

Autumn 2020

Hastoe
Group

@Home

Hastoe Housing Association resident magazine

**Enter our sustainability
competition for your
chance to win £25!**

Also in this issue:

- Your feedback makes a difference
page 7
- Our 2019-20 annual report special
pages 8-11

£

**Our Money
Matters Advisors
are here to help
you through the
pandemic**

You can also read this issue on our new website at www.hastoe.com

In this issue...

Over the past six months at Hastoe, like the rest of the world, we have been learning how to deal with the impact of the coronavirus, whilst doing all we can to keep you, our staff and our contractors as safe as possible.

We understand that the pandemic has placed many of you in financial difficulties. If you're struggling with your money due to a drop in income, please go to page 4 to find out how our Money Matters Advisors can help.

Although it's been a tough time for everybody, there have been lots of uplifting stories of connection and community spirit.

Our teams have been working hard to help us continue providing as many services as possible. We've even managed to safely begin building more new homes for people in rural areas, which you can read more about on page 13.

We've also been touched by how our residents and colleagues have pulled together to help their communities through the pandemic.

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Here are a few of our favourite photos...



One of our resident's children painted stained glass windows to help brighten up the local care homes in Norwich.



In Dorchester, our Property Services Manager Kirsty baked cakes and biscuits for the hospital where her mum and sister work to help keep them and their colleagues going during long and difficult shifts.



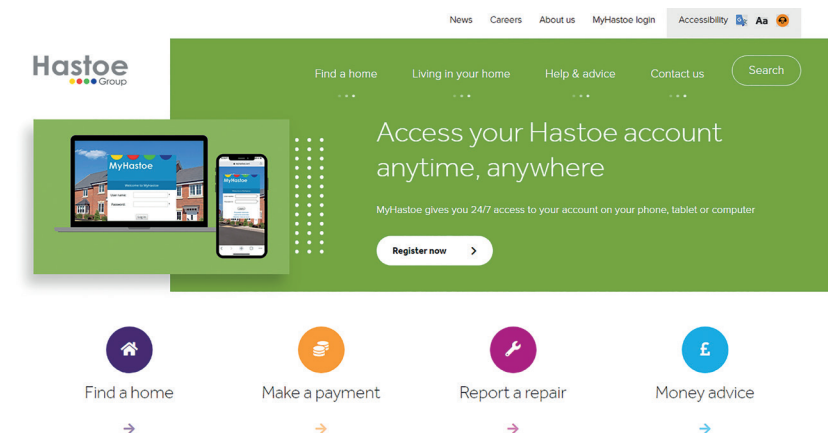
Louisa, one of our Customer Service Advisors, has been volunteering at her local Co-op every Saturday to help with orders and deliver shopping to elderly people in south west London.

We'd love to hear more of your moments of kindness and community spirit during the coronavirus pandemic. **Please send your stories and photos to communications@hastoe.com or write to us at The Communications Team, Hastoe Housing, Marina Court, 17 Marina Place, Hampton Wick, KT1 4BH.** We'll feature your submissions in the next magazine.

Visit our new and improved website at www.hastoe.com

In March we launched our new website to help you find the essential information you're looking for more easily. While we were at it, we also added more information about repairs and staying safe at home, including a handy guide on what to do in an emergency.

The website is also designed to be your go-to place for all our latest news, including how our services are affected by the coronavirus.
Go to www.hastoe.com



Report a repair or pay your rent in a couple of clicks

You can report a repair and pay your rent from the comfort of your sofa or whilst waiting for a bus when you're registered with the online MyHastoe portal. More than 1,500 residents have already discovered how easy it is to do from their phone, tablet or computer. To avoid you having to wait for our Customer Services Team to answer your call, there are a range of tasks you can carry out online in seconds with MyHastoe.



Go to www.myhastoe.com and register today. It's quick and easy to sign up – all you need is your email address, date of birth and tenancy reference number. If you can't find your tenancy reference number please email customerservices@hastoe.com with your name, address and contact telephone number, and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Virtual repairs appointments

The coronavirus pandemic has encouraged us to find new ways of working online. Our Maintenance Surveyors have been engaging with residents via video calls to virtually inspect their homes and diagnose repairs. This has helped us help you without needing to enter your homes. When you next need to report a repair, please let us know if you're happy for us to inspect your home via a video call.



We're here to help with your money

Our Money Matters Advisors, Mark and Lisane, have helped more than 50 residents who have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic, including many self-employed and furloughed workers. Since the outbreak, we have also seen a large increase in the number of you claiming Universal Credit.

Mark and Lisane offer free money advice to all of our tenants, and can help you with a range of questions or concerns such as rent payments and debt recovery. They can also provide advice about which benefits to apply for and how to claim, including:

- Universal Credit
- Self-employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS)
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Maternity and child benefits
- Disability benefits such as Personal Independence Payments and Discretionary Housing Payments.

Here's what a few of our residents said after receiving support from our Money Matters Advisors:

"The Money Matters people at Hastoe were excellent. It's reassuring to know I can organise a payment plan for any arrears. Hastoe has been very supportive with relevant and proactive help and advice during this difficult time."

"Thank you for sorting out our Housing Benefit payments, backdated by 18 months. Fantastic, and much appreciated."

"Thanks for letting me know that discretionary payments were available to us. We applied and received a letter to say we have been awarded help."

Get in touch

Our Money Matters Advisors are on hand to support you. The sooner you contact them, the sooner they can help you.

Mark Adkins, Money Matters Advisor (West)

✉ madkins@hastoe.com

Lisane Warwick, Money Matters Advisor (East)

✉ lwarwick@hastoe.com

Alternatively you can call the Hastoe Hub on **0300 123 2250** and ask to be referred.

You can also find out more on our website:

🌐 www.hastoe.com/moneyadvice

Further information and advice

Government advice

www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Citizens Advice

www.citizensadvice.org.uk
0344 411 1444

National Debtline

www.nationaldebtline.org
0808 808 4000

Turn2us

www.turn2us.org.uk

Money Savings Expert

www.moneysavingexpert.com

Got a project? *Get a grant!*

We're offering grants of up to £250 to help you get your community project off the ground. We especially welcome applications that protect wildlife, preserve green spaces and help young people learn more about the environment.

Over the past year we awarded 13 Community Grants across a wide range of projects that benefited our residents and their local areas.

If you'd like to make a difference in your community, please visit www.hastoe.com/grant or email Helen Russell at hmrussell@hastoe.com for an application form.

Please note, the Community Grant only supports activities in your wider community and is not able to provide funding for improvements to our estates or gardens. If you think work is needed to your building or garden please report it as a repair.

Share your ideas, save the environment, win prizes

Do you have an easy but effective idea for looking after your environment? We're calling on residents to share their sustainable suggestions in our Reduce, Reuse, Recycle competition.

Perhaps you know a simple way of using less water or electricity? Maybe you have a favourite recipe for reusing leftover food or for making your own eco-friendly cleaning products. It could be that you have a clever way of recycling or reusing everyday items.

However you try to make a difference to your environment, we want to hear about it! If you have any photos demonstrating your idea we'd love to see that too.

The residents who send in the top 3 suggestions will each receive a **£25 shopping voucher**. We'll also share the winning ideas on our website and in the next edition of Home magazine.

"We're over the moon!"

A gardening group in West Sussex was awarded £250 for a new water dispenser to look after plants and flowers in the local area. As well as gardening, the group also helps neighbours get to know each other better and form new friendships.

They said:

"Thank you so much for the grant, we are over the moon! There are lots of plants that need to be watered regularly so the new dispenser is the answer to our prayers."



How to enter

Please send us your suggestion by Sunday 29 November. You can email us at communications@hastoe.com or write to us at The Communications Team, Hastoe Housing Association, Marina House, 17 Marina Place, Hampton Wick, KT1 4BH.

Remember to include your name, address and telephone number so that we can contact you if you win.

Competition time!

Getting involved

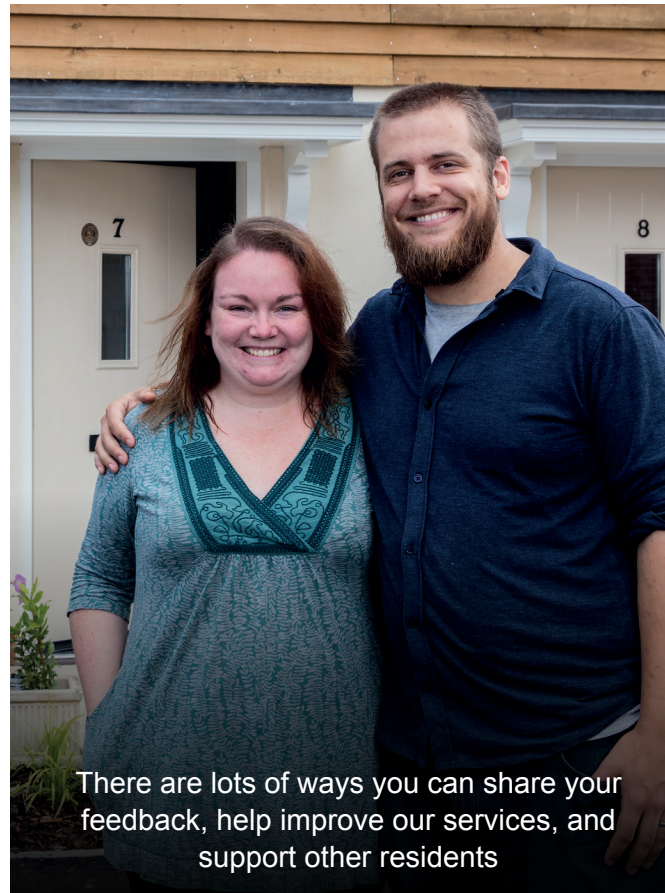
As a resident, your views and experiences are important in helping us to improve our communities and shape the services we offer. There are a variety of ways that you can get involved in providing feedback on the issues that matter most to you and help make a difference to the way we work.

Join the Hastoe Hundreds Club

The Hastoe Hundreds is a group of volunteer residents who get involved in reviewing our policies and taking part in consultations, usually via online surveys. We use the feedback we receive from them to review and improve our work. The Hastoe Hundreds Club is open to all residents – if you'd like to join or find out more please email mshort@hastoe.com.

Become a Resident Champion

Resident Champions support our Area Housing Managers by acting as their eyes and ears on the ground. At our smaller housing developments they help to monitor work being carried out by our contractors, such as cleaning and repairs. If you would like to get involved in helping out in your neighbourhood, please contact your Area Housing Manager.



There are lots of ways you can share your feedback, help improve our services, and support other residents

You can chat to Andrew on Wednesday 4 November

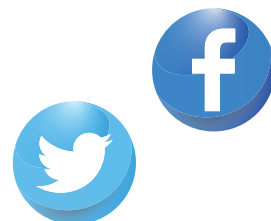


Chat to our Chief Executive

The next Residents' Phone Day is taking place on Wednesday 4 November between 3 – 7.30pm. Our Chief Executive Andrew Potter will be taking calls from residents, giving you the opportunity to ask him a question, discuss any issues or share your feedback directly. Please call the Hastoe Hub on **0300 123 2250** or email customerservices@hastoe.com if you'd like to book a slot for a phone call with Andrew.

Connect with us on social media

Join the Hastoe Residents' Group on Facebook to receive notifications on our latest updates, take part in surveys and connect with other residents across the south of England. You can also follow us on Twitter [@HastoeHousing](https://twitter.com/HastoeHousing).



Improving the way we handle complaints

Following feedback from residents, we have improved the way we handle complaints. We want to make it as simple as possible for customers to raise a complaint and our aim is to resolve your issue quickly.

What is a complaint?

We will investigate complaints about any service provided by Hastoe or on our behalf by our contractors. Some areas of customer dissatisfaction, including the first time you request a service such as a repair, are not investigated as complaints.

How we deal with complaints

Our complaints process has two stages. At the first stage, your complaint will be investigated by the manager responsible for the service you are unhappy about. Most complaints are resolved at this stage, however if you are not satisfied with the response it will be escalated to the relevant director for review.

If you are still unhappy with the outcome following the director's review, you have the right to refer your complaint to a 'designated person', who will be your MP or local councillor. They will decide whether the matter should be referred to the Housing Ombudsman. Alternatively, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service directly eight weeks after the end of Hastoe's review process.

Your feedback makes a difference

We are committed to using the feedback you provide in complaints to improve our services for everyone. Over the past six months we have made several changes following complaints from residents, including:

- Tracking calls via our housing management system to enable managers to monitor and manage staff performance in calling customers back.
- Introducing more reviews of our ongoing antisocial behaviour (ASB) cases to ensure that we are managing them effectively. Our ASB policy will also be reviewed this year and will clearly outline what actions we're able to take as a landlord in response to complaints of ASB.
- Ensuring our Regional Maintenance Surveyors now review outstanding repairs orders every week.

You can find out more about our complaints policy and how to make a complaint at www.hastoe.com



Hastoe's 2019-20 annual report to tenants

How we did between 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020

Customer service and satisfaction



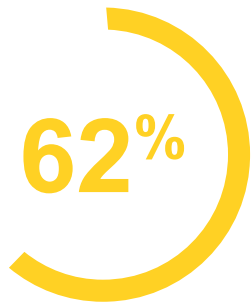
of all calls answered

We answered more than 33,000 calls throughout the year



of issues were resolved in the first phone call

This is higher than the 83% we achieved in 2018-19



of customers were satisfied with how their call was handled

174 callers out of the 452 who responded to the survey expressed dissatisfaction with our service. This is equal to 0.5% of all callers

In September and October 2020 we carried out an anonymous Tenant Satisfaction Survey to find out what you think about our services and how we can improve. The results of the survey will be published in early 2021 and will help us to understand what's most important to you. We also recognise that we need to improve the way we handle calls and will review this service as part of our commitment to increasing tenant satisfaction.

Online services

1,348

residents were registered on the online portal MyHastoe as of 31 March 2020. This is 581 more residents than the 767 last year

16%

of all customer interactions took place via MyHastoe throughout the year

Interactions via MyHastoe rose to 32% in March 2020 when our customer service centre was closed. We also launched our new website in March 2020 to help you find the information you need more easily online. You can read more about our new website on page 3.

Complaints

Complaints received by service area	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
Repairs and maintenance	57	31	30
Managing Hastoe homes	17	9	16

Following feedback from our residents, we have made some changes to the way we handle complaints. We are focused on resolving issues as quickly as possible and using what we learn from complaints to improve our services for everybody. Find out more on page 7.

Managing our homes



At 31 March 2020, we owned and managed **7,669 homes** across the south of England, including **4,182 for social rent and affordable rent**.

Re-lets

178

vacant homes were re-let

This is 19 less homes than the 197 we re-let in 2018-19

21 days

to re-let a vacant home

This is longer than our target of 16 days and the 16.9 days we achieved in 2018-19

99%

rental occupation

This means we missed out on 0.6% of rent due to vacant homes throughout the year

On average, it took us longer than last year to re-let a vacant home. This was due to staff shortages and contractor performance. We recognise that we need to make improvements in this area, and will be investing in more resources and managing our contracts more effectively in 2020-21.

Rent

We collected a total of **£23.9million** in rent and service charges from tenants.

£630k

arrears owed by current tenants

This is **2.7%** of our total rent and services charges, against our target of **2.5%**. It is lower than the **2.9%** we achieved in 2018-19

12

tenants were evicted for rent arrears

This is unchanged from the previous year

305

tenants were supported by our Money Matters Advisors

This is 73 more people than the 232 we helped in 2018-19

Since March 2020, our Money Matters Advisors have been providing additional financial support and advice to residents who have been impacted by the coronavirus outbreak. During this time, our Housing teams also contacted vulnerable tenants to check on their welfare.

New homes

We are committed to building homes that rural communities can take pride in. In 2019-20 we completed **48 new homes** and began building **18 more**.



Visit p4 to see how our Money Matters Advisors could help you

Learn more about our new homes on p13

Repairs and maintenance



Safety and quality

Your safety remains our top priority, and we are continuing to invest in fire safety and building safety works. In 2019-20 we spent over **£7.5million** on works to our existing homes.

At 31 March 2020:



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

This matches the 100% we achieved for gas safety certificates, fire risk assessments and Decent Homes Standard in 2018-19

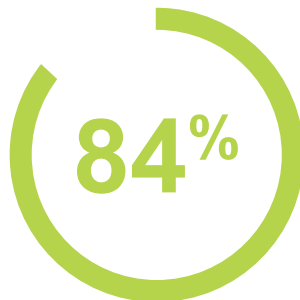
Repairs performance

We completed more than **9,896** responsive repairs throughout the year.



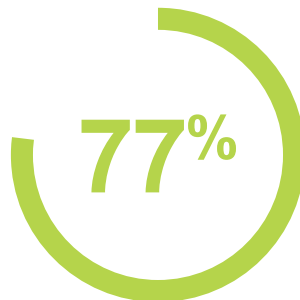
of emergency repairs were completed within 24 hours

This is higher than the 93% we achieved in 2018-19



of routine repairs were completed within 10 – 28 days

This is higher than our target of 80%



of residents were satisfied with their repair

This is the same as the 77% we achieved in 2018-19 and lower than our target of 80%

We recognise that we still need to make improvements to our repairs service, and this will remain a priority in 2020-21. To help do this, we are investing in more resources, improving our systems, and managing our contracts more effectively.

Value for money



For us, value for money means delivering our services and achieving our mission of building sustainable homes for rural communities in a cost effective and efficient way.

How we spent each pound of rent you paid

12p – Housing management costs

This is what we spent on managing tenancies, including collecting rent, dealing with antisocial behaviour and carrying out safety checks

5p – Reinvested

This is the money we reinvested back into our homes, the services we offer and building more new homes

15p – Planned maintenance

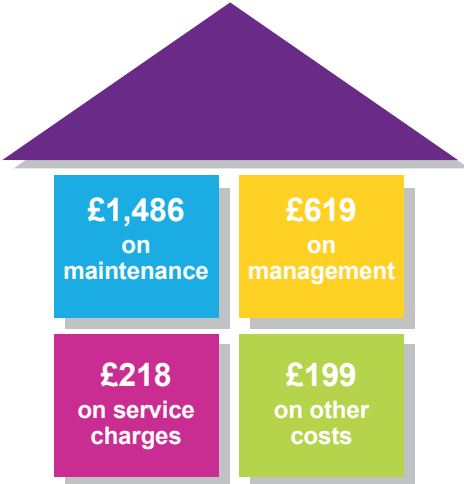
This is what we spent on improvements to your homes, such as a new roofs, windows or kitchens

50p – Financing costs

This is what we spent on repaying the loans we use to finance the building of new homes

18p – Routine repairs

This is what we spent on carrying out repairs to your homes



Over the year, it cost us an average of **£2,522** to manage and maintain a social home

How we compared to other housing associations in 2019-20*

	Hastoe's performance	All housing associations combined	Top performers
Customer satisfaction with how their call was handled	62%	87%	93%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with their repair	77%	88%	92%
Days to re-let a vacant home	21	22	17
Days to complete a repair	13	12	9

* Benchmarking against HouseMark 2019/20 results for traditional English housing associations

Hastoe's plan for 2020-23

Every year we review and update our corporate plan based on the feedback we receive from residents, changes in government policies and the economy. Although a lot has changed over the past 12 months, our Board has agreed we should continue to focus on the things you've told us are important to you – improving customer service and building high-quality new homes.

You can read our corporate plan on our website at www.hastoe.com/corporate-plan



Investing in our homes

Over the past year we have been reviewing the amount of money we invest in improvements to our homes. As part of this review, a group of involved residents called the **Hastoe Hundreds** told us they would like Hastoe to spend more on home improvements, particularly towards new kitchens.

We have listened to this feedback, and will be increasing the amount we are planning to invest in home improvements over the next five years by £4.9million, to a total of £21.8million.

We make decisions on when improvements to your home need to be made based on the age and condition of items such as your bathroom, kitchen, windows, or heating system. This means that when a part of your home reaches the end of its lifecycle, we will arrange to inspect it before making a decision about whether it needs to be replaced.

Servicing your aids and adaptations

We sometimes provide aids and adaptations to help our residents live more independently in their homes, such as a stair lift, ramp or through-floor lift. These need to be checked periodically to ensure they are safe for continued use. If you have an aid or adaptation in your home please contact us so that we can ensure the details on our system are accurate and arrange servicing appointments as and when needed.

☎ 0300 123 2250

✉ customerservices@hastoe.com



Artist's impression of our new homes in Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire

Building new homes

By spring next year we are planning to have started building almost 90 new homes across the south of England. Although the coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on our developments, all of our active sites have now safely resumed and we have begun building more rural homes for local people.

Several of our developments are due to be completed between summer and autumn 2021, and will offer a mix of social rent and shared ownership homes. These include:

- 11 new homes in Bluntisham, Cambridgeshire
- 6 new homes in Stutton, Suffolk
- 15 new homes in Icklesham, East Sussex

"I love my new home"

We opened six homes in South Tawton, Devon last summer. New resident Sally Burt says:

"We used to rent privately but our cottage was very damp and my children, a girl and a boy, had to share a room. We now have three bedrooms and I love my new home. My children play outside with the other kids in the cul-de-sac. It feels like a real home and we're part of our own little community."

If you'd like to tell us what your Hastoe home means to you, please email communications@hastoe.com or write to us at The Communications Team, Hastoe Housing, Marina House, 17 Marina Place, Hampton Wick, KT1 4BH



Sign-up for Voluntary Right to Buy updates

In the last general election the Government promised to extend the Right to Buy, which allows social housing tenants to buy the home they live in from the housing association that owns it at a discounted price. A regional pilot was launched in the Midlands, however a date has still not been set for the full roll out of the scheme.

We don't currently know who will be eligible for the scheme or whether Hastoe properties will be included. If you would like to be added to our mailing list for updates on the Voluntary Right to Buy scheme, please email sales@hastoe.com with your name and address. Alternatively, you can sign up to receive updates on changes that might affect you at www.righttobuy.gov.uk.

Preventing condensation and mould

We all generate moisture during our daily activities, but there are steps you can take to keep your home free from damp and mould.

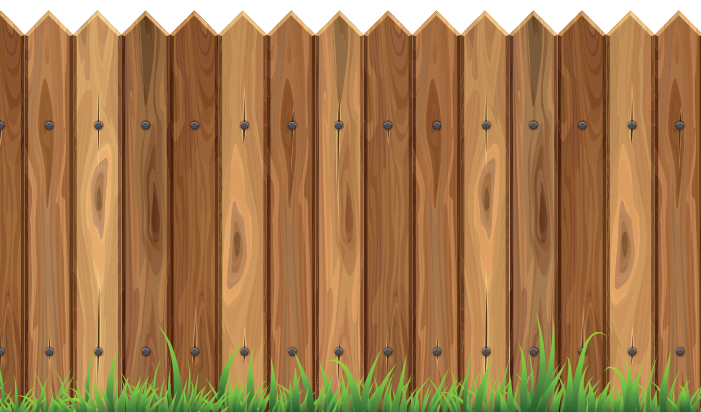
- When cooking, bathing or hanging washing close your internal doors, open your windows and use an extractor fan where possible.
- Always put lids on saucepans and stop them from boiling longer than needed.
- Keep your heating on low throughout the day rather than turning it off and on.
- Leave space at the back of cupboard shelves for air to circulate.
- Keep bulky items and materials away from external walls.
- Wipe away any condensation or water as it forms.



Fencing

Hastoe is responsible for looking after fences that border onto public roads, footpaths or shared gardens owned by us. We aim to repair fences with matching materials, however, where large sections need replacing we will use chain link.

Tenants are responsible for looking after fencing and gates within the boundary of their home, such as car parking spaces or front gardens. If a fence needs repairs or replacing it is up to you and your neighbour to agree between you how this is done.



Dealing with pests

If you have pests in your home, you are responsible for dealing with them. Your local authority may be able to help, or you can pay for a Pest Control Specialist to visit your home.

Please only contact us about pests if they are in a communal area or there is an infestation affecting several homes.

Top tips for keeping your home pest-free:

- Clean up food spills and crumbs right away.
- Never leave food (including pet food) or dirty dishes out overnight.
- Put all rubbish into your bin or the bin store.
- Keep your garden tidy. Rats and mice like to nest in old furniture.
- If you like to feed birds, use a table or a feeder to keep it off the ground.
- Seal holes around pipework with filler.
- Keep communal areas clean and rubbish-free.



Visit our website for more information about repairs and tips on looking after your home.



www.hastoe.com/looking-after-your-home

When something goes wrong at home, *Hastoe is here to help...*

Meet one of the people who helps to sort out your repairs and ensure your homes are safe – our Regional Maintenance Officer, Michelle Biebuyck.



Here, Michelle talks us through her day, including inspecting properties, completing repairs, and helping residents to resolve issues in their homes.

9am: Michelle starts her day by checking her voicemails and emails in case any emergencies have been reported overnight.

She looks at what tasks she has been assigned and checks her calendar to see what visits she has booked in. She says:

“My work is very fast paced. Prioritising what needs to be done first can be challenging but I never get bored. Every day is different.”

10.30am: Michelle's first visit of the day is to see a resident in Saffron Walden, Essex, whose home has had a bad leak. She chats to the resident to find out more about the problems the leak has caused and takes photos of the water damage.

Meeting residents is Michelle's favourite part of her job. She says:

“I really enjoy helping people and aim to take the worry out of any problems they're having with their home. I always try to make a difference to our residents' lives.”

11.30am: Michelle stops by a vacant home to carry out an inspection. She assesses what repairs will be needed before the next tenant can move in. Michelle also checks the gas and electrics and changes the code on the key safe.

1:00pm: In the afternoon Michelle drives over to West Hanningfield, where Hastoe is responsible for maintaining a rural pathway. Local residents have been concerned about the safety of the path as bad weather has caused the ground to become uneven.



Michelle uses yellow spray paint to mark out any potential trip hazards and to highlight where our contractors need to carry out repair works.

3.30pm: Michelle arrives back home after her visits and has a quick cup of tea. She inputs the information and pictures from the day's visits into our system. She works out how much the repairs works will cost and then books in the jobs with our contractors.

4.30pm: Michelle finishes the day with a couple of phone calls to her colleagues. She says:

“There's a real family atmosphere at Hastoe. I'm so happy working here. It really is my dream job!”

Michelle has worked in housing for over 10 years, and has a professional qualification in Housing Maintenance Management. She joined Hastoe's Property Services Team in February 2019. Based in our East region, Michelle covers Hornchurch, Tower Heights, and Waltham Abbey, as well as rural areas around Chelmsford, Southend-on-Sea and Colchester.

are you covered?

My Home Contents Insurance

Designed for tenants in social housing

Your landlord does not insure your furniture, belongings or personal possessions.

The **My Home** Contents Insurance scheme is designed to protect your possessions and provide peace of mind.

Some of the benefits are:

- There are no minimum home security requirements (just a lockable front door)
- There are no excesses to pay (you don't pay the first part of a claim)
- Flexible regular Pay-As-You-Go payment options (fortnightly and monthly premiums include a transaction charge)
- Storm and flood damage is covered (excludes damage caused by frost or anything that happens gradually)
- Damage to fixed glass in doors and windows which you are responsible for is also covered
- Theft from garages and outbuildings is included as standard (up to £2000)

info

For more information contact

My Home on 0345 450 7288

or email: myhome@thistleinsurance.co.uk

visit: www.thistlemyhome.co.uk

Terms & conditions, limits and exclusions apply, a copy of the policy wording is available upon request.



My Home
Contents Insurance