

EXCLUSIVE: APP TO FIND USERS REPAIRERS IN MINUTES

The Uber of homes



HOMESERVE, the house-hold insurance and repairs firm, is out to become the “Uber of home emergencies” with its new smartphone app.

Called HomeServe Now, it will connect customers with local and available trades-people who can carry out repairs within minutes.

The London-listed firm hopes a revenue boost from the ser-vice will help propel it into the FTSE100

index of companies—and turn it into a tech titan.

HomeServe is now conducting trials of the app with electricians in Sheffield, plumbers in Ipswich and a range of tradespeople in Hampshire.

Workers are drawn from HomeServe's **CHECKATRADE** arm — a website where homeowners can book and rate 36,000 tradespeople. After the app launches later this year, they will be charged a

fixed fee for being matched with customers, who only pay for the job.

The Walsall-headquartered company, which has annual sales of £1billion, also wants to expand further overseas, follow-ing a push into the US, France and Spain. Japan could be next.

It is already knocking on the door of the FTSE 100. But the success of tech giants such as **UBER** and **AIRBNB** has inspired Mr Harpin to aim higher.

The tycoon, who founded HomeServe 25 years ago, said: “There is place for a big global tech provider in the £450billion [home repairs] marketplace worldwide. I hope we are that British company.”

HomeServe bought Checka-trade in 2017 and aims to expand it to 200,000 tradespeo-ple. Mr Harpin said: “The new app will be an additional source of work for them.”