

Winter 2019

Hastoe
●●●● Group

@Home

Hastoe Housing Association resident magazine

Make a difference
in your local area
with our community
grant funding

Also in this issue:

- ▶ Our 2018-19 annual report special pages 4 - 7
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£

Worried
about money?

Learn more about
our **FREE** money
advice service

You can also read this issue online at www.hastoe.com

Your feedback is important to us...

Reviewing @Home magazine

We want to say a big thank you to everyone who responded to our survey about @Home magazine earlier this year. Your feedback has been really helpful in shaping future editions of the publication.

Based on your suggestions the magazine will now be published twice a year, bringing with it a new layout and fresh content. You can expect to receive your first copy of the new-look magazine early next year.

Some residents told us they would prefer to receive the magazine by email instead of in the post. If this is the case, you can change your preferences for receiving the magazine via MyHastoe, the online portal. If you're happy to continue receiving the magazine by post there's nothing you need to do – you will continue to receive it as normal.

Find out more about MyHastoe on the back page



Changes to our complaints process

We are reviewing the way we manage complaints to help make it more straight forward and easier to understand.



Our aim is to resolve any issue as quickly as possible, and we are currently developing different processes for dealing with different types of issues. The main change we will be making is to separate dissatisfaction about new property defects from complaints about the way our staff or contractors may have provided a service. We've also shortened the process, meaning a director will now review the complaint if the issue is not resolved at the first stage.

More information about this will be coming soon on our website and in the next edition of the magazine.



Hastoe is an early adopter of Together with Tenants, an initiative led by the National Housing Federation to increase accountability and resident involvement.

Read more at www.housing.org.uk/topics/together-with-tenants

Help us improve our services by giving us your feedback.

You can do this in a number of ways.

Meet Hastoe's Board

On Saturday 21 September, Hastoe Board Members and senior staff met with residents in London to get their feedback on how we could improve our customer service. A great range of issues were discussed, including street lighting, dealing with anti-social behaviour, services received by shared owners, improvements needed in communicating the status of repairs, and services delivered via the Hastoe Hub and online portal.

Ed Buscall, Hastoe's Board Chair, told residents that it's important for Hastoe to keep listening to their feedback and experiences so that we can improve our processes and services. Residents said they found the session very useful and appreciated the opportunity to discuss the matters that were important to them with senior staff.

Due to the success of the event, and in response to requests from residents, we plan to hold two more feedback sessions next year – one in the West and one in the East of England.

We will let you know more details in the New Year but if you are interested in coming along please call us on **01305 216930** (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm) or email **hundreds@hastoe.com**. We will provide lunch and reimburse travel expenses.



Chat to our Chief Executive

Hastoe's Chief Executive, Andrew Potter, holds a Residents' Phone Day twice a year.

He held the most recent Phone Day in November, and the next one is taking place on Wednesday 20 May 2020.

If you have any questions, an issue you'd like to discuss, or some feedback you'd like to share, this is your opportunity to chat directly with Andrew. Your views are vital in helping us to better understand your experiences and improve our services, so please do get in touch.

To book your 15 minute conversation, please call the Hastoe Hub on **0300 123 2250**. Spaces are limited and allocated on a first-come first-served basis.



Andrew Potter

Hastoe's 2018-19 annual report to tenants



Providing a snapshot of our performance between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019

Customer service and satisfaction



91%

of all calls answered

We answered **37,712 calls** over the year. This is over **1,000 more** calls than the 36,308 we answered in 2017-18

100%*

satisfaction with how calls were handled

Every tenant surveyed was happy with how their call was handled. This is higher than our **94% target** and the 94% we achieved in 2017-18

MyHastoe portal registrations

Following the introduction of our new online portal in August 2018, 767 residents had registered on MyHastoe by 31 March 2019.



Complaints

Complaints received by service area	2018-19	2017-18
Repairs and maintenance	31	30
Managing Hastoe homes	9	16

Our homes



At 31 March 2019, we owned and managed **7,630 homes** across the south of England, including **4,153 for social and affordable rent**.

Re-lets

197

vacant homes were re-let

This is 19 more homes than the 178 we re-let in 2017-18

16.9 days

to re-let a vacant home

This is longer than our target of 16 days and the 16 days we achieved in 2017-18

99.8%

rental occupation

At 31 March 2019, 99.8% of our rented homes were occupied by tenants

Rent

We collected a total of **£23,758,000** in rent and service charges from tenants.

£695k

arrears owed by current tenants

This is 2.9% against our target of 2.6%

12

tenants were evicted for rent arrears

232

tenants were supported by our Money Matters Advisors

New homes

We completed **40 homes** and began building 41 more.



Repairs and maintenance



Safety and quality

We spent **£7million** on works to our existing homes.

At 31 March 2019:



of homes had a valid gas safety certificate



of our blocks of flats had a current fire risk assessment



of properties met the Decent Homes Standard

Repairs performance

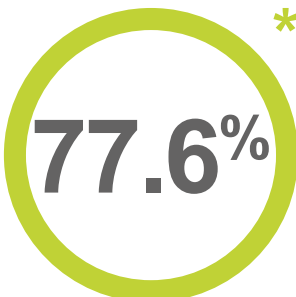
We completed more than **8,000 responsive repairs**, including over 1,000 emergency repairs and 7,000 routine repairs.



of emergency repairs were completed within 24 hours



of routine repairs were completed within 10 – 28 days



of residents were satisfied with their repair

This is lower than our 84% target and the 81% we achieved in 2017-18

Based on feedback from residents, we recognise that we still have improvements to make to the repairs services provided by us and our contractors. This is a priority for us, and we are continuing to work on improving our repairs services.

Value for money



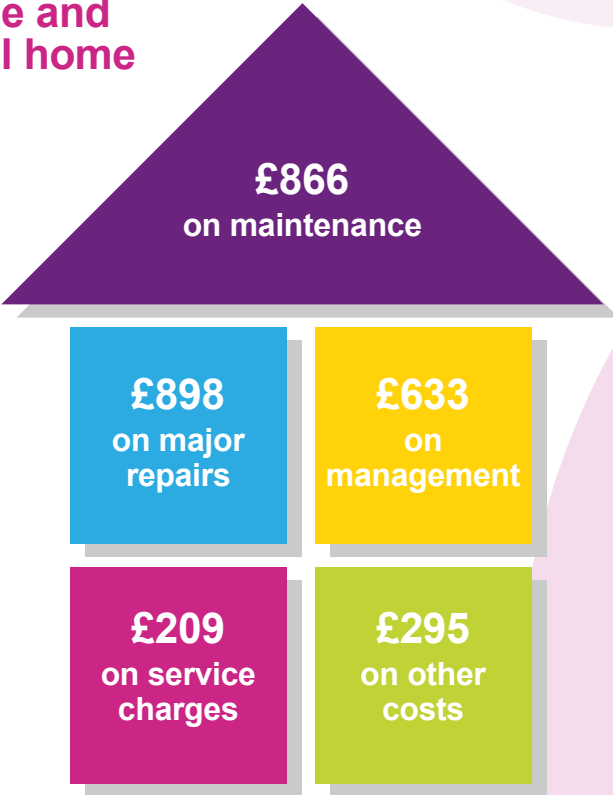
For us, value for money means achieving our ambitions in a cost effective way, delivering a good service and being efficient. We are charitable so any surplus we make is reinvested back into our homes, the services we offer and building new homes.

How we spent each pound of rent you paid

- 6p – Reinvested
- 15p – Housing management
- 45p – Financing costs
- 14p – Routine repairs
- 20p – Planned maintenance



It cost us an average of **£2,901** to manage and maintain a social home



*As we implemented a new housing management system in summer 2018, figures shown with an asterisk are based on only part of the year. Full results for 2019-20 will be available in the next annual report.

Free money advice for all residents

Are you worried about money, or unsure if you qualify for any benefits? Maybe you've had a change in circumstances such as an illness or redundancy?

Our Money Matters Advisors, Mark and Lisane, are on hand to help residents with all their cash-related questions and concerns from budgeting to benefits, and more.

The service is free and available to all of our residents – you do not need to have rent arrears to receive advice and support from our Money Matters Advisors.

They can help you with:

- ▶ Budgeting
- ▶ Completing a welfare benefits entitlement check
- ▶ Applying for benefits
- ▶ Assessing your finances, income and outgoings
- ▶ Managing your spending
- ▶ Reviewing your energy costs and switching providers
- ▶ Suggesting other agencies who can help

The team recently supported a resident who didn't think they would qualify for any help. After working with one of our Money Matters Advisors their income increased by over £200 per week in benefits and allowances.



From February 2020, you will no longer be able to make guest payments on our website. Please see the back page for how to register on our online portal, where you can pay your rent, report repairs, and lots more.

Remember to pay your rent this Christmas

Last December our residents' rent arrears went up by a total of £39,000, meaning that some faced eviction and had to be taken to court. In addition to their arrears, they each had to pay back £325 in court fees, making January extra expensive.

We know that Christmas can be a costly time of year, but protecting the roof over your head is more important.

You must prioritise paying your rent.

Paying in advance *not arrears*

As in your tenancy agreement, your rent should be paid in advance on the first of each month. For example, your rent for January is due on 1 January 2020. If you pay after the first of the month, your rent account will show as being paid in arrears.

Over the coming months we will be contacting all residents who are currently paying in arrears and asking them to bring their account up to date. Don't worry if you receive benefits or Universal Credit, or if you can't afford to pay the full month's rent on the first of the month – we can make an agreement with you to pay a small amount extra each month until your rent account is brought up to date.

If you're worried about paying your rent or want to find out more about how our Money Matters Advisors can help you, contact your Area Housing Manager directly or call the Hastoe Hub on 0300 123 2250.

Support your local area with our community grant funding

Our Community Grants Fund offers up to £250 to help deliver community-based projects that benefit our residents and their local area.

In the past year our funding has supported a scout group in Essex, provided a new play area for children in Somerset, and contributed to cooking classes for vulnerable residents in Surrey. A number of schools that our residents' children attend have also benefitted from the funding, with a new sensory garden at a school in Essex, a successful school fete in South London and a new sensory room at a school in Devon.

Funding is still available, and we particularly welcome applications from projects that will support Hastoe's commitment to sustainability and the environment.

Do you have an idea that could help to protect wildlife or create more green space in your area? For example, we could provide funding for the equipment for a local litter pick, or materials to help you dig a pond, build a community garden or install bird boxes.

For more information and an application form please contact Helen Russell on **0300 123 2250** or email **hrussell@hastoe.com**



Ten tips for a more sustainable Christmas

Christmas is a time of celebration and generosity, but all the shopping, food and presents can create a huge amount of waste – leading to a negative impact on our environment. So here are ten tips to help you enjoy a more eco-friendly festive period:

1. Take reusable bags with you when you go Christmas shopping
2. Cut down on meat by trying out some vegetarian or vegan recipes
3. Re-use Christmas decorations from last year or make your own
4. Save energy by using LED Christmas lights
5. Choose recyclable wrapping paper or use gift bags instead
6. Turn your Christmas leftovers into a tasty soup, curry or pie
7. Try your hand at DIY and give homemade gifts such as cookies or soap
8. Send e-cards instead of paper ones
9. Ditch the plastic cups and straws at your Christmas party
10. Give time and experiences instead of gifts

Happy Christmas from everyone at Hastoe!

Fire safety in your home

Your safety is our top priority and we do all we can to make sure you and your family are safe. However, there are things you can also do to reduce the chances of a fire starting and spreading in your home.

Essential fire safety tips

- ▶ Test all smoke alarms regularly.
- ▶ Dispose of rubbish and cigarettes properly.
- ▶ Do not store anything on balconies or in communal areas where it can provide fuel for a fire, create an obstruction or cause someone to trip.
- ▶ Take care when cooking with oil and never leave cooking unattended.
- ▶ Take special care with candles and incense burners. Always use holders and keep them well away from curtains and fabrics.
- ▶ Make sure you have an escape plan.



Smoke alarms

Working smoke alarms could save your life by providing an early warning and extra time to escape if there is a fire. You should regularly check that the smoke alarms in your home are working and change the batteries when necessary. Vacuuming your smoke alarms will remove dust and dirt that can stop them from working. If you don't have smoke alarms installed, or if you can't get them to work, please contact us.

Smoking

Smoking causes more deaths by fire than anything else. Make sure you put cigarettes out fully and dispose of them correctly – don't throw them on the floor or out of the window.

Fire safety in the kitchen

Most fires start in the kitchen, so make sure yours is safe.

- ▶ A major cause of fire is the build-up of fat and oil in pans, as it can easily ignite when heated. Clean your pans regularly.
- ▶ Never use water on an oil pan fire. Water reacts with the oil and will cause a fireball.

- ▶ If a pan catches fire do not attempt to move it. Only turn off the heat if it is safe to do so.
- ▶ Do not leave cooking unattended. Take pans off the heat or turn the heat down if you're called away from the cooker.

Preventing electrical fires

- ▶ Make sure electrical appliances have a British or European safety mark when you buy them.
- ▶ Try and keep to one plug per socket, especially for high-powered appliances like washing machines and freezers.
- ▶ Don't overload freezers or fridge freezers, especially older models.
- ▶ Electrical leads should not be run under carpets as any damage will go unseen.
- ▶ Unplug appliances when you're not using them or at night to help to reduce the risk of fire.
- ▶ Don't leave mobile phones charging overnight, especially on your bed or under your pillow. Batteries can overheat and catch fire.
- ▶ Regularly remove the fluff from tumble dryers.
- ▶ If you use a portable heater, use an oil filled one instead of a halogen, bar or convector heater.
- ▶ Always keep heaters well away from clothes, curtains and furniture.

Rubbish: remove and report it

Last year thousands of fires across the country were caused by rubbish. They start easily, and a large number of them are deliberate. Dumped furniture, car tyres, scraps of wood, old mattresses and cardboard boxes look bad but are also potential fire hazards and a target for arsonists.

- ▶ Keep rubbish away from buildings, doors and windows.
- ▶ Keep exits and escape routes clear of rubbish.

Keep shared areas clear

- ▶ Items left in shared areas or corridors can act as fuel for a fire – this includes doormats. Please remove them and don't leave anything, like bikes and buggies, in corridors or communal areas where they can cause an obstruction.
- ▶ If you see anything obstructing a shared area, please report it by contacting the Hastoe Hub on 0300 123 2250.

WARNING: removal of property

If our staff see any items in shared areas that could present a serious fire hazard they may remove them without notice and charge you for the cost of removal.

Make a fire escape plan

Being prepared for a fire can save lives.

With everyone in your household:

- ▶ Plan what you would do if there was a fire in your home.
- ▶ Agree your escape route out of the building.
- ▶ Make sure you all know where the keys to the front door and windows are kept.
- ▶ Learn how to navigate the stairs in darkness so you could do the same in thick smoke.
- ▶ Keep your escape route clear of obstacles.



WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE



Call 999

Call the emergency services as soon as it is safe to do so. Do not try to tackle the fire yourself as it could put you and others in danger. The sooner you call 999, the sooner the fire brigade will be sent to deal with the fire.

Fire inside your home

Try to stay calm and, if you can, close all doors to prevent smoke and fire spreading. Unless you live in a block and have been told by the fire brigade to 'stay put', you should get out and stay out. Do not waste time rescuing valuables. Alert your neighbours and do not return to your home until the fire brigade tells you it is safe.

Smoke

If there is a lot of smoke, stay low. Crawl along the floor where there is less smoke and the air will be cleaner.

Do not use lifts

Use the stairs. If you live in a block, make your way out using the emergency exit staircase. During fires, lifts are dangerous because you may become trapped inside.

Do it online with MyHastoe

With MyHastoe, there's no need to call us or wait for the Hub to open – you can access your Hastoe account online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.



Pay your rent

View your rent account
Make a payment
Set up a direct debit



Report a repair

And track the status of your repairs



Manage your tenancy

Update your details
Apply to keep a pet
Make a complaint or give a compliment
Plus lots more!



Go to ***myhastoe.com*** to register today

It's quick and easy to sign up – all you need is your email address,
date of birth and tenancy reference number

Contact the Hastoe Hub

☎ 0300 123 2250

✉ customerservices@hastoe.com

🕒 **Opening times:**
9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday

☎ **Out of hours emergency number:** 0345 266 2567
🕒 5pm – 9am, Monday to Friday, weekends and bank holidays

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Other ways to stay in touch

🏠 hastoe.com

🐦 twitter.com/hastoehousing

📘 facebook.com/groups/hastoeresidents