

Results of resident consultation about cleaning services

Thanks to all the residents who took part in our cleaning survey and workshops. A summary of the responses we received and how we will take your comments and views on board is included below.

Newlon currently employs a number of cleaning contracts within our estates and blocks and some external communal areas. These cleaning contracts are due to expire in 2019 so we need to set up new ones. The process to do this is quite long and we started it by asking our residents what they think of their cleaners – what does and doesn't work well and what could be improved.

What we did

- Residents paying a service charge for cleaning were invited to respond to a digital survey asking for their views about the current service and whether they were interested in attending a workshop.
- The survey included mainly single and multiple choice questions with two where residents were able to make qualitative comments and write freely on their views and observations. The survey was not designed to provide a statistically significant sample but could be regarded as indicative.
- 185 survey replies were received
- We also held three workshops attended by 12 residents where we discussed their suggestions on how the future cleaning contract/s could be improved

Key findings from the survey

- 56% chose the quality of cleaning as the most important to them; followed by the cost (40%) and frequency of visits (4%). As compared to our experience of schemes where resident groups have raised cleaning issues with us, these have primarily been about the cost.
- A majority (47%) indicated that they preferred no change to how often their cleaners visits, closely followed by 43% opting for less visits for less cost. These top two results together reveal that for 90%, cost is a factor for them. Considering this

result with the bullet above, they show a split view from residents on cost and quality indicating that both are important to them.

- Replies to how often cleaners should visit showed that 68% preferred visits on either one, two or three days a week.
- 40% indicated they thought their cleaners should do extra work when they visited. Some of their suggestions are already covered by our other contracts although residents may not be aware of the split of duties between them. In order of the number of times raised, these suggestions were about:
 - Internal communal areas
 - External communal areas
 - Bins/gutters
 - Windows; litter/rubbish; minor maintenance
 - Gardening
 - lighting
- A question about how residents would prefer to give feedback to their cleaners gave multiple choices. The most popular choices were to use email, closely followed by using an app and the customer portal that is being developed on the Newlon website. The least popular way to give feedback was by phone.
- A majority (54%) told us they would like to have one yearly meeting with their cleaners to tell them what they thought about their service.
- Most of the residents (152) who took part in the survey gave us additional comments and raised issues about the cleaning where they lived. In order of the number of times raised, these were about:
 - Expensive service
 - Issues around attendance/conduct by the cleaners
 - Poor quality of the cleaning
 - Good service by the cleaners
 - Scheduling of the cleaning and what duties are covered
 - Neighbour issues

Key suggestions and common themes emerging from the workshops with residents

Better information should be provided to residents about cleaning where they live. About what the cleaning duties cover, when they should happen and to what quality standard. It would also be helpful to know what is the responsibility of other contractors so it is clear what is not the responsibility of the cleaners e.g. grounds maintenance. Common comments were that residents did not know what they were paying for and that not all cleaning was carried out thoroughly or to a good standard.

Proof of cleaners' attendance and the duties carried out should be made readily available to residents through a variety of communication channels including noticeboards. Technology could assist e.g. a time stamped photo before and after the cleaning with GPS location and smart phone tracking of cleaners.

The current cleaning service is too expensive was feedback given by some residents. As a result, they would support reducing it if there was not an adverse effect on quality.

The cleaners should litter pick in the garden areas as they visit more often than the grounds maintenance contractors.

The right supervision and management of the contract/s was essential in ensuring a quality service e.g. Newlon audits

A better and cheaper system for bulk waste removal is needed.

Organising the cleaning across all sites in an efficient and effective manner could give better value for money.

Cleaning staff should be treated fairly by their employers.

Involve residents and resident groups in judging the cleaning service where they live e.g. spot checks/short & snappy surveys/contract reviews. Also involve residents in this procurement.

Incentivise the cleaning contractor/s through penalties/retentions/contract extension linked to good performance

Should cleaners have a wider role such as reporting repairs/graffiti/bulk waste?

The changing of lightbulbs should be more consistent

Provision of an ad hoc/out of hours service costed by task or hourly rate for unexpected cleaning e.g. after a party

What's happening next?

In the left hand column of the table below we have summarised residents' feedback about cleaning - from the digital survey and the face to face workshops. The right hand column shows Newlon's response to this feedback. Some responses we are confident that we can do. For our other responses, we will need to do some investigation or more thinking about them during the process of selecting a new cleaning contractor. We will be in touch with you again to let you know our conclusions.

You said	We will
<p>INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS</p> <p>Residents should have transparent information through a variety of communication channels, including digital and noticeboards about the cleaning service they pay for. Such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of the cleaning including what duties are required; exactly how much it will cost, when it will be done and how it will be monitored. • providing information about the performance of the cleaning service where they live. For example, on schemes with cleaning issues, provide timed pictures before and after cleaning with a GPS location. 	<p>Ask cleaners to tell us how they will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide information to residents through a variety of communication channels, including noticeboards, about the cleaning duties specific to where they live and when they will be carried out. • provide proof to residents of attendance by their staff and that the required duties have been carried out within timescales to standard. • monitor and ensure the quality of cleaning carried out by their staff. <p>Investigate how best to give residents access to performance information about the cleaning service where they live.</p> <p>Put procedures in place for service charge invoices to ensure that residents are paying for the right things.</p>

You said	We will
<p>INVOLVING RESIDENTS</p> <p>We should involve residents in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • this procurement. • spot checking. • a yearly meeting. • quick, easy methods of feedback. • in contract reviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve some residents in the assessment of potential cleaning contractors • involve some residents in interviewing potential cleaning contractors. • investigate the role of resident groups in spot checking the cleaning. The existing Resident Inspectors already have some input into checking cleaning but do not cover all our estates and blocks. • ask cleaners supervisors/managers to hold a yearly (or at another time) meeting for those estates and blocks that request one. • consider how best to provide quick and easy ways for residents to give us feedback.
<p>QUALITY AND COST</p> <p>Cleaning should be of the right quality at the right cost, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing incentives and penalties for contractors • getting the scheduling of the cleaning right for each estate and block. • sub-contracting or using specialist cleaners to provide better value for money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that the cleaning for the new contract/s is set at the right level in terms of quality; cost; frequency and duties required from the start. It is important to get this right at that time as for logistical reasons it is easier for contractors to increase their service rather than reduce it. This could mean a reduction in cost and frequency from the current cleaning service to the new one for some estates and blocks. Although for others, there may be no change at all.

You said	We will
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basing cleaning managers at Newlon House. • all areas being cleaned periodically according to need e.g. more footfall, more cleaning. • reducing the frequency of cleaning but not quality where the cost is too high. • contract extensions linked to good performance. • using the right method and tool to clean. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider whether having one contractor would provide a better service for us and residents. Cleaning on our estates and blocks are currently carried out by a number of different contractors. • consider whether cleaning staff should be “ring-fenced” for Newlon and not involved in other contracts. • think about the logistics of organising the cleaning of our estates and blocks across all the boroughs where we have homes to achieve better value for money. • ensure that the cleaning contractor/s mirror our own response times and quality standards.
<p>ETHICS</p> <p>There should be some ethical standards in how the new cleaning service is provided.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore this with potential cleaning contractors when we interview them for the new service.