



# Opendoor

The magazine for magna housing customers



## Derick Cridland is our housing hero

Meet our new Scrufiny panel

Page 12

Have you visited our new website?

Page 16

Blooming lovely gardens

Page 14

# Welcome

Autumn is here and there are lots of exciting things on the way!

After what has been a really strange few months, we're really glad to be resuming our suspended services. We're grateful for your patience while we're working out how to do this while still keeping you and our teams safe. For regular updates on our services, please keep an eye on our website [www.magna.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.magna.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19)

Talking of our website, I've been leading a project to update [www.magna.org.uk](http://www.magna.org.uk) and I'm very proud to announce that it went live at the beginning of September. It's showcasing our new brand, but most importantly, the content has been reviewed and updated. The navigation has been improved so we hope you will be able to find what you're looking for easily. We've involved lots of customers along the way, so

thank you to everyone who has helped with this project. Find out more on page 16.

We have some big plans for the future, which we started to talk about in the last edition of Opendoor. But it's also important to look back and review what we've already done. With this in mind, our annual report is featured on page 8.

Customer engagement is really important to us and we want to involve you as much as possible. If you'd like to get involved in anything we mention in this magazine, email [engage@magna.org.uk](mailto:engage@magna.org.uk)

I hope you enjoy reading this edition and please get in touch with any feedback.



**Tanya Head**

Marketing Manager

01305 214047  
[tanya.head@magna.org.uk](mailto:tanya.head@magna.org.uk)

## Get in touch

### General enquiries

[customerservices@magna.org.uk](mailto:customerservices@magna.org.uk)

### Postal address

Everdene House, Railway Triangle  
Industrial Estate, Poundbury Road  
Dorchester DT1 2PJ

### Online

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



Would you like to receive Opendoor by email or on audio CD?

Email us to change your preferences  
[communications@magna.org.uk](mailto:communications@magna.org.uk)



## Moved into a new home recently? We'd like your feedback!

All new build Magna homes come with a cuddle! Well, a HUG actually.

Every new home is supported by a detailed Home User Guide (HUG) intended to help you understand how your new home functions.

The HUG has photos of key bits of the new house, from boiler and thermostat controls to stop valves and consumer units. It tells you how these work and how to deal with small issues. It also lets you know

what bits of DIY (like putting up picture hooks and shelves) you can do in your new home and where.

We are reviewing what details we put into a new Magna HUG and will be asking our customers about the HUGs they have received in new build homes over the past few years.

What would you like to see included when moving into a brand new home? Let us know by emailing [development@magna.org.uk](mailto:development@magna.org.uk)

# Service remobilisation

We know this hasn't been an easy time and that you've been keen for us to restart the remainder of our services. However, we needed to make sure it was safe for you and our teams.

We are now confident we have everything in place to do this through a phased approach.

In September, we were mainly catching up on outstanding repairs, mutual exchanges, and starting our preparations for installing new bathrooms, kitchens, doors and windows.

As we move into October, most of our services will be up and running. However, our offices will remain closed and we won't be running any community events or using community rooms in sheltered housing.

As the situation changes, we are able to alter our services to adhere to any changes in Government guidance.

We'll continue to keep you informed about which services are coming back. You can also check our website: [www.magna.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.magna.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19)



## What you can expect from us

One of the ways we measure customer experience is by assessing our performance against our service standards.

Having service standards helps us to be clear on what our and our customers' priorities are and what levels of service you can expect.

Every year, we review the standards with our involved customers to ensure they are relevant, understandable and being adhered to. We also regularly use mystery shoppers to test that we are doing what we say we will. We've recently made the following changes to our service standards following customer feedback:

- Remove the term 'during void works' from the lettable standard as it's jargon.
- Publicise neighbourhood visits by housing officers across all tenures, including homeowners.
- Make it clear in the 'keeping you safe in your home' standard that we inspect and service gas central heating in rented homes.
- Clarify that a new tenancy visit happens at 6 weeks, give examples of the types of things customers might need to ask permission for and clarify that a starter tenancy lasts for 12 months.
- Clarify the levels of support (low, sheltered plus and extra care) by scheme.

You can view all of our current service standards on our website: [www.magna.org.uk/about-us/policy/what-you-can-expect-from-us](http://www.magna.org.uk/about-us/policy/what-you-can-expect-from-us)

If you would like more info about our standards, to request a printed copy, or would like to be involved in influencing our services, please contact Neil Bliss, Resident & Community Engagement Officer, on 01984 635134 or email [engage@magna.org.uk](mailto:engage@magna.org.uk)



# Derick Cridland

## Our Housing Hero

Customer involvement is a priority for us so we can make sure that we make decisions based on the experience of those who live in our homes. Derick has been involved in some great work and has really helped to shape many of our services.

Derick Cridland, 80 years young and a retired farm foreman, has been involved with Magna since 2002 when he became a Magna tenant.

We first met Derick in 2003 when he became a member of our Tenants' Panel, attending many community events and meeting with tenants

across West Somerset to get their views. He's also been a Board member, a shareholder and has been involved in a range of working groups.

He has helped administer our Community Improvements Fund, reviewing applications from customers to help improve areas where they live and helping to decide the best use of the fund. He's helped select our grounds maintenance contractors and helped set up our garden handyman service. He's also been the mainstay on our neighbourhood inspection programme in West Somerset, going on estate walkabouts throughout the year checking for any issues and raising awareness of customer involvement. This has been done through sun, rain and snow- nothing stops him!

Annie Cole, Housing Officer, nominated Derick

for the national 2020 Housing Heroes Award. Annie said "Derick has attended neighbourhood walkabouts with me for many years. He has a great sense of humour, always putting a smile on people's faces as we visit different areas in West Somerset. His dedication and commitment to both Magna and our community is amazing. Derick is always enthusiastic and a great spokesperson for our customers. I'm so glad he's been shortlisted and being recognised for the fantastic contributions he has made over the years."

We called Derick to share the news that he'd been shortlisted and he was over the moon! Derick said 'I was surprised to be nominated and even more surprised to make the shortlist! I enjoy helping others and being able to make a difference and I love doing it. One of my highlights working with Magna was being part of the Tenants' Panel and chatting to other tenants at our community events.'

Neil Bliss, resident and community engagement officer, said 'I've known and worked with Derick since I joined Magna. He always gives his honest opinion to help us improve our services for our customers, who are at the heart of everything we do. Making the shortlist makes Derick a winner already.'

The awards ceremony was held virtually on 10 September 2020. Although Derick didn't win, he's still our housing hero. Congratulations to everyone who took part.

The national 2020 Housing Heroes Awards is organised by Inside Housing magazine.



## Money worries? We're here to help

**We know this is a worrying time for many of you with regards to how to pay the rent and other bills. We can offer you advice and support to claim any benefits you are entitled to as well as tips to save money on your bills.**

If you are struggling to pay the rent as your income has reduced, please contact the income management team on **01305 216067** to agree a plan to get you through this difficult time and catch up with any missed rent payments.

If you would like advice or support to claim benefits, or discuss ways to budget and save money, please contact our money matters team on **0800 999 6130** or email **admin-shss@magna.org.uk**

More information about our money matters service can be found online at **[www.magna.org.uk/money-matters](http://www.magna.org.uk/money-matters)**

# Our annual report 2019/20

Each year, we review our performance and share the relevant information so you can check how well we are providing our services. This report relates to the financial year ending 31 March 2020.

## MONEY MATTERS

We helped our customers deal with the continuing roll out of Universal Credit and the impact of other welfare changes. Our money matters and tenancy advice services have helped our customers access £2.6 million of welfare benefits and backdated payments in 2019/20.

## REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

We spent £15.6 million on major, response and cyclical repairs in the last year, replacing hundreds of new kitchens, bathrooms, front doors and heating systems. We fitted 25 shower wet rooms and redecorated 87 sheltered homes prior to re-letting to better meet our customers' needs. 98% of our response repairs were completed within our target times.

## LETTINGS

Our time taken to re-let empty properties was very good at 15 days. However, we identified during the year that our focus on adherence to the target was having the unintended result of contributing to a reduction in the satisfaction levels of new customers with the quality of their new homes. In response, our maintenance services team focussed on changing the way they work to ensure they met the re-let standard at the time of letting and carrying out fewer post occupation repairs. As a result of these changes, customer satisfaction with the condition of newly let

properties has improved from a low point of 69% in the month of December 2019 to 95% in the month of March 2020. This was a significant improvement in customer experience.

## FORMAL COMPLAINTS

We promoted the formal complaints policy as a reliable way to put things right and help us to improve. We received 30 formal complaints during the year. At the end of the year, two complaints remained open; one at stage one and one that has progressed to stage two. Two complaints have exhausted our complaint process and have been submitted to the Ombudsman. These were both housing related, with one for general needs and one for sheltered services. One case has been closed as the complaint was brought over 3 years after the incident. The other case was recently accepted by the Ombudsman who has requested further information.

Our annual financial statements are also available online and contain more detail about our performance:  
[www.magna.org.uk/money-matters/facts-and-figures/latest-annual-report-and-financial-statements](http://www.magna.org.uk/money-matters/facts-and-figures/latest-annual-report-and-financial-statements)



**£15.6m**

spent on repairs & maintenance



**98%**

of response repairs completed within target time



**87**

sheltered homes redecorated prior to letting



**15 days**

average time to re-let empty homes



**30**

formal complaints received



**£2.6m**

of welfare benefits gained by customers through our money matters team



## Are modular homes the future?

With increasing pressure on our housing stock and people struggling to find affordable housing, we should be looking at creative and innovative ways to address this so everyone can have a home to be proud of.

Magna Housing is doing just that by developing a partnership with local company Rollalong, to create sustainable and flexible homes for the future that are built in a factory environment.

Paul Read, Assistant Director of Development at Magna Housing, explains: "The work we have undertaken demonstrates that the modular homes built in this factory are more cost-effective to maintain and quicker to construct. They generate less waste both on site and in the factory, less traffic in and around the sites we develop and also have a lower carbon footprint in use than traditional brick

houses, making them a sustainable housing solution." Paul continued: "We think that people deserve a home to be proud of that sits nicely within the local vernacular. Magna is here, for the long-term, to help to deliver that.

"Building the homes in a factory setting, using modern methods of construction (MMC) helps to ensure consistently achieving the highest quality of build, ensuring that, for our customers, we achieve the environmental benefits this way of building homes provides.

"We're now ready to roll out our first 45 factory built homes onto site and have placed our next order for a further 50 homes from the newly designed 2020/21 range of larger, greener and all electric homes."

Steve Chivers, Managing Director of Rollalong said "Our ongoing collaboration with Magna will ensure that high-quality, precision-engineered homes continue to be manufactured in the local area by local people."

Scale, repetition and volume makes the business model work for offsite manufacturers like Rollalong, but does require a step change in thinking.

"Manufacturing homes that are built to last is a new concept for many people and something that needs a new way of thinking. The quality of the homes we produce are exceptional but when you mention modular, some may be sceptical about this. We've been building homes in this way for the Ministry of Defence, and the evidence we have from years of building homes for our service men and women is that people are extremely satisfied with this way of building and something that we now, more than ever, need to do more to help with the national housing crisis." said Steve.

Steve added: "As we are a local manufacturing company we employ our workforce directly and we're pleased to be able to support the local economy and provide work for our local community."

"Local homes built by local people is important to us as a company, as we are embedded within the communities we serve and can see the connection between what we do and the impact we have." Paul said.

"With our new range of homes, each home, whether it's a 1 bed flat or a 4 bed house, will be bigger and more adaptable, reflecting that the designs can flex and adapt to people's lives. Our lives may never return to normal after the lockdown – lifestyles will change and people's needs may alter. Perhaps more



people will work from home in future and will be looking for extra space, and this new range of homes can flex and adapt to that."

"We are excited about our first schemes coming to life on sites across Dorset. These will demonstrate the wide range of looks being achieved which we have worked hard on with the urban design teams at Dorset Council and our own architects. Even the wildlife is being looked after with the inclusion of bat and bird boxes and bee bricks within our schemes. These things all matter to Magna and to our customers, as we build and then stay invested in our homes, maintaining them and looking after the landscapes we produce."

Magna will be investing £400m into its existing and new homes over the next decade.

To find out more about Magna's plans to build new homes, visit: [www.magna.org.uk/about-us/help-advice-and-information/building-new-homes](http://www.magna.org.uk/about-us/help-advice-and-information/building-new-homes)

More information about Rollalong can be found at: [www.rollalong.co.uk](http://www.rollalong.co.uk)

If you're interested in renting with Magna, or buying a shared ownership home, take a look at: [www.magna.org.uk/find-a-property](http://www.magna.org.uk/find-a-property)

# Working with our customers to improve our services

We're a customer centred business, passionate about creating great homes and delivering a great customer experience, with our customers at the heart of everything we do. With that in mind, we wanted to set up a customer scrutiny group who could help us achieve the great levels of service we want to deliver.

Back in May 2019 we asked for interest from our customers to form a new scrutiny group. We had nine expressions of interest and ran several taster sessions which resulted in us starting the group with four core members.

Val Trice, a member of the group, is excited to be taking the next steps towards successful scrutiny: "I chose to be involved with Scrutiny because I wanted to learn more and be involved in helping Magna make customer-focussed decisions. The benefits of being involved are being able to work as a team with other members of the group and Magna colleagues. I feel that my input is valued and I'm excited about the future."

From the outset everyone agreed that co-creation and learning together was the key to a successful group. We began by meeting up with Stonewater Housing Association's well-established Scrutiny group members to get an idea of how they work and how they could help us.

Following this visit, all members decided the groups' purpose:

"A group of residents working together with Magna colleagues to check and challenge our service delivery and performance to help improve services."

Neil Bliss, Resident and Community Engagement Officer, said "We will all learn along the way. We haven't got all the answers and so we chose a gradual approach, testing things out as we go. Openness, trust and transparency is key for this group to succeed."

For their first task, the group agreed to do a short Scrutiny topic, based on the survey of tenants and residents (STAR) results which showed a drop in satisfaction for our repairs and maintenance service. With help from our customer insight team, the group contacted some of our dissatisfied customers to delve deeper into what their issues were. After the phone calls, the group reviewed the customer feedback and made recommendations for improvements to our maintenance teams.

Trea Murphy, Head of Maintenance Services, commented "We were pleased to receive this valuable insight from the group which we will use to help us understand customer priorities and improve the customer experience".

Our Board are also pleased to have a Scrutiny group at Magna. Christine Turner, Board Chair, said "I'm delighted that our

customers have been so active and engaged with our work. We are a customer led organisation so it is only right that we are listening to their views and acting on their recommendations. I hope that more customers will get involved with us in the future so we can continue to put customers at the heart of everything we do."

In December, Neil Bliss and two members of the group attended the first ever Scrutiny conference for residents, run by tenant engagement experts, TPAS. Our members found it helpful to talk to other groups and they left with some good ideas for the future of Scrutiny at Magna.

The group's top priority is to make the group even more effective by recruiting new members and ensuring their project work is the best it can be. They have engaged TPAS to help and support them with this and are currently working on an outcomes-focussed workplan to help achieve their ambitious goals.

Gary Wilkinson, also a member of the group, said "I chose to become involved so that the views of the tenants could be brought to the attention of Magna. I have learnt that staff not only take note of your constructive criticisms, but also take action to rectify the raised comments. The benefit of being involved is the fact that when problems arise you are in a position to raise the concerns and make recommendations for changes."

Next steps for the group are to recruit new members, continue to develop as a team and to learn new skills. The group are also considering the best ways for them to continue their work remotely using technology in place of face to face meetings.

If you'd like to get involved, contact Neil Bliss, Resident and Community Engagement Officer, on 01984 635134 or email [neil.bliss@magna.org.uk](mailto:neil.bliss@magna.org.uk)

Meet some of the members: Val Trice & Gary Wilkinson





# Blooming lovely!

## Our virtual garden competition showcases lockdown gardening at its best!

Our green fingered customers look forward to the annual garden competition, but because of Coronavirus, this year we had to do things differently to keep the competition going.

Amanda Taylor, personal secretary at Magna, organised the Magna garden competition and was one of the judges. She said "We launched the competition before the Coronavirus outbreak, and when lockdown came it seemed like we would have to cancel. But we know how important gardens are and how much extra time our customers would be spending in them, so we knew we needed to continue the competition somehow."

For many people, gardening is an important part of their wellbeing. The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) recently commissioned a survey that revealed 7 out of 10 people consider that having a garden has helped mental health during lockdown with everyday activities such as weeding, mowing and watering cited as having a positive impact.

So, fully embracing technology, we held the competition virtually and to our surprise and delight, we received the most entries we have ever had for our garden competition!

We asked entrants to show us around their gardens using whatever video calling platforms they were comfortable with. With over 60 entries across six categories, our judges were virtually walked around our customers gardens.

Amanda added "It was such a pleasure to be shown around so many of our customers' beautiful gardens. Their passion for gardening really came through as they explained what we were looking at in each one."

After much Zooming, WhatsApping, Facetiming and deliberation, our judges came to their decisions for the best patios and containers, sustainable, small and large gardens, children's category and the tallest sunflower.

Our first prize winners for each category are listed below. For a full list of winners, visit [www.magna.org.uk/news/community/gardens-come-to-us](http://www.magna.org.uk/news/community/gardens-come-to-us)

### Patios and containers

Paul Pearson, Minehead

### Sustainable/wildlife

David & Hannah Marsh, Maiden Newton

### Small garden

Dutch de Vries, Stogursey

### Large garden

Sadie Lenton, Chickerell

### Children's

Morgan White, Yeovil

### Tallest sunflower

Reggie & Bertie Pile, Burton Bradstock

### Special Prize

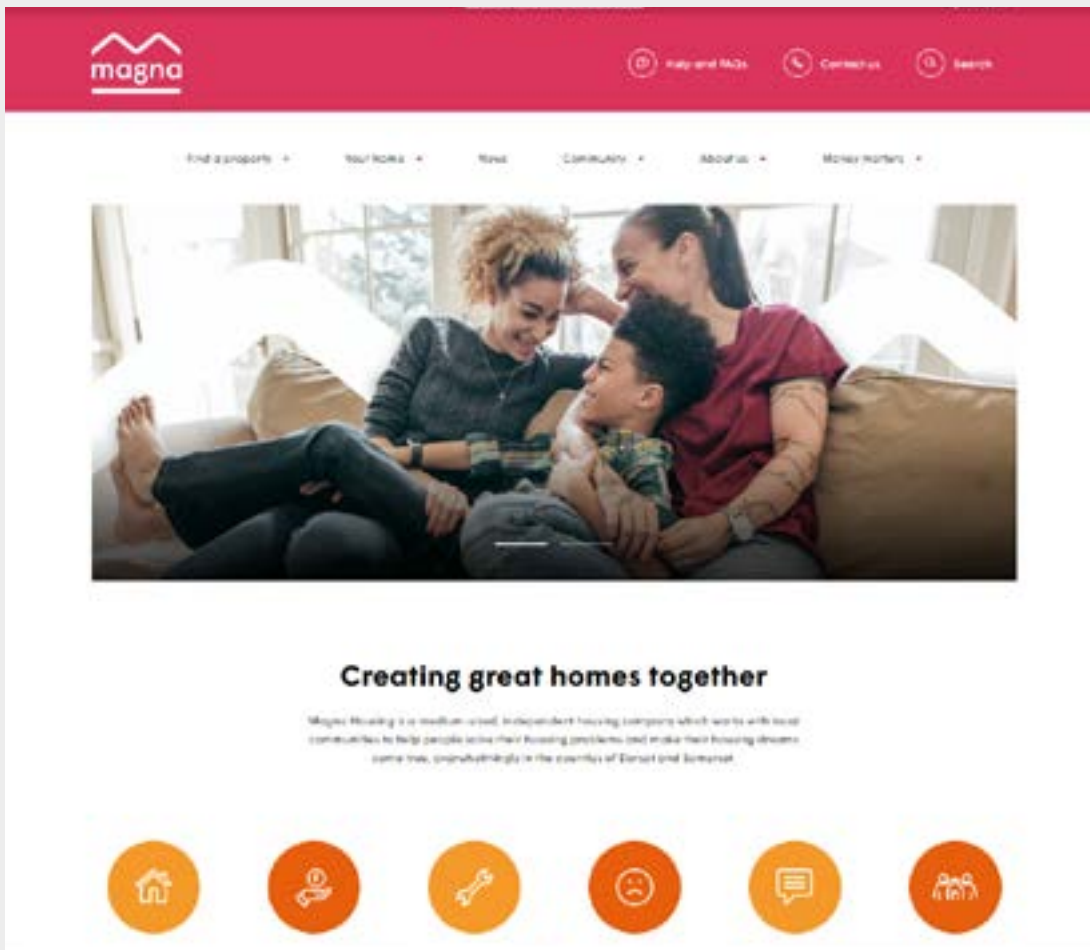
Fruit & Veg garden -  
Rosemary Cieciora, Beaminster.

Well done to the lucky winners and thanks to all our entrants for their hard work!

Neil Bliss, resident and community engagement officer, said "I'm so pleased our customers embraced technology to enable us to continue with this competition. Myself and my fellow judges found it a great way of looking around your amazing gardens whilst remaining safe and following government guidelines. This has shown us that there are lots of ways we can improve what we do by making the most of the technology we have available to us all."







## Our new website!

Our website should be a useful resource for our customers that is easy to navigate and provide a great customer experience.

However, it was starting to look a little tired and some things were a little hard to find, so we've been reviewing all of the content and deciding whether we really need it and does it help or interest our customers? If not, why is it there?

It's really important to get the content and navigation right on a website. To make sure we

get this right for you, we've involved lots of our customers in the design and build of the site, ensuring it serves your needs. They've also tested it out prior to launch to make sure it's working well. Thank you to all of you who chose to get involved and help us with this project.

Proudly showcasing our new branding, the redesign is clean, modern and user friendly. But it's important to say that this is by no means finished. Our website will continuously evolve, so if you have any suggestions for future



improvements please let us know. There's currently a pop up survey on the website that you can complete to give feedback.

**If you haven't visited our website recently, take a look:**  
**[www.magna.org.uk](http://www.magna.org.uk)**

## Moving to AllPay

**We're making changes to your online payments.**

In December we'll be updating our online payments system to AllPay. Although the site will look different, it's still Magna, and still our secure payment site. This will only affect card payments through our website, so if you have standing orders or direct debits with us, these won't change.

If you have previously saved your card details on the current site, then once we switch over to AllPay, you'll need to re-enter your card details when you make a payment. You'll also need to change any links or bookmarks you've set up to the payment page as this will also change.

We hope this doesn't cause any problems as it should work as easily as the previous system.

**If you'd like to set up a direct debit with us for your regular payments, please fill in our online form:**  
**[www.magna.org.uk/your-home/rent/apply-for-direct-debit](http://www.magna.org.uk/your-home/rent/apply-for-direct-debit)**

# Getting social

## Our first Facebook Live Chat

At the beginning of September, we held our very first Facebook Live Chat on the customer Facebook page!

We had lots of colleagues from a wide range of departments poised and ready to answer incoming questions for the Live Chat hour.

26 customers joined us to chat and ask questions, with 162 comments and responses being answered.

Talking directly about your concerns and issues and answering questions as they arise is one of the ways we are improving our overall customer experience.

Neil Bliss, Resident and Community Engagement Officer, organised the event and said: "Many thanks to everyone who took part in our first live chat earlier this month. It was great to talk to you! We're really pleased to have been able to help answer so many queries."

We'll be holding more of these sessions in the future, but you can contact us any time on social media, or using the contact details shown on the back page of this magazine.

### Have you joined our customer Facebook group?

Our customer Facebook group is just for our existing customers. You can feed back to us about topics we are currently focussing on, ask questions, chat with other customers and take part in polls and live Q&A sessions.

It's a private group, so you will have to ask to join. Simply search for 'Magna Housing Customer Group' on Facebook.

Go to 'Join Group' at the top, and then 'Answer Questions'. Please make sure you answer all 3 questions so you can be accepted quickly.

Our main Facebook page will continue for general updates for our customers and the wider community, so keep following that page too!

## Come and join us on Instagram!

We're building new shared ownership homes across Dorset and Somerset.

We promote all of our shared ownership homes on Instagram, showcasing their progress and offering advice on how you can purchase your own home.

Come and take a look at our photos and view our stories. We look forward to seeing you on there!



## Could you be our next board member?

Our Board will be recruiting up to three new members over the coming months.

The particular skills and experience we're looking for are around strategic asset management, treasury and housing finance, and customer experience and digital transformation.

The roles will be advertised widely, including on our website, in the coming months. If you'd like to be notified when these roles become available, or would like to talk about the role, please email our Governance Officer, Emma Rodell: [emma.rodell@magna.org.uk](mailto:emma.rodell@magna.org.uk)

# Contact us

Not sure who to contact? Here's some useful contacts at Magna.

## Housing services

0800 1386107  
tenancy@magna.org.uk

## Estate services

01305 214027  
estateservices@magna.org.uk

## Repairs

0800 3586025  
repairs@magna.org.uk

## Right to buy enquiries

01305 216008  
legal@magna.org.uk

## Sheltered housing & supported services

0800 9996130  
admin-shss@magna.org.uk

## Formal complaints

Repairs & maintenance issues 01305 214071

Housing services issues 01984 635131  
customerservices@magna.org.uk

## Home ownership team

01305 216153  
homeownership@magna.org.uk

## Get #social!

Get in touch through our social channels!

