the foundations for all our new homes go to www.futureshg.co.uk/projects-in-the-pipeline

A year of adding to our formula

We've published our suite of annual reports for the year, including our annual review, financial statement and environmental, social and governance (ESG) report.

The annual review is hosted on its own website, and this year is set up as an interactive periodic table for people to explore the elements and formulas that make up our achievements over the last year.

Some of the main highlights include investing over £8.5m in our customers' homes through our planned repairs programme (such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows), building and acquiring 266 new affordable homes and keeping the prestigious Investors in People Platinum standard.

Explore our annual review:
futureshg.info/2025-report

Check out our ESG report:
futureshg.info/ESG-report-2025

Read our financial statements:
futureshg.info/financial-statements-2025



What happens on an estate walkabout

It might look like we're going for a gentle stroll on your street, but we promise we're not just stretching our legs!

Our Communities team organises and runs the walkabouts. Each communities housing officer has specific towns or villages they're responsible for and part of this responsibility is the walkabouts.

The visits usually last an hour or two, and the meeting point and streets to cover are always published along with the date and time on our website. The housing officer will wait at the meeting point for any guests to come along, whether that's organisations or customers, before setting off.

As well as the general appearance of streets, some of things they'll be checking on are:



litter



footpaths



fly-tipping



street signs



graffiti



green areas



communal areas



dog mess



hedges and boundary walls



lighting

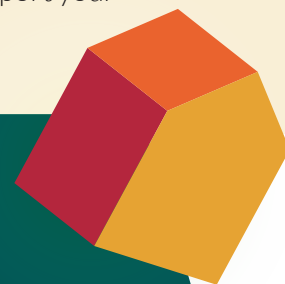


If something needs further action, then the communities housing officer will flag this as needing attention. We care about the communities where our customers live and know it's important to live in a safe and comfortable environment - which is why we do these walkabouts.

It's also just as important that we work closely with partners, as understandably we're not responsible for everything that happens on your street. That's why you may also spot the police, fire service, community groups and local councils tagging along too. So we can all work together to support your community the best we can.

To find a walkabout near you, go to www.futureshg.co.uk/walkabouts

Can't make a walkabout or not one near you? You can still share your feedback by filling in our form at www.futureshg.co.uk/walkabout-feedback



Stand-up Sharon

"What happens when two giraffes collide together? A giraffic jam."

New customer roles

At Futures we're always trying to find more ways for customers to have their say. We're excited to share some new opportunities that will give you the chance to get involved in shaping Futures and work with us to get the best out of your community.

Community champions

As a community champion, you'll be the voice of your local area, sharing what's important to the people who live near you. You'll help us with community events, make sure that the community's needs are being met, and share your views on what you think could make your area even better.

You'll be enthusiastic and committed to getting to know the people that live near you, and ready to feed back on the issues that affect your community. We're looking for someone with good communication skills, time to dedicate to hearing the voices of local people, and a real appetite for driving your community forward.

To recognise the time commitment you're making, you'll receive **£1,500 per year**. We'll also pay for reasonable expenses for things like travelling to our offices.

To tell us you're interested in becoming a community champion, email influence@futureshg.co.uk with your full name, address and a contact telephone number and email address.



We're hiring customers

Scrutiny work

We're going to be commissioning pieces of scrutiny work – where we take a closer look at particular processes, procedures or policies that shape the services you receive. As a member of our scrutiny pool, you'll be contacted from time to time to get involved in things like surveys, focus groups and in-person forums, to review and explore things like satisfaction data, trends in our complaints, or official documents. We're looking for people with an analytical mind, who can help us to see things through the eyes of a customer while remaining strategic and impartial.

To recognise the commitment involved in scrutiny work, you'll receive ad-hoc payments of between **£10 and £25** per piece of research, paid in shopping vouchers. We'll also pay reasonable expenses for things like travel if you take part in an in-person focus group.

To join our pool of scrutineers, email influence@futureshg.co.uk with your full name, address and a contact email address.



Catching up with Joe



In the last magazine we introduced you to Joe and his brand-new role of Customer Feedback Coordinator. Now he's almost a year into the role we caught up with him again to share some of his highlights of customer feedback so far.

What we're doing well

1

Customer feedback about our repairs service is consistently high. **90%** of customers are satisfied that their repair was completed first time without us needing to come out again. This is a nearly **15% increase** from previous years!

2

Staff are consistently found to be polite, helpful, friendly, empathetic, and professional. This is the case for both staff you see in person, like our repair operatives, and those you speak to over the phone, such as customer service agents. **94%** of customers were satisfied the repair operative was polite and friendly, and **90%** were satisfied the customer service agent was empathetic, professional, and helpful.

3

Customers often tell us they feel safe in their homes. '**Home is safe**' is our highest satisfaction score in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. Comments always suggest that when customers need us, Futures is there to support.

What we need to improve

1

Communication is consistently the highest root cause of complaints.

2

60% of customers say they had to call us more than three times to get a problem resolved, and nearly a third said they had to call us five or more times.

3

Last year, one of our lowest Tenant Satisfaction Measures scores was how well customers thought we listen to their views and act on them, with only two thirds of customers saying we do this.

These areas to improve are something we're continually working on, so we'll be sure to share the changes that come from this. One change we've already made are the new customer roles mentioned on the previous page. One of the main reasons customers said they felt like we don't listen to their views and act on them is because they don't think there's opportunities to be involved in decision making, so now we've got even more ways for customers to do this.



We're not the council

Lots of customers refer to Futures as the council or ask us questions about things that the council are responsible for. Earlier this year we asked customers on My Voice about their understanding of the differences between housing associations and the council, and while half of the customers said they had a clear or partial understanding, the other half either weren't sure, had a limited understanding or no idea about the differences.

Although, it is understandable why some people mistake us as being the same, as...



We both provide affordable, secure homes



Many of our homes were once owned by the council



You register with the council to go on their housing register for one of our homes.

But housing associations are independent, not-for-profit organisations, so we have different roles and responsibilities.



Who does what – common misconceptions

Manages the housing register	▶ local council
Sets the criteria and bidding priority on the housing register	▶ local council
Any questions to do with the housing register	▶ local council
Questions about rubbish and recycling	▶ local council
Questions about roads and paths	▶ local council
Questions about social care	▶ local council
Questions about council tax	▶ local council
Questions about green spaces	▶ this could be Futures or the local council
Questions about street lighting	▶ this could be Futures or the local council*

*If the lamppost has a number printed on it (usually on the front or top of the light) then this is the council. If there's no number at all this is Futures.

Did you know

Futures, the council and the police are responsible for antisocial behaviour, but the council and police generally have more powers than we do.

Housing associations may operate across multiple council borders. We've got homes all across the East Midlands covering lots of different local authority areas.

If someone is homeless, councils legally have to support them so the council is who you need to contact if you are homeless or might lose your home.

Although we do often help the council with temporary accommodation.

Councils set planning frameworks and approve planning and building regulations that we have to comply with. Councils also have a say in what tenures we offer in our new developments.

Whenever we build a new development, we help fund or deliver community infrastructure as part of this, including giving money towards local schools, community groups, roads and green spaces.



Stand-up Sharon

*"What did Sherlock Holmes do when he dropped his mobile phone?
He cracked the case wide open!"*

Five quick fire safety tips

1 | Test your smoke alarm regularly – when did you last check yours?



2 | Don't overload your plug sockets and extension cables.



3 | Turn electric blankets off overnight.



4 | Make sure there's no items too close to heaters.



5 | Set an escape plan for everyone you live with.



Own a vape or e-scooter?

How are you charging yours? They're likely to have a lithium-ion battery inside, which when used properly is safe. But they can become a fire risk when overcharged or damaged.

Make sure you:

-  Only use the charger supplied with the battery.
-  Buy replacements from the original manufacturer.
-  Don't charge in high temperatures or direct sunlight.
-  Never leave it charging while you're not there.



Helping you adapt with **home adaptations**

There's a rather controversial phrase some people with disabilities use to describe other people who don't have disabilities – 'TABs'. That stands for 'people who are temporarily able-bodied'. The idea behind it is that even those in the very best of health could well end up with disabilities down the line due to accidents, illness or old age.

Many disabled people will also point out that they are only 'less able' when the world around them is designed in a way that makes it harder or impossible for them to do things. So it's stairs without ramps or lifts and out of reach switches and the like that do the disabling. A world that is well designed so that everyone can participate makes people with all sorts of conditions feel far less 'disabled'.



With all that in mind we want to do our bit to help our customers to live life to the full when at home if their health or mobility decline. To do that we offer an aids and adaptations service to help with installing equipment or reconfiguring your home to make it more suited to your needs.

Small adaptations – things like handrails or lever taps – we can generally take care of ourselves. In the case of bigger changes such as installing ramps or a wet room – we'll work with health and social care specialists from the council and NHS to fully understand your needs and to apply for extra funding where needed. And if your home is really no longer suitable for you we can also look into finding somewhere new that better meets your needs.

The starting point though is letting us know you need a bit more help so we can start looking into what can be done to make life at home a bit easier.

Find out more and fill in an enquiry form on our website at **[futureshg.info/home-adaptations](https://www.futureshg.info/home-adaptations)** or simply give our customer services team a ring on the usual number.

My Voice

Customers leading the way on My Voice

Our online community My Voice gives customers a chance to have their say on our services by taking part in regular surveys – all while earning points to swap for vouchers!

Here's some of the projects they've recently helped us with:



Fire safety | Customers were asked to read a fire risk assessment letter and fire safety advice on our website.

My Voice told us

They were happy with the advice on the letter and website, that the tone was right, but we could improve some of the wording to clarify a few points, particularly reassurance around the 'stay put' advice. They also said we should give more information about the process of a fire risk assessment and suggested offering face-to-face sessions to discuss fire safety concerns.



What we're doing

We've changed the letter to make it easier to read and explain what happens during a fire risk assessment better. We've created a leaflet that simply explains the 'stay put' message and we'll be working with our Communities team to offer more drop-in sessions to speak to us in person about fire safety.



Communication at Futures

We asked customers to share what good communication looks like versus not so good communication when dealing with us.



My Voice told us

We're good at being non-judgemental, polite and helpful, however some said we don't always keep them up to date with their repair and they can struggle getting in touch with some teams. Our repairs service was the most mentioned area they told us they'd experienced both good and bad communication with.

What we're doing

We're reviewing how and when we send you text messages to make sure they're clear, timely, and helpful and we're introducing a new system for our Repairs team to keep you better informed about the progress of your repair. We've already updated how our Customer Services team handles your emails and response times have jumped down from five working days to two!

Our online options

Customers were asked to share their thoughts on our online 'self serve' services - MyAccount, our repairs checker, website and the Help Hub – essentially the tasks you can complete online without having to speak to anyone!

My Voice told us

The top three things you want to be able to do online with Futures are to raise repairs and book appointments, report antisocial behaviour and make changes to your personal information. For our current services, they said they liked being able to raise repairs, know the status of their repair, and the ease of use when these systems are working well. However, they didn't like the rent payment function, glitches when logging into MyAccount and that it wasn't always easy to use.



What we're doing

We're using this feedback as part of an ongoing project that will help shape all of the digital services we offer, including what customers would like to do more of online and what we could make simpler – we'll share more when we can!

Working together to tackle mould and damp

As the nights start to draw in and the temperature drops it's natural for us all to want to cosy up at home and fight the cold.

While modern living has brought us lots of innovations such as central heating and double glazing that help to keep homes more comfortable, they can still be at risk of damp and mould.

Warmer air in our homes can hold a lot of invisible moisture. That comes from the environment, our breath and lots of the normal things we do in our homes every day such as cooking, doing laundry and bathing. That damp air floats around inside our homes and if it goes into a cooler area such as a room you're not heating or awkward spaces behind cupboards and around windows it starts to cool. Cold air can't hold so much moisture so it can then turn to liquid which can collect on colder surfaces.

If this is left it can create conditions for mould to grow and also cause surfaces to become damp over time. And none of us want mould or damp in our homes, so what can we do about it? Well team work is the answer. There are things you can do to help yourself and things we can do as well.

Reducing the amount of moisture is a good place to start. Covering pans while cooking, turning on fans when you are showering or taking a bath, and drying clothes in well ventilated areas will all help to reduce the 'invisible steam' in your home. Opening windows from time to time will also let the moisture escape – although we know it also lets out expensive heat too so it's something you might just want to do for short times in the winter. And if mould does start to show,

try to wipe it up whenever you can to reduce the risk of it becoming a bigger problem.

Damp and mould can also be caused by faults in your home – for example if the damp proof course in the walls fails or because of a persistent water leak. So if you've done all you can to reduce airborne moisture and still have a problem, we need to know about it.

Call our customer contact centre or fill out our customer enquiry form futureshg.info/customer-enquiries-form and we'll come and check it out.

New legislation, known as Awaab's Law, comes into effect on 27 October that means all social landlords will have to deal with emergency repairs, damp and mould within specific timescales. You can see more information about that on the next page. Futures already works to this kind of deadline but the new law will tighten things up even further.

The law is quite complicated and different parts of it will be introduced over the next few years, but it sets new standards for the kind of repairs service you can expect. We'll be sharing more information about it with you over the coming months.



Awaab's Law – what all social landlords must do from 27 October 2025



Investigate reports of a potential damp and mould hazard in a social home within **ten working days** to find out if there is a hazard.



Give the customer a written summary of what we have found within **three working days**.



If a damp and mould hazard is found that poses a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of anyone living in property, make it safe (with temporary measures if necessary) within **five working days** of the investigation. Further work to prevent serious hazards reoccurring must be completed within **12 weeks** and overall repair works must be completed within a reasonable time period.



In an emergency, investigate and action any emergency repairs as soon as reasonably practicable and within **24 hours** – which is in fact how we already work at Futures.

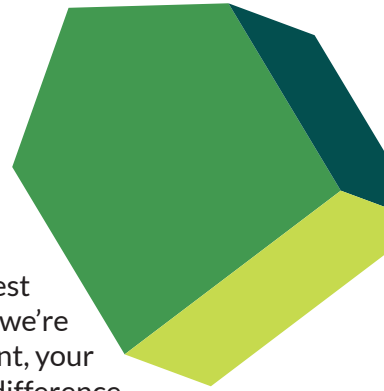


If the property cannot be made safe within these timescales, offer to arrange for the residents to stay in suitable alternative accommodation, at the landlord's expense, until it is safe to return.



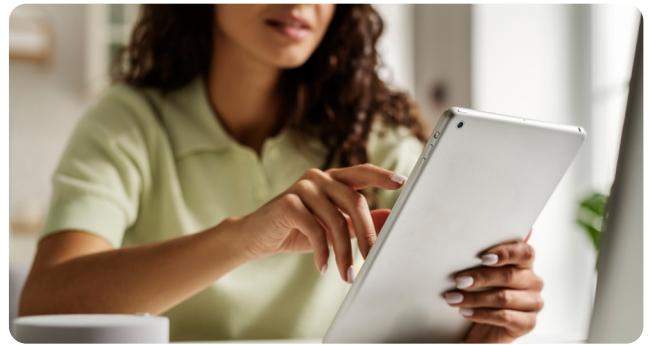
Keep clear records of everything we have done in responding to issues covered by the new law.

Comments, compliments and complaints



At Futures, we're always striving to find ways to improve as we want to provide the best service for our customers. And who better to tell us what we're doing right, and what we're doing wrong, than our customers! Whether you've sent us a compliment or a complaint, your feedback is incredibly valuable. It helps shape our services which ultimately makes a difference to our communities. Here are a few examples of how your feedback has driven real change:

You told us our complaints process wasn't very accessible as we didn't have an option to make a complaint or share feedback on our website. So, we created a new feedback form on our website where customers can share their views and experiences – we've had a fantastic response with many customers using the form to share their feedback!



You told us that communication is really important to you, especially when you need support as part of an ongoing issue. We're reviewing how we communicate with customers when they have a query and how we can make it better.

You told us that we haven't always handled pest problems as you'd expect as it can take time to get to the root of the issue. Finding the cause can be a complicated process, so our Communities team will now come and visit all customers after reporting pest issues to us, so they can offer any support you need throughout.



If you want to make a difference, then please share your feedback with us. Try out our new feedback form to let us know what we're doing well and what we could do better. Go to futureshg.info/complaints-and-feedback-form



Stand-up Sharon

"I'd tell you a secret joke about jam but you'd only go and spread it."

Crossword puzzle competition

A wicked witch has flown away on her broomstick with an item from one of our plumber's vans. Solve the animal themed crossword and rearrange the highlighted letters to reveal what item she's stolen. Email your answer to communications@futureshg.co.uk for your chance to win a **£75 shopping voucher!**

Entries close 5pm on 28 November. You must be a Futures customer to enter.

Read the full terms and conditions on our website www.futureshg.co.uk/competition.



Answer _ _ _ _ _ (6)

Across

- 4. Known as the king of the jungle (4)
- 5. Largest land animal (8)
- 6. Like to hang upside down (3)

Down

- 1. Santa has 12 of these (8)
- 2. This bird can almost turn their head all the way round (3)
- 3. Type of lizard that some people may have as a pet (6)



Stand-up Sharon

"I've been telling people about the benefit of eating dried grapes, it's all about 'raisin' awareness."

Thank you



futureshg.info/customer-enquiries-form



0300 456 2531



@futureshousing



Futures Housing Group



www.futureshg.co.uk