

# Haig News

SUMMER 2024



**Haig Housing signs Armed Forces Covenant**

TRUST NEWS • TENANT NEWS • EVENTS • FUNDRAISING • INFORMATION

# Message from Tim Stockings

## Chief Executive

I write as the sun is shining and spring feels like it's taking hold. This is the season when we accelerate our works programme, more details of which are in this issue.

As a charity we do not make a profit, we spend our money on three things: our houses, wages and administration. We are cutting our costs, for example the move of our head office saves money. That money goes straight back into our properties. We will spend over £50 million in the next five years improving our estate. I receive great feedback that the work makes a real difference to your quality of life, as well as cutting down on heating bills.

We also go above and beyond in other ways, such as decorating or bereavement allowances, community grants and support with rent payments. These are just some of the ways we help as a charity. On average our rents are 30% below market rates – that's a direct saving to you. We

accept we don't always get it right and are working hard to improve our customer service. You have a role to play as well. It is obvious as I visit estates the difference a little bit of self-help makes.

Money is tight for everyone, so we are careful how we spend it. As a charity, our aim is to address need not want. Many of the things we are asked to do are not needed and so we have to say no. The cost of tradesmen

and material has rocketed so we are working hard to obtain value for money. You can help us by letting us know straight away when a job is not done properly. The cost of regulation is also rising and despite what you might read on the news, there isn't a big pot of money waiting to be paid out to tenants who ask.

We're working hard to make our homes good to live in – please join us and help us realise our goal.

## HM Armed Forces Veterans Card

Don't forget to apply for yours. Please see page 19 for more details about how to do this.



## IMPORTANT UPDATES

**Your feedback** – we'll be sending out a tenant survey this summer. Please keep an eye out for this as your feedback helps us to improve our services

**Complaints, comments and suggestions** – details of the updated Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code are on page 4

**Keeping in touch** – it's really important that we have your correct contact details. We frequently get details of events which might be of interest to residents and we can keep you up to date by email. Please check your spam and junk folders to make sure that you aren't missing emails from us. If you don't have email, please don't worry as details of visits and appointments will always be sent by post and we include updates in Haig News.

## Head office move

The Haig team is now settled into Mountbarrow House where we are co-located with other veterans charities. We have not only reduced our overheads but we benefit from a shared purpose and knowledge with our sister charities which will help with our fundraising and applications for grants.

We are still in the planning stages of the redevelopment of the old head office site in Morden. We look forward to sharing our plans for the development with you in the future. We are delighted to be making plans to provide much needed homes for veterans and building communities and spaces to support the Armed Forces family.





Tim Stockings with trustee, Nina McWhinney, David Williams, Chair of Trustees and Air Vice Marshal Suraya Marshall (representing MOD). (photo credit: Andy Sillett)

# Armed Forces Covenant

We are thrilled to announce that we have signed the Armed Forces Covenant pledging Haig Housing's commitment to supporting the Armed Forces community.

Haig already serves the Armed Forces community as a charity providing homes for veterans and their families in housing need. In signing the Covenant, Haig Housing is committing to be an Armed Forces-friendly organisation and to support the employment of Veterans, service spouses and partners, Reservists and volunteers in military cadet organisations.

A member of the Haig team who served with the Household Cavalry arranged to host the signing in the Warrant Officer's Mess at Hyde Park Barracks. Air Vice-Marshall Suraya Marshall CBE MA LLB RAF signed the Covenant on behalf of the MOD and was joined at the signing event by supporters, suppliers, beneficiaries and friends of Haig.

## By signing the Covenant, we pledge to:

- Promote Haig as an Armed Forces-friendly organisation to our staff, service users, contractors, partners, other organisations we engage with and the wider public
- Support the employment of veterans, recognising military skills and qualifications in our recruitment and selection process
- Support the employment of Service spouses and partners
- Support our employees who are members of the Reserve Forces
- Support our employees who are volunteer leaders in military cadet organisations



## Employee Recognition Scheme

Haig Housing is proud to announce that we have been awarded the Bronze Employer Recognition Scheme. We are actively working towards Silver to further demonstrate our dedication to the scheme.

The Employee Recognition scheme

encompasses Bronze, Silver and Gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant.

Haig will be actively promoting

this with suppliers to inspire them to follow suit and ensure that their organisations are armed-forces friendly employers.



# Complaints, Comments, and Suggestions

The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code became statutory on 1 April 2020 and has recently been updated. The code aims to bring best practice in complaint handling and ultimately to provide a better service to residents. We have updated our policy to reflect these changes.

At Haig we need you to tell us what you think about our services. Feedback is important to us and helps us improve. It's as important that you tell us when things have gone well and when they have not: we can learn from that too.



## Aisha Wright – Complaints Officer

Aisha is Haig Housing's Complaints Officer and will manage complaints to ensure they are dealt with quickly and efficiently. She will also investigate complaints at Stage 1 and write the response letter.

## COMPLAINT OR SERVICE REQUEST?

A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf.

A **service request** is a request requiring action to be taken to put something right, often this is the first time you tell us there is an issue. Contacting us further to say that the issue has not been put right or been done badly might then be an expression of dissatisfaction or complaint.

## HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

The Housing Ombudsman service is a free, independent, and impartial service. They designed the Complaint Handling Code that sets out requirements to allow us to respond to complaints effectively and fairly.

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

[www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Preston PR2 0ET

## How to make a complaint

**You need to let us know in detail about your issue and how you think it can be sorted out.**

You can make a complaint, comment or suggestion in the following ways:

**Online:** [www.haighousing.org.uk/](http://www.haighousing.org.uk/) residents

**Email:** [complaints@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:complaints@haighousing.org.uk)

**Verbally via telephone:** 020 8685 5777

**Post:** Complaints, Haig Housing, Mountbarrow House, 12 Elizabeth Street, London, SW1W 9RB

**In person:** when you see Haig Housing staff

You can make the complaint yourself, or somebody can make a complaint on your behalf (if you give them your consent for them to do so). Where representatives are involved data sharing consent will be required.

You can read the new Haig Housing complaints policy on the website [www.haighousing.org.uk/residents/complaints](http://www.haighousing.org.uk/residents/complaints) or call 020 8685 5777 to request a copy.

## Compliments

If you think we've done something well or if a member of the Haig team has done a particularly good job we'd love to hear about it. Send your compliments to [enquiries@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@haighousing.org.uk) or call us on 020 8685 5777.

# LGBT+ Veterans and Restorative Measures Support

The 1967 Sexual Offence Act decriminalised homosexuality in respect of consenting men, in private where both were over 21, in England & Wales. However, this excluded the Armed Forces and the Merchant Navy. Although serving personnel had been dismissed prior to then if they had been caught, from 1967 onwards it was pursued in the UK Armed Forces with far more rigour and resources, remaining a criminal offence until 1996. The ban on serving remained in place until January 2000 and since then LGBT+ people have been allowed to serve openly in the Armed Forces.

Following a further campaign in recent years by the Armed Forces LGBT+ charity, Fighting With Pride, which saw the commissioning by the Government of an Independent Review into LGBT+ Veterans by Lord Etherton, 49 Recommendations were put forward, all of which have been accepted.

LGBT+ individuals who were banned from serving in the Armed Forces and often dismissed in unsettling circumstances prior to 2000, can now register their interest in applying for reparative measures. This also

extends to LGBT+ Veterans who left of their own accord as they found living a secret life unpalatable plus others who were incorrectly accused of being LGBT+.

Up to £50 Million has been set aside for compensation to those who lost their careers and much else – as well as other measures including formal apologies, the return of medals, Warrants and Commissions, a special badge or ribbon and the commissioning of a National Memorial to LGBT+ Service Personnel and Veterans at the National Arboretum.

Veterans affected by the ban can specify which non-financial measures they are interested in, and register their interest for the future compensation scheme. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/lgbt-veterans-apply-for-restorative-measures](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lgbt-veterans-apply-for-restorative-measures)

If you require any advice, please contact Fighting With Pride directly at [info@fightingwithpride.org.uk](mailto:info@fightingwithpride.org.uk) or Patrick Lyster-Todd, both a trustee of Fighting With Pride and a manager at Haig Housing at [patrick.lyster-todd@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:patrick.lyster-todd@haighousing.org.uk).



## PRIDE IN VETERANS STANDARD (PIVS)

Haig is proud to have joined the Pride in Veterans Standard showing our commitment to ensuring that we are friendly and welcoming to LGBT+ Veterans, serving personnel and their families. We'll be continuing to build awareness of LGBT+ Veterans' experiences and the impact on their lives.



# Scotland News

## No more drafty doors!

Scott (Scotty) Black, Scotland Regional Housing Manager, undertook an exciting pilot of fitting 26 new arch doors in Edinburgh. This was a big project as individual templates had to be manufactured for every single door to ensure a precise fitting of the arch door frame. The contractor, JSK, contributed significant value as they supported the completion of all 26 arch doors ahead of time.

This made immediate improvements to our beneficiaries as they happily report:

*"Since I moved into my home almost 46 years ago, I have never seen the estate in such good condition. This door is the 1st to make the homes draught-free and raise the pride throughout the estate. The company (JSK) worked well, did a good job and cleaned everything up before they left. I think the beneficiaries are very proud and pleased with the "New Look" in their estate."*

**Mary Forgie**



*"We got out new front door a while back, they are a massive improvement to both the overall look and to the heating of the house. Our fitter was very professional throughout the fitting... a massive improvement!"*

**Colin Richards**



# Birmingham News

## Easter Egg Hunt

It's always great to see communities getting together and we received some lovely photos from Kady Poole of Haig Place. Here's the young and young-at-heart with their Easter egg finds.



## Ancient oak tree

It was a sad day when the residents of Haig Place, Wheelers Lane, Birmingham had to say farewell to a very old oak tree due to disease and the risk of it falling down. This was especially sad for the resident of number 19 who has spent the last 32 years looking out of her bedroom window at the tree when it was in



bloom, bringing tears to her eyes as she watched it taken down.

We are lucky to have so many beautiful trees on our estates and we never want to lose any of them but they are bad for foundations and can be a significant risk for residents.



# Anchors Aweigh!

## Record breaking attempt sailing around Great Britain

Ashtead resident Talan Skeels-Piggins is not only a Paralympian, World and European Champion skier, racing motorcyclist and a published author but he is now attempting a record-breaking attempt sailing around Britain in the Round GB challenge.



Talan grew up in Cornwall and learned to sail at an early age. Following service in the Royal Navy as a Fighter Controller he travelled extensively before training as a PE teacher. He was planning a teaching stint in Africa in 2003 when his plans and active life came to an abrupt halt after he was knocked from his motorbike and thrown into the path of oncoming traffic. His injuries left him paralysed from the chest down.

While recovering in hospital, he set himself a challenge: to learn to ski and become part of the Paralympic team which he did in seven years. He went on to become the first licensed disabled motorcycle racer to compete against able bodied riders.

His love of adventure and sailing are now taking him on a new journey.

There have been a number of paralysed sailors who have completed the Round GB challenge, all of whom have been in heavily adapted or specially built craft. The challenge for

Talan, and his crew-mate Neil Baxter, an Army veteran who lost his leg to diabetes, is to sail around the coast of Britain in standard yacht.

If successful, he believes he will become the first paraplegic sailor to sail this route in a non-adapted boat.

“When I’m sailing I feel a wonderful sense of freedom from my paralysis. It is a huge benefit to my own mental health, as I can focus fully on the process of being at sea, of helming and trimming the sails, therefore escaping my limitations brought about by the high level of paralysis.

These moments allow me to mentally recharge and enable me to deal with the constant neurogenic pain, the restrictions of the wheelchair and the many other aspects of paralysis.”

This voyage is to show others that challenges can be overcome and that sailing can be accessible. It is not always necessary to spend vast amounts of money on specially adapted equipment, and that thinking

about issues in a rational way can lead to you finding simple workarounds.

It will also be a chance to “give back to others” and he is raising money for BLESMA, Hilary’s Dream Trust and the Disabled Sailors Association.

**Good luck Talan, we wish you fair winds and following seas.**

**If you want to support Talan, here are the charities he is supporting.**



If you have a story you'd like to share with the Haig community, please email [communications@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:communications@haighousing.org.uk) or call 020 685 5777.

# Building Heroes

Dan Gatenby, Sustainability Manager, recently attended a Building Heroes graduation ceremony for the first Retrofitter Assessor training programme. This is a ground-breaking course which reflects Building Heroes commitment to evolving and addressing the ever-changing needs of the construction industry. Haig Housing is an academy partner along with EON.

Building Heroes offers funded training programmes in construction and property maintenance to help military service leavers, Veterans, Reservists and military family members transition into civilian life and onto pathways to a second career.



For details of courses on offer visit [www.buildingheroes.org.uk](http://www.buildingheroes.org.uk) or call the Building Heroes team on **0330 912 6200** and mention that you are a Haig Housing resident.



## COMMUNITY FUND

Do you have an idea for something to enhance and improve your estate? It might be adding a flower bed to a communal area or setting up a community activity, like a weekly coffee morning.

The Haig Housing Community Fund is available to you, as tenants, to be able to enhance your local community and make our estates even better places to live.

If you have an idea, please discuss it with your Housing Manager. Projects will need to benefit a sufficient number of residents on the estate, be properly costed and have a measurable outcome. We are happy to look at all proposals as long as they are organized and maintained by the residents and deliver something that Haig Housing would not normally provide.

### HOW TO APPLY

If you have an idea, please speak to your Housing Manager. You can find more details, including an application form at [www.haighousing.org.uk/residents/community-fund](http://www.haighousing.org.uk/residents/community-fund)

## Decorating Allowance

We give each Haig beneficiary an annual allowance of £100 for decorating\*. If your rent account is in credit, we will send you a voucher to spend at B&Q.

- Please apply by sending an email from your registered email address to [incomes@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:incomes@haighousing.org.uk) or call **020 8685 5777** and ask for the Income Team who can process your application
- Once we check that your rent account is in credit, you will receive a B&Q voucher
- If you want to use your own decorator, please send a copy of the decorators invoice and Haig will pay you the equivalent of your allowance.

Your annual allowance is payable on the first anniversary of your tenancy start date, after which your allowance is added each April and will accumulate to a maximum of £300

*\*Your rent account must be in credit for a period of six months, there must have been no other breaches of your Tenancy Agreement for six months and you must have no other monies owed to the Trust. This allowance is not available to non-beneficiaries or market-let tenants.*



Help with Buying Basics –

## The Mrs Willie James Fund

All beneficiaries of Haig Housing are eligible for assistance from the Mrs Willie James Fund. The fund gives a wide range of assistance by providing items, service or facilities which are needed but a beneficiary might not be able to afford. Ranging from furniture and white goods to items to improve the quality of life to courses or equipment to help with a return to work.

If you would like to apply please contact Shirley Skinner for an application form **020 8685 5777**.  
[shirley.skinner@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:shirley.skinner@haighousing.org.uk)





June 2024 marks 80 years since one of the most significant military operations in history and we remember with everlasting gratitude those who gave their lives for the freedom of Europe.



Here are the reflections of  
**General Sir Patrick Sanders**  
KCB CBE DSO ADC Gen

Chief of the  
General Staff of  
the British Army

# D-DAY

# 80

1944 - 2024

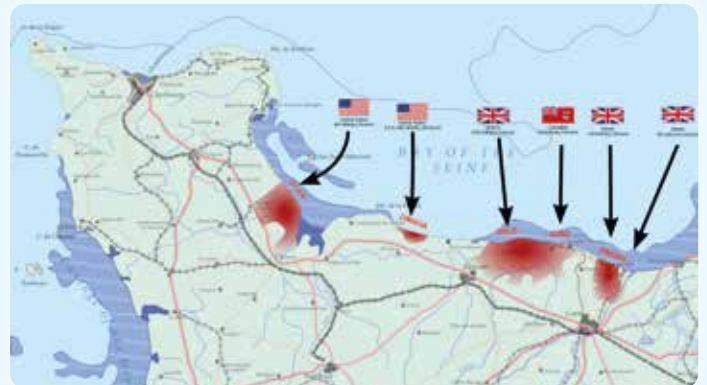
The ultimate success of D-Day and the subsequent campaign is testament to the strength of international alliances. It reminds us of friends and partners who stood together against tyranny and oppression to force invaders from sovereign land; of soldiers from many different nations who boarded the landing craft to a fate unknown. Who in soaked khaki and the fearsome noise of battle pushed forward while friends fell alongside them. They gave their best and bravest; we will always remember them.

The D-Day landings were an astonishing achievement. A triumph of soldiers, sailors and airmen working in concert to achieve a victory which was fiercely fought, terribly bloody, and truly remarkable. Over 154,000 troops from eight allied nations boarded 6,000 vessels to cross the English Channel. 24,000 Allied paratroopers and glider infantry drifted down from above, skirting 88mm guns. Field Marshal Montgomery's message to the troops rang true – it was a great and righteous cause and will continue to live in history, as the last 80 years have proved.

Learning the lessons from the past is never more pertinent than now as we face war in Europe once again. The post-war international order which has maintained peace and

prosperity in Europe since the Second World War is under threat. As we did then, we must ensure our alliances and partnerships are ever closer and stronger.

**We will remember them.**



## D-Day Commemorative Events

If you take part in any events to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day, please send your photos to [communications@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:communications@haighousing.org.uk) and we can include them in the Winter edition of Haig News.



# Incomes Update

If you are struggling to pay your rent, please get in contact with the Incomes Team as soon as you can. Lorna and Louisa have lots of experience helping tenants and can signpost to where you can get help. If you are in rent arrears and do not have an arrangement in place please contact the Incomes Team urgently.



## RENT INCREASE

Rent increases took effect in April for most tenants and from July for our Scotland residents. Please ensure that you have increased your payments and check that your Council has the updated information. Rent statements will now be sent to you quarterly.

You can do a quick check here to make sure that you are up to date on benefits you can claim [www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators](http://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators)



## Our your contact details up to date?

Please make sure that we have your up-to-date contact phone number and email address.

## GDPR

General Data Protection Regulations means that we need written consent from you to speak to anyone (including your partner) about your rent account.

## Service charge update

If your rent includes charges for services provided in communal areas these charges have not increased since 2018. We will be reviewing these costs during 2024 to ensure value for money and decent service standards. The results of the service charge review will be reflected in April 2025 rent review.



## Are you currently receiving benefits or tax credits?

The Department for Work and Pensions has recently made some changes which mean that some benefits and tax credits are ending and being replaced by Universal Credit.

**This may impact you. Please review this website for more detail [www.ucmove.campaign.gov.uk](http://www.ucmove.campaign.gov.uk)**

## YOUR RENT

- ✓ Let your Council know if you are receipt of Local Housing Allowance
- ✓ Universal Credit (UC) journals should be kept up to date
- ✓ Ensure that your Standing Orders are correct

# Housing Management

We were sad to see Housing Manager, Laura King, leave Haig Housing and wish her all the very best for her future. We welcome Paul Harrison as our new housing manager and have taken to opportunity to make a few adjustments to the patches covered by each Housing Manager.

## A day in the life of a Housing Manager

We are very lucky to have a team of dedicated housing professionals who are committed to the Veteran community. Our Housing Managers are primarily responsible for managing your tenancies and often go beyond their job role to provide services needed and signposting to other agencies.

### What a Housing Manager does...

- Make sure that tenancies are managed
- Make sure that properties are being maintained by the resident, both inside and out
- Inspect all properties, inside and out, and estates at least once a year
- To ensure that beneficiaries are aware of and follow Haig Housing policies
- Conduct all stages of the tenancy process including viewings and signups for new tenants; interview and recommend applications for transfer, assignments and succession
- Work alongside our repairs team to ensure delivery of high-quality service

### And what they don't do...

- Repair things for you
- Rearrange appointments
- Report your repairs; this is your responsibility as a resident
- Give verbal permission for improvements or alterations to your home and garden; this always needs to be in writing
- Make 3rd party referrals to outside agencies without your consent

### What they want to remind you...

- If you leave your home for longer than 28 days you are required to notify Haig. It would be a good idea to leave a key with friend or neighbour in case of emergency so we can gain access
- You, as our tenant, need to be present during annual tenancy review visits. Your nominated person is not sufficient as we need to see you in the property.



## PAUL HARRISON Housing Manager

After job-hopping for several years, I set off on my Social Housing career with Gloucestershire Housing Association (GHA) 21 years ago. Oddly enough, at that time, GHA were the managing agent for Haig and managed the Rissington Road and Evelyn Close estates. I worked for several housing providers in the Southwest in several different roles focusing on tenancy management, income collection and service improvements before starting with Haig at the end of February. I am enjoying my start with Haig and the variety of the work.



Outside of work I enjoy spending time with the family and dogs, watching live music and following my beloved Tottenham Hotspur.

## Key Housing Manager patch changes

### Paul Harrison

will cover Warrington, Liverpool and Leicester

### Sharon McKnight

will cover Bristol, Cardiff and Swansea

### Julie Cann

will cover Portsmouth

### Lisa Waterman

will cover Morden (North of Green Lane) and Ashted

### Toni Cooper

will cover Morden (South of Green Lane)

### Scott Black

will cover Belfast

# Your heating, your home – putting you in control

A Switchee Smart Thermostat is a smart, touch-screen, connected thermostat for your heating and hot water that doesn't require WiFi.

Haig Housing is in the process of rolling out the installation of Switchee Smart Thermostats in all of Haig's properties across the UK – this is a general upgrade of heating controllers and an important part of Haig's upkeep of our properties and investing in our future.



We will simply replace your old thermostat with a Switchee Smart Thermostat which will enable you to heat your home efficiently. Many housing providers are installing Smart Thermostats as they give data and insights which means that we can see if your home is at risk of damp and mould and we can then act sooner.

## What do I need to do?

You don't need to do anything. You will be notified by letter when your Switchee is going to be installed. The Switchee Trusted Installer will then make contact with you to arrange a convenient installation date.

Once the installation is complete your installer will provide a demonstration of your new device and also explain how to use it. They will leave you with user guides and further details. The friendly team at Switchee are at the end of the phone if you need any further help.

## How much will it cost?

It's all part of Haig's sustainability drive so the cost and installation of the Switchee Smart Thermostat is completely free to Haig residents. Although there is a small cost to run, approximately £5 a year, it is estimated that a Switchee Smart Thermostat will help you save on your heating bills.

## Switchee messaging facility

The Switchee Smart Thermostat also has a messaging facility which we will use from time-to-time to send you messages. These might be to inform you about something happening in your area, a reminder about a service visit or something that we need to let all residents know. We may occasionally send you a short survey. It also means that we can act early if we see that your home could be at risk of damp.

If your device has a message waiting for you, the envelope button on the top right of your screen will flash. Simply press the button and follow the on-screen instructions.

## Help with your Switchee

If you have any problems with your Switchee Smart Thermostat, help is available at the end of the phone.

If you have a question about your Switchee installation:

**0800 133 7957** Mon-Fri 9am to 6pm

**install@switchee.com**

Help Chat Bot: **Switchee**

If you need help with using your Switchee Smart Thermostat:

**0800 133 7957** Mon-Fri 9am to 6pm

**support@switchee.com**

Help Chat Bot: **Switchee**



## Switchee App

The Switchee resident mobile app gives you the ability to control your heating and hot water from whenever and wherever you are.

# Quick tips to save energy

It's predicted that energy bills will remain high until the end of the decade so it's really important to make sure you are doing everything you can to be energy efficient at home.

**1. Switch off standby:** You can save money just by remembering to turn your appliances off standby mode. Almost all electrical appliances can be turned off at the plug without upsetting their programming although check the instructions for any appliances you aren't sure about. Some satellite and digital TV recorders may need to be left plugged in so they can keep track of any programmes you want to record.

**2. Draught-proof windows and doors:** Check for drafts around windows, doors, floors and skirting boards and seal to prevent heat loss in winter and save money on your annual energy bills.

**3. Avoid the tumble dryer:** Drying clothes outside where you can will save money. If you are drying clothes

indoors, make sure you position washing near an open window with good airflow – your bathroom is a great option if you have an openable window – this will help prevent condensation.

**4. Spend less time in the shower:** Keep to a shower time of 4 minutes or less will help save money on energy. Also swapping a bath for a shower uses less water and energy.

Lots more information and tips at

[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)



## The biggest users of electricity in the home are:

**Wet appliances:** Washing machines, dishwashers and tumble dryers account for 14% of a typical energy bill. The power needed to heat the water that they use pushes up consumption, making them energy-hungry household appliances

- Choose a lower temperature to wash your clothes
- Avoid washing half loads to save water
- Use the Eco setting where you have one

**Cold appliances:** Fridges and freezers account for around 13% of the average household's energy bill. As they need to stay on constantly, they are continually drawing power.

**Consumer electronics:** From laptops to TVs to games consoles, they seem to be essential to our lives but account for around 6% of your energy bill. Turn yours off where possible

**Lighting:** Accounting for around 5% of an average energy bill, you can reduce the amount of energy you use by replacing halogen bulbs with LEDs. Make sure you turn your lights out when you are not using them.

**Cooking:** Around 4% of your energy bill is spent on kitchen appliances, including hob, oven, kettle and microwave. Microwaves and AirFryers are more efficient at cooking than traditional ovens and always make sure you don't overfill your kettle.



# Sustainability update

Natasha Carr, Adam Jones, Andy Aleo, Muzafar (Muzzy) Osman, all from E.ON, Daniel Gatenby from Haig and Stevie Bennett (E.ON)

**Haig Housing is now over a year into a major project to improve the energy efficiency of our homes. Housing providers have a major part to play on the road to Net Zero as an estimated 26% of carbon emissions comes from UK homes.\***

Haig's Sustainability programme, which is part funded by the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1 (SHDF W2.1), is well underway and is being delivered by our partner E.ON. We are installing measures to make homes warmer and more energy efficient. This is a major investment by Haig to upgrade our homes for veterans now and in the future.

## IMPORTANT NOTE

Retrofit Assessments (RFA) and Asbestos surveys are mandatory and need to be done before any work takes place. We ask that you look out for communications from Haig, E.ON or their contractors as to when your assessment will be and make arrangements for them to visit you. The Sustainability programme involves many contractors and any delay increases our costs.

## Keeping you informed

Alongside regular updates in Haig News, by letter and in eNewsletters, you have the opportunity to ask questions directly to the Sustainability team at our regular webinars. These are held every couple of months so keep an eye out for invitations and you can see the latest one here [www.haighousing.org.uk/sustainability/webinars](http://www.haighousing.org.uk/sustainability/webinars)

If you don't have access to the internet, you can always ask a tech-savvy neighbour over for a cuppa to show you.

## RETROFIT ASSESSMENTS (RFA)

You'll be contacted by one of the following companies to arrange a convenient time to carry out an RFA. The visit should take no longer than 2 hours and they will need to look at your loft. They will also take some photos of windows, loft insulation, vents and internal and external walls. Please don't worry, they won't take photos of anything personal and all images will be stored securely. If you have any questions or concerns, you can ask when they contact you to make the appointment or contact E.ON directly.

- North – Thrift Energy Solutions
- Midlands – Green Home Solutions
- South – Surefire MS

## Asbestos surveys

These are conducted by **Life Environmental** and you will be contacted directly by them.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY MEASURES

Once your Retrofit Assessment has been completed, you'll be contacted about the measures which will be installed. These could be:

- External Wall Insulation
- Cavity Wall Insulation
- Loft Insulation
- Underfloor Insulation
- Solar Panels (Solar PV)

## SOLAR PANELS

Solar PV have now been installed in many of our properties. There is lots of information on our website [www.haighousing.org.uk/sustainability/solar-panels](http://www.haighousing.org.uk/sustainability/solar-panels)



## Smart Export Guarantee Scheme

Solar panel users don't necessarily use all the electricity their panels generate at any one time. This electricity can be put back into the National Grid and large energy companies are obliged to pay a tariff for it.

Most landlords keep the SEG payments themselves, but Haig Housing has decided that our residents can benefit from this. This can give a significant payback and you can find more information here [www.haighousing.org.uk/seg](http://www.haighousing.org.uk/seg)

## FUTURE PLANS

### Devolved nations

There is currently an ECO4 (Energy Company Obligation Phase 4) trial running in Wales. If successful and funding is secured, we will roll this out to Scotland.

### Conservation areas

We continue to engage with local planning authorities for those areas not covered by the current Sustainability programme and we are currently drafting the SHDF Wave 3.0 bid.

## GOING ELECTRIC?

Electric Vehicles are a crucial step to decarbonising our transport system and reducing air pollution.

If you have an Electric Vehicle and wish to install an Electric Vehicle Charging Point (EVCP) on your driveway, you will need to first contact us for permission. There is lots of useful information here [www.haighousing.org.uk/sustainability/ev-chargers-home-use](http://www.haighousing.org.uk/sustainability/ev-chargers-home-use)

We have recently installed Electric Vehicle chargers in Morden. These are exclusively for the use of Haig residents and we are looking at installing chargers on other estates where appropriate.

*"I have always been humbled and felt lucky to be fortunate enough to be given a Haig property since I left the Army in 2019 after 23 years of service.*

*This week saw the start of our new solar panel installation. I have no doubt in my mind that this will dramatically decrease our energy costs during these difficult times.*

*I simply wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone at Haig involved in this project and express how deeply grateful I am for the hard work that has gone in to make this happen. Please pass on my gratitude to all involved.*

*It is absolutely wonderful to be appreciated and looked after, as a veteran, by a truly first class organisation. Thank you Haig".*

## Questions?

**SHDF Wave 2.1 project - including retrofit assessments, solar panels (England only)**  
E.ON Advice Team 0333 202 4820  
[GHGAdministration@eonenergy.com](mailto:GHGAdministration@eonenergy.com)

**Solar Panels – Solax App**  
02476 586 998

**Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP)**  
020 8685 5777 option 1  
[repairs@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:repairs@haighousing.org.uk)

**Sustainability general questions**  
[sustainability@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:sustainability@haighousing.org.uk)

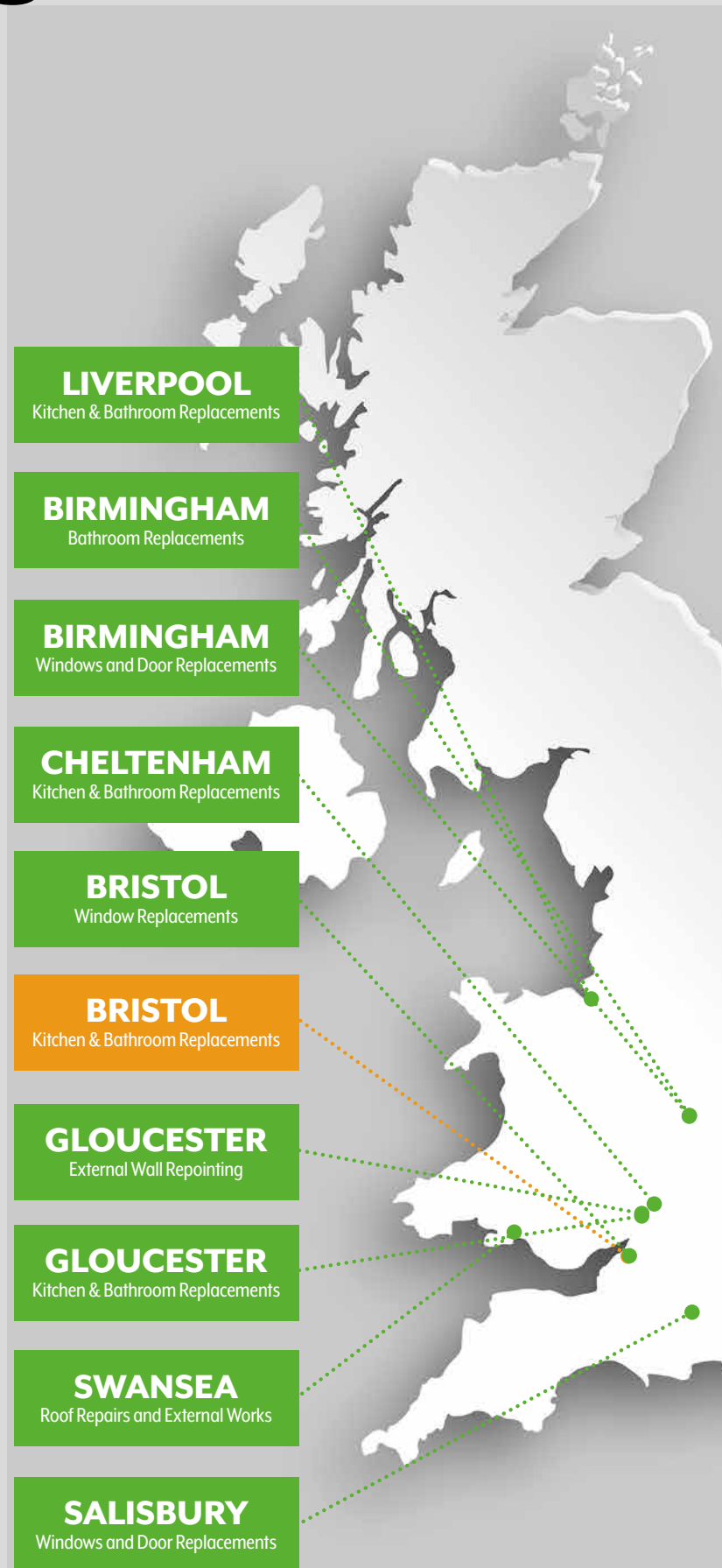
*\*Source: ons.gov.uk*

# Planned Programme of Works

This is the status of the Planned Programme of Works for 2023/24 delivering improvements to almost 500 of our homes. We are in the process of finalising the programme for 2024/25 which includes kitchen and bathroom upgrades, window and door replacements, roofing works and external brickwork repairs. If work is taking place in your area you will be given plenty of notice.

Please note that sometimes plans will change. This may be due to external factors such as contractor issues or to tie in with the Sustainability works as we aim to keep disturbance to residents to a minimum.

Stock condition surveys continue to be carried out by RAND Associates on behalf of Haig Housing. A stock condition survey is an inspection of the inside and outside of your home and help us to assess the age and condition of each property so that we can plan future improvements.



Photos (left to right) © KostiantynVoitenko | Envato, © duallogic | Envato, © duallogic | Envato





- **Completed Work**
- **In Progress**



**SHEFFIELD**  
Kitchen & Bathroom Replacements

**NORWICH**  
Windows and Door Replacements

**BRENTWOOD**  
External Wall Repointing

**LOUDWATER**  
Kitchen Replacements

**CHALFORD  
ST PETER**  
External Roofline Works

**MORDEN**  
Front Door Replacements

**ASHTEAD**  
External Cyclical Decoration

**PORTSMOUTH**  
Front Door Replacements

## Work starting soon

**WINCHFIELD**  
Kitchen & Bathroom Replacements

**FARNBOROUGH**  
Kitchen & Bathroom Replacements

**MORDEN**  
Roof Repairs

**PORTSMOUTH**  
Kitchen & Bathroom Replacements

**MORECAMBE**  
Roof Repairs

**ASHTEAD**  
Bathroom Replacements

**ENFIELD**  
Windows and Door Replacements

**MORDEN**  
Kitchen Replacements

**SHREWSBURY**  
Windows Replacements

# Fire Safety in the Home

Your safety is our top priority so please take the time to check your home for fire risk. Fires can occur unexpectedly, but with the right knowledge and precautions, you can significantly reduce the risk to yourself, your family and your neighbours. Here are some essential tips and information to enhance fire safety at home.

1. **Identify Hazards:** Watch for common fire risks like faulty electronics and overloaded sockets. Address these promptly to minimise risk
2. **Check Smoke Alarms:** Ideally once a month
3. **Know Escape Routes:** Familiarise yourself with multiple exit paths. And keep them clear for swift evacuation during emergencies

## PREVENTION TIPS:

1. **Kitchen Caution:** Never leave cooking unattended. Keep flammable items away from heat sources
2. **Electrical Safety:** Avoid overloading sockets and check appliances for damage regularly
3. **Smoking Sensibly:** Use sturdy ashtrays, never smoke in bed and make sure you fully extinguish cigarettes
4. **Home Alone:** Never leave electrical appliances such as dishwashers or washing machines running overnight or when you leave the house
5. **Candles and Incense Sticks:** Never leave these burning unattended

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

1. **Stay Calm, Evacuate: Call 999**
2. **Know your plan:** If you live in a communal blocks you will have either a stay put or evacuate policy in the event of a fire- If you are unsure of the correct policy for your block, please contact us at [compliance@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:compliance@haighousing.org.uk) and we will clarify the correct policy for your home
3. **Stay Low in Smoke:** Crawl if necessary to avoid toxic smoke inhalation
4. **Never Re-enter:** Never return to a burning building. Wait for professionals to handle the situation

**Fire Safety is everyone's responsibility. By staying informed and proactive, you can create a safer living environment for yourself and your neighbours.**

**For Fire Safety concerns or assistance with safety equipment please contact [compliance@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:compliance@haighousing.org.uk) or call 020 8685 5777.**

## BARBEQUES AND BONFIRES

Please enjoy your barbeques safely – use suitable equipment and never leave a lit barbeque unattended.

**Reminder: The burning of garden waste or any other rubbish in the vicinity of a property (i.e. in the garden) is a fire risk and is inconsiderate to neighbours.**



# Pest Prevention

If unwanted pests appear in your home, from insects to rodents, we know it can be a real concern.

Here are some useful tips to minimise the risk of attracting unwanted guests:

- Clean any food containers before putting into your recycling bins.
- Keep indoor spaces clean and tidy. Areas of clutter are a good hiding place.
- Put outdoor rubbish bags in metal bins or wheelie bins with securely fitted lids to stop pests feeding from contents.
- Clean up pet food and bird seed debris, and store pet food in robust containers with fitted lids - preferably above ground level.
- Keep gardens and sheds tidy, free from waste and potential nesting materials, carry out regular inspections to check for rodent activity.
- If you have a compost heap do not include food waste, peelings or egg shells.
- Ensure water butts are fitted with close fitting lids and rainwater does not accumulate in old plant pots.
- Report any damaged or missing drain covers. Rodents only need a gap of 15mm to gain entry - report any holes around pipework, missing bricks, damaged vent covers or other potential entry points on the outside of the property to customer services.
- If you spot signs of rodent activity, including burrows, shredded paper, gnawing, droppings or smears - act quickly to prevent a larger infestation.



## Repairs Team

[repairs@haighousing.org.uk](mailto:repairs@haighousing.org.uk)  
020 8685 5777 option 1

# Useful information

## ‘Say you served’ Campaign

The government has launched a campaign to help improve Veterans’ access to healthcare services, and opened applications to the £2.52 million Veterans Mobility Fund. All Veterans, service leavers, non-mobilised reservists, and their family members and carers can access a range of specialist healthcare and support created to provide treatment and care for many different problems.

[www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/armed-forces-community/veterans-service-leavers-non-mobilised-reservists](http://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/armed-forces-community/veterans-service-leavers-non-mobilised-reservists)



## Disabled Veteran Scholarship Fund (DVSF) - Open University

In 2017, the OU launched the DVSF. The first of its kind in the UK, this pioneering scheme provides both free education (up to the value of £20,000) and tailored support to the ex-military population who have been injured in or during military service. So far, the OU has awarded 261 scholarships and have now committed a further 50 scholarships in 2023.

Further details of the scheme including how to apply are here [www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/disabled-veterans-scholarship-fund](http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/disabled-veterans-scholarship-fund)

## The Female Veterans’ Transformation Programme

Over the last few years, lots of work and academic research has been conducted on the challenges female veterans face as a result of their time in the Armed Forces. However, this programme recognises the need to use this research as a basis to take action and make improvements so women get the right support at the right time and in a way that matters to them.

Their website is a one stop shop for finding out about the programme and how you can get involved [www.fvtp.org.uk](http://www.fvtp.org.uk)



## HM Armed Forces Veteran card



An HM Armed Forces Veteran Card is a way to prove that you served in the UK armed forces. The card can make it quicker and easier to apply for support as a Veteran. It is free to apply.

[www.gov.uk/veteran-card](http://www.gov.uk/veteran-card)

Veterans UK Helpline

[veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk](mailto:veterans-uk@mod.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0808 1914 218

(Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm).

# How to contact Haig

Our postal address is **Haig Housing, Mountbarrow House, 12 Elizabeth Street, London, SW1W 9RB.**

Our telephone number is **020 8685 5777**. This number is staffed Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. Outside these times and on Bank Holidays the number will automatically transfer, after a short delay, to our Emergency Maintenance Operator. Please note if you have a **GAS EMERGENCY** or if you **SMELL GAS** you should phone **0800 111 999**.

Our email address is **enquiries@haighousing.org.uk**.

Please follow us on social media:



HaigHousing



@HaigHousing



Haig Housing



@HaigHousingTrust



## This is your newsletter

Please help us to make it relevant to you.

Please let us know about the commemorations, celebrations, anniversaries and fundraising happening in your area and we will do our best to include your news in our next issue.

Please email **communications@haighousing.org.uk**, telephone **020 8685 5777**.

Haig News is committed to ensuring that our content is accessible and inclusive to all our readers. Recognizing the diverse needs of our audience, we continually strive to enhance our magazine's usability and performance for everyone.

## PRODUCTION

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