



2025 | Issue 1

Customer Connect

If you need this newsletter in a
different format please contact:
diversity@platformhg.com

platform
housing group

Welcome

I am delighted to welcome you to this bumper edition of your **Customer Connect Newsletter**. As always, it's packed with useful updates, helpful advice and new opportunities to get involved in shaping the services that matter most to you.

We know that good communication is the foundation of a great service and this newsletter is just one of the ways we make it easier for you to stay informed. You'll find information on how to access support, report repairs, manage your tenancy online, and keep your home safe and well maintained.

We've also included exciting news about your new Customer Digital Handbook, a one-stop online guide that gives you all the information you need about your tenancy, 24/7. Plus, you'll hear more about how our Customer Hub team is improving response times, and how our Successful Tenancies team is supporting thousands of customers with financial and wellbeing advice and how they can help you, too.

Listening to your feedback continues to drive improvements, from developing our Platform Pledges to investing in more affordable, energy-efficient homes. You'll also read about our Communities Connected events, which bring people together to create positive change across our neighbourhoods, and how you can take part.

Marion Duffy,
Chief Operations Officer



Customer Hub: Improving our services

Our Customer Hub team is continuing to make improvements to help us deliver a better, faster service for you.

You told us that getting through on the phone could be difficult, with long wait times to speak to an advisor. That's why improving our call response times has remained a top priority.

Thanks to several key changes, including new technology, hiring more advisors, and launching a dedicated out-of-hours team, we've seen a real improvement in how quickly we can answer your calls during our core opening hours. You can see the progress reflected in the figures below.

	2023-24	2024-25	
Phone calls answered	175,369	192,293	▲
Average time for calls to be answered	13.05 mins	1 min 38 secs	▼
Average wait time improved by	6.56 mins	11 mins 27 secs	▼
Digital contacts handled	189,200	226,930	▲
Emails responded to	96,592	121,720	▲
Social media messages answered	4,995	5,190	▲
Enquiries dealt with via Your Platform	32,534	40,897	▲
Call backs made	21,854	1,024 (Lower due to reduced wait times)	▼

Chatbot support with Dotty

Our chatbot, **Dotty**, is also proving popular - helping you get answers to common questions quickly and easily, without needing to wait in a queue. The figures below share how many customers Dotty has supported during the last 12 months.



Chatbot interactions	40,897
Questions answered from Chatbot interactions	52,576
Average response time	0.86 secs
Average confidence score	79.65%

Your Platform

– Access our Services 24/7

Your Platform is a self-service customer portal which enables you to manage your tenancy conveniently at a time that suits you.

By registering to use Your Platform, you'll be able to:

- Check your rent balance and recent transactions.
- Make a payment.
- Change a direct debit.
- Report a repair.

New repairs self-service pilot

We are currently working on a pilot that we are planning to launch later this year to make it easier than ever for you to:

- Report routine, non-urgent repairs easily.
- Book an appointment at a date and time that suits you with no need to call us!

Why are we launching this pilot?

We've listened to your feedback and know that calling during the day isn't always convenient.

This new service aims to give you more control and flexibility over your repairs, making it easier to:

- Book repairs at a time that works for you.
- Reduce call wait times by using self-service instead.
- Minimise appointment changes and missed visits.

How can I register?

To register for the Your Platform, customer portal simply head over to our website:

<https://your.platformmhg.com/SignIn>.

You'll need:

- Your tenancy reference number – which can be found on any letter from us.
- Your date of birth.
- Your email address.

Save time – do it online!

Did you know that there are lots of ways that you can get in touch with us digitally 24/7?

- Report a non-urgent repair, ask a general housing enquiry, or report ASB via the:
 - Your Platform customer portal: <https://your.platformmhg.com>.
 - Platform website: www.platformmhg.com/contact-us.
- Ask our website Chatbot a frequently asked question.
- Send us a private message on our Facebook account www.facebook.com/PlatformHousing.

How to report a repair



- **Emergency repairs** can be reported 24/7 by calling **0333 200 7304**.
- **Non-emergency repairs** can be reported using our online form at www.platformmhg.com/report-repair, or by calling us on **0333 200 7304**.

An emergency repair is something that poses a risk to life, health, or serious damage to your home. Examples include:

- A complete loss of water supply.
- Major leaks that can't be contained.
- A blocked toilet when there is only one in your home.
- A complete power failure.
- An unsecured home – for example, broken external doors or windows, or damage to the structure of the building.
- Failed smoke or carbon monoxide (CO) alarms.
- A total loss of heating between 1 November and 1 April.



Talk to us – We're here to help

Worried about money? You're not alone – and you don't have to face it alone either.

Our **Successful Tenancies Team** is here to support you with free, confidential advice on money matters, benefits, and budgeting.

How we can help:

- Full **benefits checks** to see what you may be entitled to.
- Advice and support with **Universal Credit**.
- Help with **benefit applications**.
- Practical **budgeting tips**.
- Referrals to **debt advice** and **energy support** services.

Delivering real impact

Between April 2024 and March 2025, we've:

- Handled **6,999** referrals.
- Helped customers access **£3,935,626** in annualised benefit income and other grant funding.

If you're struggling, we're ready to help.

Find out more or refer yourself online:

www.platformhg.com/money-and-benefits-advice.



The **Successful Tenancies Team**

Platform's Wellbeing Fund: Do you need a little extra support?

If you're struggling with household bills, food costs, or buying essential items, our Wellbeing Fund may be able to help.

From April 2024 to March 2025, we supported over **3,000** customers with:

- Food, clothing and energy vouchers.
- School uniforms and essentials.
- Beds, white goods and digital support.
- Help while waiting for benefit payments.

How to apply

To check if you're eligible and apply online visit:

www.platformhg.com/platform-wellbeing-fund.

"I've really been struggling to pay all the bills and keep food on the table, so this has helped fill our cupboards, fridge and freezer with some things to keep us going! And for that we are very grateful."

Hannah, Customer



Wellbeing Fund
emerge better



Stay Nimble and find a new job!

Are you looking for work and need some help building confidence or getting started?

Platform has partnered with Stay Nimble to offer the Thrive programme - a free career coaching service exclusively for our customers.

**Stay
Nimble**



What's included?

- **Personalised Coaching:** Up to 6 hours of one-on-one sessions with qualified career coaches.
- **Lifetime Access:** Utilise online tools for CV writing, job searching, interview preparation and more.
- **Flexible Support:** Engage with coaches via video calls or chat at times that suit your schedule.
- **Self-Discovery Activities:** Participate in exercises designed to identify your strengths and career aspirations.

Whether you're re-entering the workforce, seeking a career change, or just starting out, the Thrive programme is tailored to help you achieve your goals.

How to get started

Visit our website to sign up today and begin your journey towards a fulfilling career:

www.platformmhg.com/stay-nimble.

Working together to Keep you Safe

Your safety is really important to us.

That's why we've created a dedicated section on our website full of helpful advice to help you stay safe in your home. From gas and fire safety to electrical checks, asbestos and water hygiene, you'll find clear, practical guidance on the steps we take and how you can help too.

Visit: platformmhg.com/keeping-you-and-your-home-safe for the latest advice and guidance.



Fire safety in communal areas

We take fire safety very seriously and you should too.

In communal areas, we have a legal responsibility to make sure you and your neighbours are safe from key hazards, including fire.

We must ensure communal areas are free from flammable materials, ignition sources, obstructions, trip hazards, or any other fire risks.

If items are found in communal areas, we will try to identify who owns them and ask you to immediately remove them.

Where we are not able to identify the owner of the item or if they are not willing to remove them, in line with Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977 we will:

- **IMMEDIATELY** remove high-risk items, such as flammables or items obstructing escape routes.
- Sticker other items advising that they must be removed within 7 days.
- Record and photograph items to be removed.
- Return after 7 days to check items have been removed. If they have not been removed, then **WE WILL REMOVE** them without further notice.
- Permanently **DISPOSE** of items irrespective of their value.
- Not return disposed items.

Our Zero Tolerance approach

Zero Tolerance
means
NO storage,
NO disposals,
NO rubbish,
NO exceptions.

Report it!

If you notice items causing blockages in hallways, please report them to us on **0333 200 7304** so they can be removed as soon as possible.



Home Safety Checks – Keep your home safe and **Win £100!**

Your safety is our top priority.
As your landlord, we're legally
required to carry out regular gas
and electrical safety checks to
make sure your home is safe

Want to win £100?

Let us in on your first appointment date and you'll help us keep you, your home and family safe – you could also be in with the chance of winning £100 in high street vouchers!

What checks do you do?

- Annual gas appliance, flue and pipework checks.
- Regular electrical safety inspections.

These checks are free and carried out by qualified engineers. Once complete, you can relax knowing your home is safe and up to standard.

Can't make your appointment?

If you need to rearrange your appointment, just call us on **0121 788 7884**.



Electric and Mobility Vehicle Safety: What you need to know

The use of electric scooters, bikes, and mobility vehicles is on the rise, offering increased independence and convenience.

However, with this growth comes a heightened responsibility to ensure these modes of transport are used and stored safely to protect everyone, so we have put together some useful guidance.

Rising concerns

Recent data indicates a significant **160% increase** in battery-related fires involving electric vehicles and e-scooters over the past year, with fire services responding to 390 incidents between 2022 and 2023. These figures highlight the importance of proper usage and storage of battery-powered vehicles.

Understanding vehicle classes

Mobility vehicles are categorised into three classes:

- **Class 1:** Manual wheelchairs.
- **Class 2:** Powered wheelchairs and scooters intended for indoor use and pavements, with a maximum speed of 4 mph.
- **Class 3:** Vehicles suitable for pavements (up to 4 mph) and roads (up to 8 mph); these must be registered with the DVLA and are not permitted inside Platform properties.

Safe storage and charging

To mitigate fire risks and ensure safe evacuation routes:

Do:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Always unplug your charger when it's finished charging.
- If your battery can be removed from your electric vehicle and charged separately, charge it on a hard flat surface where heat can disperse and in an area with good ventilation.

Don't:

- Charge electric vehicles or mobility vehicles in bedrooms or where escape routes can be blocked – for example, hallways.
- Leave your battery charging unattended, when you are out or while you are asleep.
- Cover chargers or battery packs when charging.
- Overload sockets or use inappropriate extension leads.
- Charge or store batteries in direct sunlight or in hot locations (above 45°C).
- Charge batteries close to combustible materials or hazardous substances.
- Charge electric vehicles or mobility vehicles in communal areas.

Insurance

Insurance isn't legally required for electric or mobility vehicles, but it is mandatory if you use or store the vehicle in or around Platform buildings. You must arrange cover for damage to property and third-party claims, and provide:

- A valid insurance certificate every year.
- A Portable Appliance Test (PAT) certificate for your charger.

Permissions and policy

Permission must be granted by Platform before acquiring a mobility vehicle and bringing it onto our premises. Our mobility policy sets out conditions of use for customers who live in buildings with communal areas, such as retirement villages, retirement living schemes/community properties and blocks of flats with communal areas i.e. entrance hallways, staircases and landing areas.

For full safety guidance and our Mobility Vehicle Policy, visit: www.platformhg.com/electric-vehicles-mobility-vehicles-and-batteries.



Do you know a – Community Hero?



Our annual Community Heroes Awards celebrate those unsung champions who go the extra mile to make a real difference - whether as individuals or as part of a local group.

Meet this year's winners

To find out who our 2025 Community Heroes are and hear some of their inspirational stories, simply scan the QR code to visit our YouTube channel.



Nominate a hero for 2026!

Although this year's awards have now been presented, nominations are open for our 2026 Community Heroes Awards. If you know someone who goes above and beyond in your community, we'd love to hear about them!

Visit www.platformhg.com/community-heroes to learn more and complete the online nomination form.

Are you Insured?

What would you do if a fire or flood damaged everything in your home?

While we insure the building you live in, it's up to you to protect your personal belongings. Home contents insurance covers things like furniture, electronics, clothes and valuables in case of fire, theft, flooding or accidental damage.

We've partnered with Thistle to offer **My Home Contents Insurance**, designed especially for people in social or affordable housing.

✓ **Easy to apply**

✓ **Affordable cover**

✓ **Peace of mind**

Find out more:

www.platformhg.com/home-contents-insurance

Stay One Step Ahead: Sign Up for Flood Warnings

Did you know you can get free flood warnings direct from the Environment Agency?

Signing up means you'll be alerted when flooding is expected from main rivers or the sea in your area - giving you time to prepare and stay safe. The Environment Agency also offer advice on what to do before and after flooding and lots more.

It's quick and easy to register. Call the Floodline on **0345 988 1188** or visit

www.gov.uk/flood.

You can choose to receive warnings by landline, mobile, text or email - whichever works best for you.



**Environment
Agency**

Platform Pledges – Our promise to you

We're committed to providing the best possible service to our customers. That's why we've introduced Platform Pledges – a simple, transparent set of promises that outline what you can expect from us.

What are Platform Pledges?

Replacing our previous Customer Commitments, our Platform Pledges:

- Reflect what matters most to you.
- Are clear, easy to understand and measurable.
- Align with current legal and regulatory standards.
- Help you hold us to account and see how we're doing.

Built with you, for you

Our Pledges were created with customer input at every stage:

- Feedback gathered through surveys, focus groups and panel discussions.
- Benchmarking against other housing providers and trusted brands.
- Direct changes made based on what customers told us.
- Approved by our Executive Team and Board.

Staying transparent

We'll track our performance monthly against our promises and share updates quarterly on our website. That means you'll always know if we're meeting the standards we've set.

Find out more and read the Pledges on our website:
www.platformhg.com/platform-pledges.

Tackling **Anti-Social Behaviour** Together

We know that Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) can seriously affect your wellbeing and peace of mind.

That's why our **Community Safety Team** works closely with Neighbourhood Officers, local councils, police, and other partners to tackle ASB quickly.

In serious cases, where issues can't be resolved, we may take legal action to protect our communities.

Report it!

If you're experiencing ASB - report it online:
www.platformhg.com/antisocialbehaviour.

You can also access our handy ASB Toolkit offering guidance on what is treated as ASB and where to find specialist support.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 999.



Speak Up – Help keep others safe

Safeguarding means protecting children and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and we work closely with other agencies to promote people's welfare and protect them from harm.

How to report a concern

1. If a child or adult is in immediate danger or if a crime has been committed – call **999**.
2. For non-urgent concerns, contact your local council's safeguarding team by visiting their website or calling them.
3. You can also report concerns to us directly: **0333 200 7304**.

Reports can be made anonymously. We will not normally take action or share information without consent unless:

- Others are at risk.
- The person can't make their own decisions.
- There's serious risk to someone's wellbeing.

For more advice and guidance, visit:
www.platformhg.com/safeguarding.

Neighbourhood Walkabouts

Why not come along and join us on a neighbourhood walkabout and have a say in how your neighbourhood is maintained and improved.

What are Neighbourhood Walkabouts?

Neighbourhood Walkabouts are informal, community-led inspections where you can:

- Meet your Neighbourhood and Community Engagement Officers, local council representatives, police, and other community partners.
- Walk around your neighbourhood, including communal areas and gardens.
- Highlight any issues or concerns you may have.

How can I find out more?

Visit our website: www.platformhg.com/neighbourhood-walkabouts.

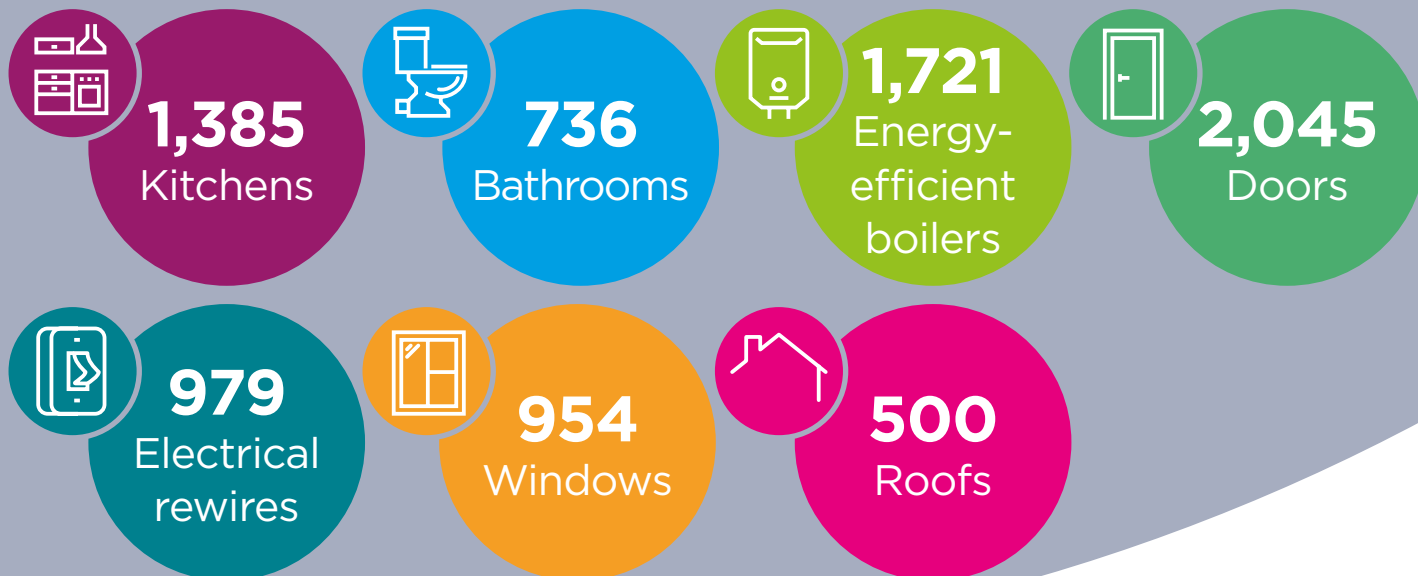
There's a handy search function where you can pop in your postcode to find out when the next walkabout is planned in your area.

If you'd like to arrange an individual meeting with your Neighbourhood Officer, please contact our Customer Hub on **0333 200 7304**.



Improving your home

Last year, we invested over **£55 million** to improve your homes, installing the upgrades listed and more:



These upgrades help make your home more comfortable, efficient and easier to maintain.

We usually replace kitchens, bathrooms, boilers, and external doors **based on their age** as outlined below.

Type of improvement	Replacement age
Kitchen	20 years old
Bathroom	30 years old
Boiler	15 years old
External doors	30 years old

Time for an upgrade? Here's what to expect

We know home improvements can be a bit disruptive, but it's really important that we carry them out. Sometimes, older parts and materials just aren't available anymore - so agreeing to the work means we can improve your home and keep it safe.

If you're contacted about improvement works, we'll provide a step by step guide to what will happen and do everything we can to make the process smooth and stress-free.



Reaching for a sustainable future

Wildflower Giveaway Helps Communities Create a Buzz

Our Create a Buzz – Planting with Platform campaign has seen 500 free wildflower seed packets distributed to customers and communities, helping boost biodiversity and support vital pollinators like bees and butterflies.

Launched ahead of the International Day for Biological Diversity in May, and sponsored by our partners JLL, the campaign inspired customers, colleagues and communities to reconnect with nature by planting wildflowers in local spaces.

Lianne Taylor, Platform's Sustainability Director said: *"Wildflowers aren't just beautiful to look at they play a vital role in supporting our bees, butterflies, and other pollinators, which are in decline. It's been fantastic to see so many people get involved. Even a small patch of wildflowers can make a big difference to our local ecosystems."*

Pollinators rely on wildflowers for nectar and pollen, particularly in spring and summer. With 97% of the UK's wildflower meadows lost since the 1930s, small local actions like these are more important than ever.

If you received a free seed pack, don't forget to share your blooms using #CreateABuzz and tag @PlatformHousing on social media.

Our Sustainability Journey

Our new Group Sustainability video is now available. You can hear from our Director of Sustainability, Lianne Taylor and colleagues from across the group as they explore and share what sustainability means for Platform, along with our customers, communities, colleagues, and partners - something we can all play a part in.

How can I watch it?

Scan the QR code to visit our You Tube channel.



Looking ahead

Plastic Free July is our next sustainability initiative when we'll be focussing on a whole month of litter picks and other great initiatives, so keep your eyes peeled for further details on our Facebook account and website: www.platformmhg.com.



Our New Digital Handbook: Everything you need, when you need it

We've launched a brand new Digital Handbook to help you find the information you need quickly and easily, all in one convenient place.



Your brand new Customer Digital Handbook will help you find the information you need. Whether you're just moving in, setting up rent payments, reporting a repair or looking to understand your responsibilities, our Digital Handbook is here to support you throughout your tenancy.

The Digital Handbook is part of our ongoing work to improve and update our website. Because it is online, the information is up to date, giving you the latest advice, guidance, and contact details. You can access it 24/7 on your phone, tablet, or computer, whenever and wherever it suits you.

Information is clearly grouped into sections, so it's simple to navigate. There's also a handy new search function that lets you find information about your local community, including contact details for your local officers and events like Neighbourhood Walkabouts.

Head over to our website to find out more:
www.platformhg.com/customer-digital-handbook.

Tell us what you think! Join Platform Voices to share your views on the new digital handbook.
Visit: **<https://voices.platformhg.com>**.

Counting the cost of missed appointments

Last year, nearly £1,052,000 was lost due to missed repairs appointments.

That's money that could have been used to install more new kitchens, bathroom and energy efficient boilers.

We know things come up - life happens! But if you can't make your appointment, please let us know. That way, we can give the slot to another customer who's waiting for a repair. It's easy to reschedule:

- When you get your automated appointment reminder, just tap **'No'** if it no longer works for you. That'll connect you straight to our planning team to rearrange.
- Alternatively, please call our **Customer Hub** on **0333 200 7304** - we're always happy to help.

Together, we can save money for improvement works and offer your appointment to another customer who is waiting for a repair!



Do you need help to get online?



Our Digital4Everyone sessions are a free one stop shop to get you and people in your local community online.

We work with our community partners and volunteer Digital Champions to support regular events in our neighbourhoods to introduce you to what's possible when you get online.

Whether you need help with computer basics, are looking for work online or want to learn more about using email or social media, our Digital4Everyone sessions can help. Take a look at our website: www.platformhg.com/digital4everyone to find a group near you.

Are you interested in getting involved?

We are looking for Digital Champion volunteers to help others improve their digital skills and overcome digital exclusion.

As a Digital Champion you will be invited to volunteer at IT sessions in community venues near your home. You don't need to be an IT expert or have a degree in coding to become a digital champion.

You just need:

- Basic IT skills, including communicating via email.
- Patience and a friendly personality.
- To be flexible and adaptable.
- An understanding of, and commitment towards, equality and diversity.

To find out more and register your interest visit our website: www.platformhg.com/digital-champions.



Join the Conversation: Help shape our services

Community Conversations are held across our localities to give you the opportunity to:

- Talk to us about the issues that matter to you.
- Find out more about how you can get involved in shaping our services.
- Hear from colleagues and teams across our organisation who will offer guidance and share future plans.

We regularly advertise our Community Conversations on our Facebook page @PlatformHousing and website: www.platformhg.com/community-conversations.

You can also complete our online form letting us know if you'd like to see a Community Conversation event in your local area.



Community Chest – Funding Local Projects



Are you part of a charity, club or community group making a difference?

Our **Community Chest** helps fund projects that benefit Platform customers and communities. Last year, **242** applications were reviewed by our Customer Voice Panel - which includes customers living in our homes - with **£159,000** awarded to fantastic local initiatives.

Could your project be next?

If you're a charity, club or not-for-profit organisation, you can apply to our Community Chest for funding to bring about positive changes for Platform customers and communities.

The easiest way to apply is online: www.platformhg.com/platform-community-chest.



Connecting Communities in 2025

Our 2025 Communities Connected programme of events launched in May, with the first of our two special focus fortnights, which ran from 12 – 23 May.

Communities Connected events offer our customers, colleagues and community partners a whole host of opportunities for you to work together on neighbourhood projects that celebrate communities and make a real difference.

Whilst our May Focus Fortnight has come to a close, it's impact is still being felt through the creative events, volunteering opportunities and meaningful conversations, so why not sign up to take part in our next focus fortnight?

Our next Communities Connected focus fortnight will run from 8 -19 September. Head over to our website: www.platformhg.com/communities-connected to find out more and sign up to an event near you.

You can also suggest a community project for your local area for a future Communities Connected event.



Baroness Jacqui Smith visits Malvern Help Centre

The Rt Hon Baroness Jacqui Smith, Minister of State for Skills, recently visited our Malvern Help Centre to highlight the importance of community-led initiatives in supporting residents facing barriers to accessing services.

Organised by Councillor Marilyn Birks, Mayor of Malvern Town, the visit showcased the centre's evolution since its establishment in 2015 into a vital support hub. Helping with IT skills, job searches, debt advice and wellbeing, the centre has joined forces with various partners to support **20 to 60 people** at the weekly session.



John shared how the centre helped him overcome personal challenges, leading him to pursue higher education and become a Learning Support Assistant at Heart of Worcestershire College.

"I didn't have the best start in life; I struggled at school and left with no qualifications. I lost my job, my home, got divorced and was really struggling with my mental health. But thanks to the Help Centre I have really turned my life around. I was able to access educational courses which led me to studying for an undergraduate degree and then a postgraduate one. The centre gave me the confidence to find my path in life."

The event was also attended by local stakeholders, including Councillor Caroline Bovey and Jen Taylor from Malvern Hills District Council, emphasising the joint efforts to address local community needs.

Read the full story in the news section of our website: www.platformhg.com/news.

Your Voice Matters – Get Involved!

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do. We're committed to listening to your views and working together to shape the services you want and need.

By getting involved, you can help us celebrate what we do well – and more importantly, guide us on where we can do better. Whether you've got five minutes or a few hours to spare, there's a way for everyone to get involved and make a difference.



Here's how you can get involved:

- **Customer Voice Panel** – Play a strategic role in shaping our services and making sure we keep our promises. This is a paid role.
- **Scrutiny Panel** – Dive deeper into specific services and help us identify improvements from a customer's point of view.
- **Platform Voices** – Join our online community to exchange ideas, share your thoughts on topics that matter you, at a time that suits you, and help influence our policies and plans. Sign up today at <https://voices.platformhg.com>.

Let's
Talk!

However much time you have, your voice counts. Visit www.platformhg.com/get-involved to learn more and explore all the ways you can take part.

Energy Efficient Homes

We're committed to making our homes warmer, greener and more affordable to run.

As part of our long-term sustainability goals, we're working towards ensuring that all our homes reach an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C or above by 2030.

What is retrofit?

Retrofit refers to upgrading existing homes to reduce energy use and lower emissions. These improvements can also lead to healthier, more comfortable living spaces and lower energy bills.

We follow a fabric-first approach, which means we focus on reducing heat loss before anything else. This helps create low-carbon homes that are sustainable and affordable to heat.

Typical retrofit works include:

- Improved insulation.
- Energy-efficient windows and doors.
- Enhanced ventilation systems.
- Air source heat pumps.
- Solar PV panels.

To learn more about our retrofit plans and how they could benefit your home, visit:
www.platformhg.com/retrofit.

"I was dead against having an air source heat pump fitted as I'd read lots of awful things about them, but in hindsight it was information that was not complete. Because we've had everything done, I can see the benefits. The house stays the same temperature – it's really changed our daily lives, really changed it for the better."

Robin, Customer



New energy-efficient homes bring comfort and savings

A brand new housing development in Kirton, Lincolnshire is giving local families the chance to live in high quality, affordable homes – with big savings on their energy bills.

In partnership with Burmor Construction and LoCAL Homes we have built **41** one, two and three bedroom homes for rent and shared ownership.

Six of the homes have been built to exceed the government's Future Homes Standard (2025), with features like air source heat pumps, solar panels, triple glazing and thermal flooring – all helping to reduce energy use and keep running costs low.

"These homes are a great example of what we're aiming to deliver – high quality, energy-efficient homes that are more affordable to live in."

Paula Heatley, Platform's New Homes Delivery Director



Why we survey your home

To get a clear understanding of the current condition of your home and to keep your home in great shape now and in the years to come we carry out a home stock condition survey around every five years.

This quick visit helps us check the condition of key parts of your home, like:

- The roof and loft (if you have one).
- Windows and doors.
- Your kitchen and bathroom.

By doing this, we can plan ahead - working out how long things are likely to last and when they'll need to be replaced. That way, we can make sure future improvements are done at the right time and in the right way.

What to expect

When it's time for your survey, we'll be in touch to let you know. You'll get at least **two weeks' written notice** before we visit.

The survey only takes around **20 to 25 minutes** and our friendly surveyors will do their best to keep things efficient and hassle-free.



Home Improvements: Thinking about making changes to your home?

If you're planning any improvements or alterations, you need to seek our permission to ensure they meet the required standards and are safe.

Should permission be granted:

- You'll be responsible for the future maintenance, repair, or replacement of any improvements you've made.
- You may be eligible for compensation at the end of your tenancy.

How can I find out more and apply?

Visit our website for further guidance and to complete our online form: www.platformhg.com/diy-and-home-improvements.

Important: Please don't start any work until you've received our written permission.



Cathedral Park is now Open!

We're excited to announce the opening of Cathedral Park, our newest Retirement Village located in Holmer, Hereford.

This brand-new development offers a selection of modern one and two-bedroom apartments for rent – each featuring their own balcony or patio area. Homes are available in open or closed-plan layouts and have been thoughtfully designed with **age and dementia friendly features**, as well as **Smart thermostats** for added comfort and control.

Cathedral Park also includes a welcoming communal hub, with amenities such as:

- A small commercial shop.
- On-site salon and café.
- Two meeting rooms.
- A village hall available for hire.
- Landscaped gardens.
- Dedicated storage for mobility vehicles.

In addition, our **Successful Tenancies Team** is on hand to help you thrive in your new home. They can support you with budgeting, carry out a full benefit check to see if your income can be increased, and help ensure your tenancy is sustained in the long term.

Visit our website to find out more:

www.platformhg.com/cathedralpark.



Looking for your next home?

We offer a wide range of affordable homes to rent, as well as shared ownership properties if you're looking to buy or part-own your home.

You can also consider a **mutual exchange** to move to a home that better suits your needs.

Need help with the process?

We've put together a step-by-step guide and FAQs to help you understand how renting with us works: www.platformhg.com/rent-home.

Looking for a home now?

You can browse immediately available homes on our website: www.platformhg.com/properties.



The landline switch-off

Over the coming months, our contractor Wavenet will be auditing analogue services in communal areas of our retirement housing schemes and some general rented homes.

This work is part of the **national digital switchover**, which involves replacing old, copper-based landline networks with more reliable and future-proof **digital services** that use internet connections.

Why is this happening?

Traditional analogue networks are becoming outdated and less reliable. The UK is phasing them out and switching to digital networks that offer **better performance, increased reliability**, and are ready for future technologies.

This change (often referred to as the '**landline switch-off**') is being rolled out gradually and will be complete by **2027**.

Who will be affected?

The switchover will impact anyone using:

- Landline phones.
- Non-voice services such as fax machines and personal alarms.
- Some telecare or telehealth devices.

We'll be in touch with you if you are directly affected and will support you throughout the transition.

Elizabeth Court – Celebrating Retirement in Style

One of our 13 Retirement Villages celebrated its 20th Anniversary in June!

Elizabeth Court in Louth, Lincolnshire officially opened in 2005 offering 40 apartments in the historic market town and has provided homes and social interaction for many residents over the years.

Scheme Manager Donna Koss has been the welcoming face since the day it opened and her commitment to our customers is evident every day, ensuring the care and welfare of everyone.

Long term resident 88-year-old **Jackie** has been living at Elizabeth Court for 19 years. Although she initially moved in with her husband Keith, who has since sadly passed away, Jackie continues to enjoy the activities and gets involved with as much as possible to help her feel connected and prevent isolation. When Jackie was asked about living at Elizabeth Court, she told us **"I love it here!"**



Preventing blocked drains

Non-flushable items and toilet blockages

Flushing non-flushable items like wet wipes, sanitary products, and even excessive toilet paper is a common cause of **blocked external drains**. These items don't break down easily and can create large blockages in your pipes, leading to unpleasant odours and overflow.

Prevention Tips:

1. **Use rubbish bins for non-flushables:** Always dispose of wipes, sanitary products, and other non-flushable items in the rubbish, not the toilet.
2. **Educate household members:** Make sure everyone in your household knows what should and shouldn't be flushed down the toilet.

Hair, soap scum, and other bathroom blockages

One of the primary causes of **blocked drains** in bathrooms is the build-up of hair and soap scum. As you shower or wash your hair, loose strands accumulate and get stuck in the drain, combining with soap residue and other debris. Over time, this forms a blockage that restricts water flow.

Garden alterations and drainage

Before making any major changes to your garden - such as adding paving, decking, or new landscaping - it's important to consider how these alterations could affect drainage. Poor drainage can lead to water pooling, damage to your property, or even affect your neighbours.

This is especially important if your home is newly built, as drainage features are often already in place and carefully planned during construction. Alterations could unintentionally block or interfere with these systems, leading to future issues.

Prevention Tips:

1. **Use drain screens:** Install a drain screen over your shower or bath plughole to catch hair and prevent it from entering the drain.
2. **Regular cleaning:** Remove hair and debris from the drain cover after every shower or bath to prevent it from building up.
3. **Flush drains with hot water:** Regularly pour hot water down the drain to help dissolve soap scum and clear any small blockages.

Food waste and grease in kitchen sinks

In the kitchen, food particles and grease are leading culprits behind blocked drains. Even with a rubbish disposal, fats, oils, and grease can solidify inside pipes, trapping food particles and creating stubborn blockages. Over time, this build-up can completely block the drain, causing water to back up into your sink.

Prevention Tips:

1. **Dispose of grease properly:** Never pour cooking oils, fats, or grease down the sink. Instead, collect them in a container and dispose of them in the bin.
2. **Use a sink strainer:** Install a strainer in your sink to catch food particles and prevent them from going down the drain.
3. **Rinse with hot water:** After using the sink, run hot water down the drain to flush out any lingering grease and food particles.



Building new homes – Places for you to call home

Platform is continuing to deliver on its promise to build more affordable homes with work started on building more than 1,650 new homes - a record-breaking year for our development programme.

This milestone forms part of our commitment to help tackle the housing crisis by building **high quality, sustainable, and affordable homes** across the Midlands.

We also took on our **50,000th home** this year – a huge moment for us as an organisation that’s delivered over **8,000 new homes** since we were formed in 2018 following merger.

New developments underway

We’re delivering some of the biggest schemes in our history. Work has now started on:

- **319 homes in Beeston, Nottingham**, including 82 on the Octopus Energy ‘Zero Bills’ tariff.
- **260 homes in Keresley, Coventry**.
- **133 homes in Rushden, Northamptonshire**.
- A future site at **Browns Lane in Tamworth**, where **210 homes** and large green spaces will be created.

Looking ahead

We’ve already surpassed our development target for the year and are aiming even higher. Our pipeline is strong, and we’re on track to deliver **more than 7,500 sustainable, affordable homes over the next five years**.

“We made the decision after the pandemic to keep building homes, and that’s taken a monumental effort. To start on over 1,600 homes in one year is fantastic. Nearly all of them are gas-free, and many use modern methods of construction.”

Gerraint Oakley, Platform’s
Chief Growth and Development Officer

How to make a complaint or give feedback

We welcome your feedback as we are committed to giving an excellent service to our customers and when things don’t go to plan, we want to hear about it.

When this happens, we want to hear from you so we can put it right and improve our services to prevent similar problems from happening again.

How to make a complaint

You can make a complaint or give feedback by:

- Completing our online form: www.platformhg.com/complaints.
- Calling: **0333 200 7304**.
- Writing to: **Platform Housing Group
1700 Solihull Parkway
Birmingham Business Park
Solihull, B37 7YD**.

Want to know more?

Visit our website to read our full complaints policy and process www.platformhg.com/complaints.



Have your say! – Tenant Satisfaction Measures

The Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) are designed to enhance transparency and accountability across the housing sector.

What are Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)?

TSMs consist of **22 performance indicators** that all housing associations must report on annually. These measures provide insights into how well we're doing and highlight areas for improvement.

The 22 measures are divided into two categories:

- **10 Performance Measures:** Collected through our management systems, covering aspects like repairs and safety checks.
- **12 Customer Perception Measures:** Gathered via surveys to understand your experiences and satisfaction levels.



These measures focus on key areas, including:

- Overall satisfaction.
- Property maintenance.
- Building safety.
- Customer engagement.
- Complaint handling.
- Neighbourhood management.

How can I take part?

We're working with **TLF Research**, an independent market research company, to conduct customer perception surveys. If selected, you will receive a call from a **01484** number or an email from **uk@leadershipfactor.com**. Your responses will help us understand your needs better and improve our services.

Each survey takes about **10 minutes**, and your input is invaluable in shaping the future of our services.

Where can I find the results?

We publish our TSM performance results annually, providing a transparent view of our progress. You can access the latest results and learn more about the TSMs on our website: www.platformhg.com/have-your-say-tenant-satisfaction-measures.

Join our Platform Team

Looking for a new opportunity?

As one of the largest housing associations in the Midlands, we own over 50,000 homes and we're hiring!

We have a wide range of roles available across our regions, and we'd love to hear from you.

Why work with us?

We are proud to be an inclusive employer offering a supportive environment and:

- Generous holiday allowance.
- Training and development opportunities.
- Family-friendly policies.
- Health cash plan.
- Remote working options (role dependent).

It's a great time to join us! Find out more and apply: www.platformhg.com/join-our-team.



Diversity Grants – Bringing Communities Together

Do you have an idea that could celebrate diversity, build community spirit, or break down barriers between different groups?

Our **Diversity Grants** offer up to **£1,000** (and more for impactful projects) to support activities that bring people together and benefit Platform customers.

Projects we've supported include:

- Music, food and coffee morning events to support community cohesion.
- Children's clubs.
- Local PRIDE events.
- Dementia and respite care sessions.
- Hate Crime Awareness events.

We welcome applications from charities, community groups and organisations making a real difference.

Apply now:

Email: diversity@platformhg.com.

Website: www.platformhg.com/platform-community-chest.



Looking after your Communal Areas

Window cleaning

We are pleased to confirm that our communal window cleaning service, which is delivered on a quarterly basis, is back up and running in all areas.

This means that by the end of June 2025, all communal area windows in blocks of flats and specialist housing schemes will have received their first clean.

Thank you for your patience while we have been working to update and improve this service.

Caretaking and cleaning services

Did you know that our Property Care team can offer cleaning and caretaking services to you if you live in a home or building with communal areas?

If you are interested in these services, which you will pay an annual service charge for, please call our Customer Hub on **0333 200 7304**. Our Estate Services team will look into your request and get in touch.

Find out more

You can visit our website to read more about our cleaning and caretaking services and what we offer: www.platformhg.com/cleaning-and-caretaking.

