



Futures in **Focus**

Autumn: « digital **special**



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Who would have known at the beginning of 2020 we would have spent almost two years learning all about new types of technology to find new ways to manage our lives. We've seen everything from virtual job interviews to virtual pub quizzes and developed skills we never knew we were missing. And one thing is clear: **digital is here to stay.**

At Futures we're passionate about giving customers the tools you need to manage and enjoy your home and community – and our digital services are there to make it as effortless as possible, so you don't have to wait on the phone or find time on the school run to get in touch with us. In this special edition of your customer magazine, we're shining the spotlight on all things digital – from the launch of our exciting new Help Hub to reminding you about all the other ways you can engage with us digitally. We've even got our ICT experts on board to answer our MyVoice community's questions about technology and digital confidence.



Don't forget, if you've got any feedback or have a story for us to tell, you can email communications@futureshg.co.uk!

Contents «

Introducing: the Help Hub!	3
Meet the team behind the Help Hub	5
How to access the Help Hub	7
And that's not all we've been working on!	8
Getting digitally confident (Q & A)	9



We know how important your time is – whether you’re getting the kids to swimming on time, managing an ever-changing shift pattern or caring for a loved one, there are lots of things that put pressure on your diary. Finding the answer to questions about your home, your neighbourhood and your landlord shouldn’t be one of them.

thehelphub.futureshg.co.uk

At Futures, we’ve been working hard to make sure that you can find loads of information about your home at the click of a button.

Introducing: The Help Hub!

The Help Hub is a digital knowledge library full of information about all things Futures. Using their years of experience and expertise, our team members have created articles with pictures and how-to videos, to make it easy to manage your home – whether it’s repressurising a boiler or adding a four-legged friend to your household, you’ll be able to visit the Help Hub to get the information you need.



We’ve worked with members of our teams from across the organisation to identify the questions they’re asked most frequently and what information needs to be included to give the best experience possible. We’ll be continuing to update it as we go along, adding more articles, videos and resources for our customers – a real one-stop shop for all your Futures needs. We’ve started by transferring information from our internal knowledgebase, which has helped our teams answer more questions first time – so we know that this information is really valuable to have at your fingertips. You’ll have access to the same information as our team members – so you know you’re getting the same answer whether you visit the Help Hub or speak to one of our advisors.

The Help Hub is easy to use and accessible on a wide range of devices – so even if you’re on the move, you can still find the answer to your question. All you need to do is visit our website and click the link to the Help Hub (or follow the link at the bottom of this page). From here, you can search key words like ‘leaking sink’ or ‘Universal Credit’ to find the answer you need, or click into different categories like ‘my home and tenancy’ or ‘money advice’ to browse the most popular articles about a particular topic.



We really love speaking to our customers and helping wherever we can – but we know that life doesn’t happen Monday to Friday during office hours. The Help Hub is there to make it easier for our customers to manage their home 24 hours a day, seven days a week, without having to find

time to make a phone call or waiting for a response to an email. With more customers self-serving and able to find the information they need in one place, our advisors will be easier to get hold of for those issues you just need to chat through with someone.

The reviews are in...

We asked our MyVoice community to take the Help Hub for a test drive and give us their honest feedback.



said they could find the answers to common queries



were satisfied with the Help Hub after using it



of people who found their answer said it was easy to understand



of those surveyed said the Help Hub was easy to use!

As you use the Help Hub you’ll see that there are feedback opportunities throughout – so feel free to let us know how you’re getting on, if there’s anything missing or if you need a bit more information to find your answer. Do you want to help us shape our services? Visit futureshg.co.uk/get-involved for more information about MyVoice and how you can have your say.

Meet the team behind the Help Hub

Robbyne

Robbyne is our Digital Operations Manager and has been working at Futures for just over two years. Her main focus is managing digital projects, enabling customers to use digital first if they choose to.

The Help Hub is one of the projects I have oversight of. It's really exciting to be able to bring choice to our customers – we're giving them an opportunity to self-serve and get the answers to their queries in one easy-to-use platform. They don't have to call us if they prefer not to – it's all there in one place for them. The best thing is that the information is the same as we can find internally, so they're getting the exact information that our advisors would give them – it's consistent, accurate and easy! I'd say the biggest challenge has been getting all the



information out of our team members' brains and into a knowledge centre! We've done some work to make sure our processes are right for the customer, and easy to understand. A piece of advice I would give our customers is to give the Help Hub a go! You can trust the information in there and we're always looking for feedback, so have a go and see what you think.

Jonathan



Jonathan is a Customer Services Technical Adviser and has worked at Futures for 16 years. As well as the Help Hub, Jonathan is working on a new scheduling tool and helping to train our teams on how to use it.

I've been involved in the Help Hub since before it even existed! I was originally part of a project that designed an internal repairs self-help tool, which helped us to avoid over 2,000 repairs call-outs in a two year period. I've got a lot of technical knowledge about repairs, especially plumbing, so I check over the information and make sure it's correct. I think the best thing about the Help Hub is that it'll help customers to help themselves and resolve issues immediately – which is better for everyone involved. It's been a challenge trying to think of every possible scenario that might crop up, because homes have a lot of things that can and do go wrong, but we've done our best to get all the most important things in there! I'd advise our customers to give the Help Hub a try – everything in there is doable, and we've tested it with our non-technical team members to make sure you don't need specialist knowledge to fix things yourself. If you can't fix it yourself then we'll be able to point you in the right direction.

Katey

Katey is our Knowledge Co-ordinator and has been with Futures for four years. She's responsible for our internal knowledgebase and has led the Help Hub project, bringing it to life.

The Help Hub is great for our customers – it's quick and easy and means you don't have to contact us for every little thing. It gives everyone more choice about how they interact with us. I've had loads of fun filming the videos and writing the content as it's helped me to learn new skills – I can repressurise my own boiler now and I know what to do if there's a leak under my sink! I think the biggest challenge for me has been trying to think about how to write a question in the way someone might type it, to make sure our customers can find whatever they need from the Help Hub as easily as possible. It's been really interesting trying to put myself in the shoes of our customers and work out how they might phrase something or put it into the search bar so we can make sure they find the answer they're looking for! I would really recommend the Help Hub to all our



customers because it really is easy and convenient to use – if you can't find the answer you're looking for first time, have a look in the categories or try searching for it in a different way that might be more specific. You can even just use keywords like 'loud music' or 'boiler' to widen your search and get more specific results. We're always happy to hear your feedback so please do let us know if you've found the information helpful or if there's something that could make it even better for you!

Lee

Lee is a Customer Services Technical Adviser and has worked at Futures for eight years. He's been part of the team taking videos and photos for the repairs section of the Help Hub and has been writing the repairs advice. When he's not working on the Help Hub, he helps to bridge a gap between the customer services and repairs teams to make sure we understand our customers' needs and how to support them best.

We're really giving our customers the power to get stuck in and try their own repairs in a safe way and at their own pace – there's no-one on the other end of the phone waiting for you to complete each stage, and if you need to rewind a video to make sure you're doing the right thing you can do it as many times as you need. I've got twenty years' experience in the construction industry and at times it's been a real challenge not to be too critical of the articles I'm writing or over-analyse what someone might need to know. And that's where other people from across the business come in – it's been great asking team members from all over the organisation to step into

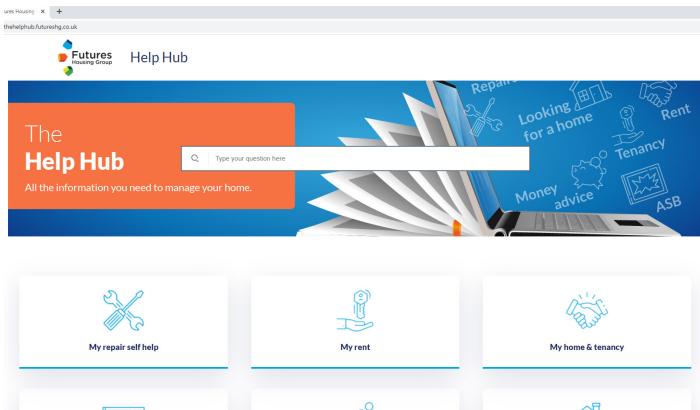
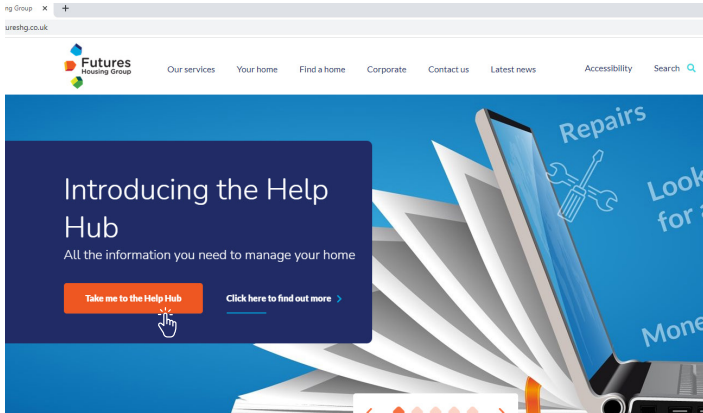


our customers' shoes and have a go at completing a repair using only the information we've given to customers. This has really allowed us to make sure the processes are easy to understand and give enough information to people regardless of whether they're an expert tradesperson or are picking up a spanner for the first time! If I could give our customers one piece of advice about the Help Hub it's just to have a good look around, and keep giving us feedback about things you feel might be missing or isn't working quite right for you. We want it to be a really effortless experience and to do that we need to hear if something doesn't make sense!



How to access the Help Hub

It's easy to find the answer you need. You can either go to our website and click the button on the homepage, or go straight to the Help Hub by visiting thehelphub.futureshg.co.uk/. From there you can either type your question or keywords into the search bar at the top, or click into a category using the buttons below. Each category will show you a selection of the articles available, so you might still need to use the search to find exactly what you're looking for. It's a good idea to use specific terms or keywords like 'dogs barking' or 'loud music' instead of 'antisocial behaviour', or 'sink leaking' rather than 'repair'.



And that's not all we've been working on!

Our digital team has also been working hard to make it easier to get in touch and manage your home. We don't want to stop people phoning us - we love talking to our customers - but we know that we can really make our customer experience effortless by providing options that suit a whole range of people. If more customers can access our digital services for checking their rent, booking a

routine repair or setting up a Direct Debit, that means our friendly advisors can be on-hand to help with the things that just can't be resolved without a personal – and human! – touch.

So what else can digital do for you?

► Live chat

Speak to one of our customer services team instantly through the live chat function on our website. Available during office hours, our live chat can be used to get quick responses to questions without waiting on the phone, and can even be escalated to a voice or video call if we need a bit more information to answer your query. One of our first ever live chats supported a customer to repressurise their boiler – with our agent Colin on the other end of the call guiding them over video. Live chat makes it easier than ever to chat to our team without waiting on the phone or for a response to an email. Visit futureshg.co.uk/contact-us and click the orange button in the bottom right-hand corner to access live chat.

► Repairs checker

Meet our virtual assistant – here to help you find out the status of your repair 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With just your postcode and the first line of your address, our intuitive virtual assistant will check our records and let you know the date and time of your appointment so you can get it straight into your calendar, as well as which team is looking after it. To access our repairs checker, visit futureshg.co.uk/repairs and click 'check your repair' in the banner at the top.

► MyAccount

MyAccount is our one-stop shop for managing your home. Our handy online portal allows you to update your personal details, check your rent account and set up a Direct Debit, and book a repair appointment all from one easy-to-use platform. It's available 24 hours a day, seven days a week – so you can manage your home at a time and a place that suits you. You can sign up to MyAccount by visiting futureshg.co.uk/myaccount/

Getting digitally confident

We know that moving to digital can be tricky if it's not what you're used to, so we asked Christian, Callum and Ryan from our excellent ICT team to answer questions from our MyVoice community.



What's the best way to choose a secure password?
Amy



We'd recommend using something that is not related to you – your birthday, name and pet names are easily guessed. Use a mixture of letter, numbers, capitals and special characters like !#\$%. Think of a word you will remember and build this around that word. As for password length see the chart below which shows how long it will take for a hacker to crack your password.

Password length	All characters	Only lowercase
3 characters	0.86 seconds	0.02 seconds
4 characters	1.36 minutes	0.046 seconds
5 characters	2.15 hours	11.9 seconds
6 characters	8.51 days	5.15 minutes
7 characters	2,21 years	2.23 hours
8 characters	2,10 centuries	2.42 days
9 characters	20 millennia	2.07 months
10 characters	1,899 millennia	4.48 years
11 characters	180,365 millennia	1.16 centuries
12 characters	17,184,705 millenia	3.03 millenia
13 characters	1,627,797,068 millenia	78.7 millenia
14 characters	154,640,721,434 millenia	2,046 millenia

How can I stop receiving scam emails or texts?
James, Daventry



Scam emails are usually filtered into the junk mail section of your account. You can also select scam emails to be reported as junk. Every time you do this, your email system will get a little bit smarter and learn to filter even more out of your main inbox. Depending on the model and version of your phone, you can usually also block scam texts – search 'blocking scam texts' and the model of your phone online, and you should find guides on how to do this direct from the manufacturer.

Are my personal details digitally safe and secure?
Jim, Spratton



It depends on where you use them and how safe you are online. Large secure companies have strict policies about keeping your details safe and secure. However, big companies are targeted and have been broken into in the past, so you should always be vigilant.

Where to send suspicious emails for help?
Anonymous, Barby



Your antivirus provider may offer this service, and most email systems have built in spam and junk folders you can send the email to. The more you send to these folders the more it learns to separate out for you automatically. If the emails are pretending to be from a large company or organisation, you can usually find an email address to report them to. For example, an email pretending to be from HMRC can be sent to phishing@hmrc.gov.uk, and one pretending to be from Royal Mail can be forwarded to reportascam@royalmail.com. To find the email address you need to forward it to for other organisations, search '[company name] phishing report'.

What is the difference between a phishing email and a scam email?
Michele, Daventry



Scam is an umbrella term for someone trying to steal something valuable from you. Phishing is a type of scam, where the scammer will attempt to send you an email disguised as someone trustworthy, like a large company asking for your details or to login. The link in the email will take you to a fake web page that steals your details when you put them in.

How do you know when you're being scammed?

Anonymous



It can be difficult to know when you are being scammed, so always be vigilant. Look out for things like spelling errors, pictures in the wrong place and email addresses that don't match up to ones you'd expect to see.

If an email looks suspicious or is asking for personal details that the company should already know, do not follow the link within the email. If you're not sure, you can always go directly to the company's website instead of following the link in the email.

A trick scammers often used is to add 'drama' to their messages – suggesting for example that you are at risk or there is an emergency. They do this on purpose to try to panic you in the hope that this will affect your judgment. If you get a message like this, take a very deep breath and calm down before doing anything!

We used to have tenant digital champions, do we still have them to help others in the community?

Sharon, Daventry



We don't run a digital champion scheme, but there are lots of places in the community you can find support with all things digital. The Barclay's Digital Eagles scheme is a great place to start and runs events as well as offering support through social media and their website. You can also find information about other support on the digital hub section of our website. Visit [futureshg.co.uk/digital-hub](https://www.futureshg.co.uk/digital-hub) to find out more.

Could you please explain what cookies are? How do they work? How to clear them from your devices?

Anonymous



Cookies are little bits of data that remember what you have looked at or searched for on a website. This information is used to tailor adverts and offers to you. Each device and browser clears these slightly differently but this is usually found in the settings of the device or by clicking the little cog icon on your web browser. You can also find guides about how to do this on the digital hub section of our website. Visit [futureshg.co.uk/digital-hub](https://www.futureshg.co.uk/digital-hub) to find out more.



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