

myplace

Housing news for Solon people



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Customer service is changing

Welcome to our summer edition. Meet the team who will look after you from start to finish and find out how you can have a say at the highest level in Solon – page 5.

Rebecca

0117 916 7792

solon@solonswha.co.uk

Find us on:

facebook.com/solonswha

twitter.com/solonswha

We pay childcare and travel to help you attend our meetings

We want to help you attend meetings when you can, so we pay reasonable childcare and travel and supply food at all meetings.

We need a receipt for childcare and for transport costs and you can complete a claim form at the meeting. The money is paid to you within 14 days.

Need some help to get to a meeting?

Call Rebecca (above) to discuss your needs.



August bank holiday + move

Our office is open as usual except:

Monday 26 August – Closed

We're moving office
See page 8

Meetings & Events

Contact Rebecca if you want more info about events or if you would like to have a say. See above for more information on help to attend.



Maintenance Action Group
Solon office 4pm
Maintenance team
0117 924 7777



Customer Service Improvement Committee (see page 5)
Solon office 4pm
Call: 0117 916 7792

Read reports from recent meetings

- **Customer Service Improvement: Page 7**
- **Maintenance: Page 8**

Local meetings, childcare and online forums help residents to be involved

Out and about for our spring roadshow we were able to talk face to face with residents who don't often make it to meetings to give their views.

In our short survey we explored what kinds of communication

you like and what stops you from getting involved. Childcare, local events, meetings in school hours and online forums were suggested for us to take on board. See page 4 for the full report from our five April events.



Expecting us? Ask to see ID!

We never send anyone to your home without an appointment and all our operatives carry identification.

So if anyone comes to your home to carry out work, please ask to see their ID before you let them in. No ID? No entry!

If you are in doubt, ask the person to wait outside, close the door and call us to check. They will be happy to wait.

Follow-up on last issue

Spring roadshow

What the residents said... Find out what went on (including the face paint) at our Easter events – page 4

Checking repair work

We have restructured to make sure we follow up on all repairs – page 5

Communal areas

Gardening and cleaning contracts are being improved – page 7

Solon open meeting 2019

**St Pauls Learning Centre
Thursday 12 September 2019
5.15pm to 8.45pm**

We would like to invite you to this great opportunity to meet our Board members, contractors, partners and staff to find out what we have done over the past 12 months and what the future brings. Our annual get-together includes two amazing speakers and hot food.

Kate Henderson, Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation, will talk about the national housing situation and the importance of investing in social rented homes.

Jez Sweetland from Bristol Housing Festival will discuss how modern construction is changing the look and feel of houses.

Keep an eye on Facebook for updates. See you there!



What better time to meet residents with children than at the start of the holidays? With amazing face painters and our dedicated housing team, we hopped aboard the fun bus to chat to those we don't always see...

WE STOPPED BY TO SAY HI!



Residents and their children enjoyed some Easter craft activities while giving us feedback on the ways they would choose to have their say in Solon.

Would you like a local resident meeting?
Get in touch so we can include you in our plans.

Social and fun for kids

Residents were keen to come out and see what was happening and loved the chance to bring the children out to play.

Would you attend again?

More than three-quarters (78%) of residents said they would come to more Solon events. However only half of those we spoke to said they knew how to get involved.

What might stop you?

A third of residents told us they could be involved with Solon but half said that lack of childcare (the main reason), time of day or work prevents them coming to meetings (see page 2 for how to claim childcare and travel).

Local turns out to be best

Importantly, half of residents said they would attend a meeting if it were more local, so we are looking at setting this up.

Feedback online is a 'yes'

Half of the residents we spoke to said they would like both meetings and documents to be online so they could give comments – we're already working on that!

MyPlace gets some

Almost everyone liked MyPlace - we had an 88% score – which made our team glow with pride!

IMPROVING SERVICE TO YOU



Our 2018 survey put maintenance and communal areas as priorities for improvement. We're listening! Your contact with Solon is now picked up by a new customer support team.

What you told us

In our most recent Customer Satisfaction Survey (our 2018 STAR survey) you told us that we need to improve our maintenance service and you raised other issues, such as the quality of landscaping and cleaning for communal spaces.

The two areas where residents were most dissatisfied were:

- Repairs and maintenance requests were not being carried out quickly enough and not being done right the first time.

- Residents felt we were not listening to their views and acting upon them.

Our response

To address these problems we took a hard look at our setup and decided to restructure and create a new customer service team. This group will focus on making sure there are always staff to process customer calls and requests at first contact.

Meet the team on page 6.

How will it work?

For a Solon resident, this will mean that you should always be able to reach someone who will listen to your concern, log your repair and help you. They will follow up and make sure you are satisfied with the outcome.

We are committed to improving customer satisfaction and are using all our capacity to ensure a positive experience for you. We will ask you to tell us how this is working in the future so we can continue to make things even better.

You're invited!

Our Customer Service Improvement Committee (CSIC) is one of the best ways to help us understand what works for residents. All our residents are warmly invited to attend and be involved in top-level decisions.

Read the report from our May meeting (page 7) and feel free to come along to the Solon office on Wednesday 9 October at 4pm. For more information call:

0117 916 7792



MEET YOUR NEW CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM



Michelle Green
Customer Services Manager

Michelle will join us at the end of August and manage the new team. She will make sure everything runs smoothly so requests are processed in the best way possible.

Contact us on
0117 916 7777

Text + WhatsApp: 07712 670 228
or send us an email at:
maintenance@solonswha.co.uk

Cassie Holdsworth
Customer Services
Advisor

Cassie is a new staff member who will make sure that all your calls are being processed to your satisfaction and that we get things right first time.



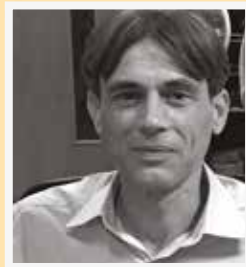
Kylie Davis
Estate Management
Officer

Kylie covers our Central Bristol areas and is the first point of contact for any issues with your tenancy other than arrears.



Andrew Davey
Customer Services
Advisor

Andrew joined us in July. He will answer calls and deal with any repairs and housing requests by phone, text, WhatsApp, email and social media.



Flic Hughes
Estate Management
Officer

Flic is the first point of contact for residents in South Bristol, BANES, South Glos, Mendip, Forest of Dean and Melksham.



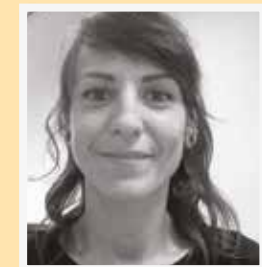
Dominic Cookson
Customer Services
Advisor

Dominic will answer the maintenance phone line. He will book repairs appointments, send out the works orders and liaise with contractors to make sure the works are on time.



Kym Britton
Estate Management
Officer

Kym manages our properties in Stoke Gifford and in parts of Yate and also covers the role of Housing Assistant.



MAY 2019 CSIC HIGHLIGHTS

Here is a summary of things discussed by our Customer Service Improvement Committee

Comparing new IT systems

The Board is currently considering the plan for our ambitions new IT system – assessing value for money and customer service benefits. A new system will update our services, particularly given that more people use text and email or online forms for communication. We are currently comparing two systems to prepare for selecting a supplier.

Update on communal spaces

Currently cleaners do not have a full schedule for times and dates of cleaning. Once this is done Solon will ask residents to monitor times and the quality of the work.

Availability of water for cleaning and electricity for vacuuming and some grubby paintwork are all to be addressed. Our follow-up of resident complaints also revealed that gardening

contracts do not cover all works mentioned, so we will consult residents on which works they want.

Operatives to show ID

Residents commented that contractors are not all showing ID when visiting homes. Gregor and Novus confirmed that they tell all operatives that this is essential for every visit. See page 3 for our advice on asking to see ID.

Could you take a seat on our Board?

To provide the best customer service, it is helpful to have a Board member with experience of living in a Solon property and using our services. The role is exciting and challenging and offers a chance to gain new skills.

Board members help make decisions about the policies, strategies and budgets that shape resident services.

As a minimum, Board members attend an evening meeting every two months (6 per year) and come to some other meetings and events.

There is no pay for Board members, but we cover reasonable expenses for meetings and offer free training and many opportunities. In exchange, you offer your unique perspective as a resident to help improve the way Solon is run, for the benefit of all tenants. This is a great opportunity for personal development.

We are keen to ensure that membership of our Board reflects

our resident profile and the local community, so we particularly welcome applications from groups that are under-represented, such as members of local BME communities.

How to prepare to get in touch

A Resident Board Member has important responsibilities that require a commitment of time, skills and resources. Before you nominate yourself, you may wish to visit our website at solonswha.co.uk for more information or get in touch with **Rebecca Bellingham 0117 916 7792**
Email: rebecca_bellingham@solonswha.co.uk

Board meetings

Regular meetings for all residents

- **Join our Maintenance Action Group**
Next meeting Weds 2 Oct.
- **Join our Customer Services Improvement Committee (CSIC)**
Next meeting Weds 9 Oct.

MEETING NOTES 3 JULY

Focus on repairs satisfaction

Contractors Gregor and Novus both attended the Maintenance Action Group (MAG) meeting to discuss repairs and servicing.

Performance for May was compared to April and most service had greatly improved. Scores of 100% satisfaction were recorded for keeping appointments, protecting homes and being tidy, being polite and helpful, and communicating with the customer about the repair.

Other scores were all improved except repairs response times. This is an area we are addressing by restructuring our customer service team (see page 5).

A key area for improvement is for the contractor to show ID when they arrive at the property. This was done only 70% of the time in May. Many customers know the repairs team but we still advise you to check official ID at every visit (see page 3).

We also have a new contract manager for day to day repairs. **Peter Derrick** at Novus now leads on all Solon repairs and maintenance work. Peter comes with a wealth of experience and a strong focus

Our MAG meeting is open to all residents. We cover childcare and travel costs and supply food!

**Next MAG meeting
Weds 2 October 4pm
SEE PAGE 2**

on the customer. Novus has also had an internal restructure to improve the way they deliver customer service to Solon residents.

We want to offer something to residents who come to meetings, so we always put on a yummy spread!



We're moving office ... But we're not going very far

After 20 years in the city centre our lease is coming to an end and we have found a lower cost and better value space in Fishponds. We will write to all residents before we move.

City centre office rents are now very expensive – much higher than we are paying now. We have been unable to find an affordable place in the centre so we are moving further out, where it is cheaper and better value for money. – just off Fishponds Road.

The new office has good public transport links and visiting us will now be easier for some people. However, most people don't visit us and we're not expecting you to come to us – we will be able to come and visit you in your home if you ask us.

We also encourage all our residents to get in touch by phone, email, WhatsApp, Facebook or Twitter.

You can also pay your rent via Allpay.



Building homes and **FUTURES**

Six new-build homes now under construction will be handed over to Solon in August by developers Bristol Together.

Four three-bedroom terraced houses and two semi-detached three-bedroom homes are being built on the site of a former Baptist Church in Newry Walk, Knowle West. They will provide a great addition to the Solon housing stock.

A truly unique construction company, Bristol Together is a social enterprise providing employment for ex-offenders



Six new 3-bedroom houses in Knowle West become available for Solon to let in August.

“**Hands-on training and fantastic new-build homes... a double whammy...**”

seeking to create a new life for themselves through the building of homes. Experienced tradesmen work alongside the recruits, teaching them skills on the job: bricklaying, carpentry, plastering, plumbing, painting and landscaping.

Paul Morgan of Bristol Together explained: “Many ex-offenders are desperate to start a new life and put their past behind them, but finding employment can be a huge challenge. At Bristol Together we provide the opportunity for those who want to start afresh to learn and develop their skills and then find long-term employment with other construction companies

“**We provide the opportunity to start afresh.**”

after they leave us. “Partnering experienced tradesmen with those who want to learn means that we not only offer access to valuable hands-on training for individuals but also deliver fantastic new-build homes for those who need them. It’s a double whammy which we’re enormously proud of and we are delighted to have struck a deal with Solon for the homes.”

Shared ambitions

Solon continues to develop partnerships within innovative schemes to release more homes for affordable rent. By working closely with developers, local authorities and planners, we are in a strong position to provide even more homes to help address the severe housing crisis in the UK. This helps us to maintain steady growth in housing stock alongside our own developments: we call it a win-win!



RESPONSE+RECOVERY

Taking steps to put things right

DAMP CONCERNS TAKEN SERIOUSLY

“I would like to say thank you to Jon the surveyor, who came and inspected a mould issue in the property.

“Jon was very professional and not once made me feel uncomfortable or fobbed me off by saying ‘condensation’.

“He was full of advice and went through steps that were going to happen.

“He even called back for follow-up.

“I also want to say thank you to Kym Britton for her role as Housing Officer – she was a tremendous help.

“Thank you for employing people like Jon and Kym, who take pride in their work. It makes a lot of difference to the residents.”

FAST FIX AT LAST TO THE OUTSIDE

A distressed tenant got in touch to complain about the condition of the outside of their home and about not having a response from us. Thankfully we were able to visit the next day, assess the damage and agree a plan for the work. We said sorry for taking so long.



SUMMEREVENTS

Bristol’s festival season begins - and these are FREE!

Here fest

28 July 10am - 4pm
Bath Road BS4 3AP

Family funday with circus workshops, games and facepainting. Raises money for the homeless in Bristol.

Redfest

3 August
St George Park BS5 9EN
redfestbristol.co.uk

Annual vibrant community festival with packed

programme of performances, exhibitions and installations. Children’s entertainment, workshops and storytelling are all part of the fun.

Bristol Balloon Fiesta

8-11 August, Ashton Court,
bristolballoonfiesta.co.uk

Spectacular event with 100+ hot air balloons taking off at dawn and dusk and the famous Night Glows at 9pm on Thurs 8 and Sat 10 August: tethered balloons are lit up in time to music.

Bristol Open Doors

13-15 September, city-wide
bristolopendoors.org.uk

For a whole weekend a year, Bristol Open Doors gives you the keys to the city: free access to 101 fascinating buildings and secret spaces. For some buildings you need to book in advance online. Some offer expert-led tours.



Measuring our latest service

Solon keeps key performance data and reports regularly. Results from February to May 2019 are here. Ask us if you want more info.

Service	Latest	Previous	Target	Are we improving?	Our comment on these results
Repairs					
Repair completed on time %	97.2	97.2	98.5		Thank you for your feedback. We are committed to improving our service.
Customers satisfied with their latest repair %	95	86.8	96		We've nearly reached our target - that's great news for you and for us.
Relets					
Average number of days to relet a property	19.2	20.7	18		We are improving our relets and filling up empty properties faster.
Rent arrears %	3.54	3.51	3.2		While Universal Credit is delayed, we work hard with the relevant agencies.
Resident involvement + feedback					
Involved residents % (number)	1.85	12.26	25		In the next six months we will be meeting more of you to get feedback.
Number of complaints	8	5	N/A		We are working with our contractors to improve our services to you.
Number of compliments	16	14	N/A		Thank you for your kind words.



Upgrade your work skills

Did you know that we can help you get a fresh start with work?

Future Bright offers funded support for training to help you develop skills for work or improve work options. We can put you in touch or you can call Future Bright. We recently helped six residents.

- Three residents took up new training courses.
- Two residents will begin training.
- One resident got a job they wanted that provides training.

Bristol 0117 922 2250 or email futurebright@bristol.gov.uk

South Glos 01454 866008 or email futurebright@southglos.gov.uk

futurebright.org.uk



Tell us if you want MyPlace in large print, in a different language or in another format.

ARABIC

إذا لم تكن اللغة الإنجليزية هي لغتك الأم وتحتاج إلى الترجمة فسيكون هذا الأمر.

BANGLADESHI

ইংরেজী আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হলে এবং আপনার কোন অনুবাদের প্রয়োজন হলে আমরা তা প্রদান করতে সক্ষম।

BENGALI

ইংরেজী আপনার মাতৃভাষা না হলে এবং আপনার কোন অনুবাদের প্রয়োজন হলে আমরা তা প্রদান করতে সক্ষম।

CHINESE

如果英文不是您的第一語言，而您需要翻譯的話，我們可以為您安排。

FRENCH

Si l'anglais n'est pas votre langue natale et que vous souhaitez une traduction, nous pouvons vous la fournir.

POLISH

Jeżeli język angielski nie jest Twoim językiem ojczystym i wymagasz tłumaczenia, możemy to zapewnić.

PORTUGUESE

Se o Inglês não é a sua língua materna e precisa de uma tradução, nós podemos obtê-la.

PUNJABI

ਜੇਕਰ ਇੰਗਲਿਸ਼ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਬਾਰੀਏ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਰਤ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

SOMALI

Haddii Ingiliska aynu ahayn afkaga kowada oo aad u baahan tahay furjumaad, annaga kuu samayn karta.

THAI

ถ้าภาษาไทยไม่ใช่ภาษาแม่ของคุณและคุณต้องการขอความช่วยเหลือจากเรา เราสามารถช่วยคุณได้

TURKISH

Eğer İngilizce ilk diliniz değilse ve bir çeviriye ihtiyacınız varsa, sizin için bunun yapılmasını sağlayabiliriz.

URDU

اگر انگریزی آپ کی پہلی زبان نہیں ہے اور آپ کو ترجمہ کی ضرورت ہے تو ہم آپ کے لئے فراہم کر سکتے ہیں۔

**August bank holiday
Our office is closed on
Monday 26 August**

**Please use our
out-of-hours services**

Get in touch with Solon and we can help

**Solon South West
Housing Association
1 Newfoundland Court
St Paul Street, Bristol BS2 8AN
Email: solon@solonswha.co.uk
Website: www.solonswha.co.uk**

**Office hours
8.30am-5.00pm Mon-Fri**

Main office 0117 924 4071
Includes voicemail when the office is closed

Maintenance 0117 916 7777
Repairs and emergency repairs (office hours) or report a non-urgent repair on our website or by: WhatsApp 07712 670 228 or Email: solon@solonswha.co.uk

Emergency out-of-hours repairs
Gas heating / hot water (Gregor)
0117 947 9034
For all other emergency repairs
0117 938 6899

**Fire alarm 0117 966 8300
or dial 999 if you think it is a fire**
Out of hours if the alarm sounds and you think it is a false alarm call Ashton **07831 281037**

Face-to-face visits
Come to our office or arrange a home visit (translation and interpretation services available)

Resident involvement 0117 916 7792
Resident communication, meetings, newsletter

Language Line 0117 924 4071
Call the main Solon number and we will connect you to the Language Line service immediately

Translation service 0117 924 4071
Ask us if you would like us to translate any information into a language for you

Allpay 0870 770 0472

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



business for neighbourhoods



NEW team to take your call

Our resident survey in 2018 put maintenance and communal areas as priority for improvement. We're listening! Your inbound call is now handled by a new team who will deal with all residents queries, including repairs, tenancy questions, complaints and any other matters.

Improvement led by residents – see pages 5,6 and 7

**Call the usual
repairs number
0117 916 7777**