

Mystery Shopping Report

Spring 2026

1. Background

This Mystery Shopping exercise tested our responsiveness to residents' queries across the organisation. There were 47 email enquiries and 4 telephone enquiries (a total of 51 overall) tests carried out by 17 Newlon Mystery Shoppers. One new shopper took part in this exercise following their training.

Our rating system

- Gold: Fully meets the 2-ten standard. A full response provided within 2 working days, or acknowledgement within 2 working days, followed by a full response within 10 working days.
- Silver: Partially meets the 2-ten standard. Although no acknowledgement within initial 2 working days, a full response within 10 working days.
- Bronze: Does not meet the 2-ten standard. Personal acknowledgement within 2 working days but no full response within 10 working days. Late acknowledgement or full response outside of 10 working days.
- No reply: Does not meet the 2-ten standard.
- We thoroughly overhauled and reviewed the questions and scenarios to provide a baseline for deliverables key to Trust Newlon (post July 2022), asking our Mystery Shoppers to review responses to see if they offered respect, warmth and empathy, alongside our existing questions around professionalism and whether residents felt valued.

2. SUMMARY

- 85% of email enquiries (40) were responded to effectively and met the full, Gold level standard.
- 2% enquiries (1) met the Silver level – partially meeting 2-10 standard.
- 9% enquiries (4) did not meet the 2-ten standard (Bronze level).
- 4% email enquiries (2) were not responded to (No reply).
- 83% of enquiries responded to provided the required information or answered the question – a slight decrease of 1% from the last report.
- 38 times it was mentioned that they thought the response was professional.
- 17 times it was mentioned that they thought the response was warm.
- 29 times it was mentioned that they felt the response was respectful.
- 18 times it was mentioned that they felt the response was friendly.
- 12 times it was mentioned that they felt the response was empathetic.

- The terms 'disrespectful', 'not friendly' and 'unprofessional' were not used at all by shoppers although one response was said to be 'cold' and two 'not empathetic'.
- 23/45 email scenarios, which were responded to, received a maximum 10/10 value score response, making up 51% of the emails overall. 37/45 emails received value scores between 8/10-10/10, making up 82% of replies.
- The overall average value score (asking shoppers how valued they felt from their email response) has risen to 8.21 from 7.90 in the Winter report, which is in line with the Autumn 2025 report. This value score of 8.21 was buoyed by the number of 10/10 replies, detracting from the late replies and lack of replies to email enquiries.
- Group email auto-replies were an issue for six Teams (that is 33%) that did not have their auto-replies activated. This is the highest it has been and makes it harder work for Teams to adhere to the '2' in the Newlon 2-10. However, fortunately, many of the Teams affected managed to send full replies within two days and were therefore able to achieve Gold replies.

3. Results

This results of this report highlight that all but two email scenarios were responded to as can be seen in the breakdown below. The level of Gold responses has risen from 82% to 85%, which is in line with the Autumn report last year. Four scenarios (9%) received a bronze response as the replies were received outside of the ten day period. The overall value score rose, despite the bronze and no-replies, largely due to a high number of 10/10 replies received (of the emails that received responses, 23/45 received a 10/10 value rating), which was very pleasing and indicates that the responses were of a very high quality.

3.1. Results - responses to email enquiries:

Overarching results: Timeframe	2 working days / Gold level	10 working days / Silver level	Late replies / Bronze level	No reply
Spring 2023	71%	5%	12%	11%
Autumn 2023	62%	24%	7%	7%
Autumn 2024	92%	0%	3%	5%
Winter 2024/25	84%	0%	0%	16%
Spring 2025	95%	2.5%	2.5%	0%
Autumn 2025	85%	0%	2.5%	12.5%
Winter 2025/26	82%	2%	4%	12%
Spring 2026	85%	2%	9%	4%

Team results	Email enquiries	Gold	Silver	Bronze	No reply
Property Services					
Asset Management	3		1	2	
Special Projects	1	1			
Building Services	4	4			
Fire Safety	4	3			1
Subtotal =	12	8	1	2	1

Team results	Email enquiries	Gold	Silver	Bronze	No reply
Housing Services					
Barnsbury Office	3	2		1	
Neighbourhoods	3	2			1
Financial Inclusion	4	4			
Income Recovery	2	2			
Homes and Lettings	4	4			
Service Centre	2	2			
Repairs	2	2			
Service Charge	3	3			
Service Resolution	2	2			
Investigations	3	3			
Subtotal =	28	26	-	1	1
Other teams					
Resident Sales	2	2			
Sales	3	3			
BD BEST	1			1	
STIR	1	1			
Subtotal =	7	6	-	1	-
Total	47	40	1	4	2

3.2. Analysis of telephone responses

There were four telephone enquiries. Three of the phone calls were to the Customer Service Team and one was to Income. Call connection times were somewhat sporadic with one shopper being connected in under one minute, another in three minutes and five minutes, whereas one shopper stated it took 36 minutes, with the average being 11 minutes (same as the previous report).

Telephone calls overall	
Total calls connected	4
Put on hold before speaking to the advisor?	4
Did you take the Queue Buster option?	1/4
How long did it take for someone to reply back?	15 minutes
Were you put on hold during the call?	1 (2 mins)

How would you describe your encounter?

The comments around the phone calls were generally positive with shoppers saying they felt listened to, that their name was asked and a name given by the advisor and that the query was mostly answered within their remit. Shoppers noted that the replies were professional, helpful, polite and were calm, friendly and knowledgeable. However, one resident was surprised with the answer received when requesting the damp and mould policy, with the phone call operative saying it was against company policy. The resident would like us to follow-up on this to find out whether it was just an error, or if it is actually Newlon policy not to share the damp and mould policy.

4. Conclusions

Where we've done well

- The average value rating scored by residents is 8.21/10. This score was buoyed by the high numbers of 10/10 scores. Overall, 23/45 email replies were scored the maximum possible value rating, 10/10, which is over 50% of responses.
- By responding swiftly we have seen our value scores rise; Shoppers who receive a swift response feel respected and valued.
- Shoppers' overall impression of their email response was that their requests were handled professionally by the officer or advisor. They felt that we answered their questions, provided relevant information, and it was to the point.
- Just two emails were said to have contained errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar.
- Just one email was said to contain abbreviations or acronyms without stating the full meaning - no change from the previous report.
- Phone queries were similarly positive overall.

Where improvement is required

- Two queries were not responded to and this is an area where improvement is needed, despite it being a positive fall from the previous report. Nonetheless, this score could have been higher, as we had four additional replies which were upgraded into the late reply/bronze category.
- There were six Teams (one third of Teams tested) that did not have their autoreplies active. Reminders needed for Teams to check that their auto-responses are active thereby making it easier for Teams to adhere to the Newlon 2-ten.
- Clarification required re: sharing internal policy documents with residents.

5. Managers' feedback

To be updated following Managers' feedback.

6. Staff singled out for praise

There were twenty three 10/10 replies in this mystery shopping exercise

- 10/10 replies - Ashanti Anderson (x4), Kellie Dorrington (x3), Abigail Banya (x3), Aatif Hussain (x2), Daniel Good, John William, Mercy Akinde, Jacqueline Mitchell, Jessica and Stefan, Daniel Brew-Riverson, Ejoro Ighovojah, Brandon Man, Antonia Cover, Davila Coolen, Mahmuda Khanom

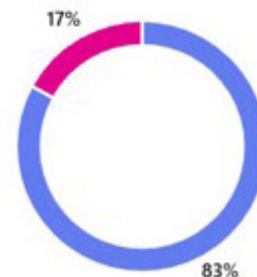
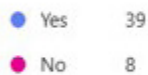
7. Recommendations and actions

Recommendation	Action	Team/ Person	Expected rectification date	RAG rating
We need to keep up the work monitoring shared inboxes and to understand who is responding to which query in order to reduce the numbers of no replies.	Better organisation of email inboxes to understand who is responsible for replies. Look at ways to prevent non response which is a service failure. Reminders to be sent to Teams.	All Teams	30 June 2026	
Six teams did not have their auto-replies activated.	Team Managers to check their group email inboxes and ensure auto-replies are activated thereby making it easier to adhere to the Newlon 2-ten.	Team Managers	15 May 2025	
Recruitment and training of more mystery shoppers needed due to two leaving Scrutiny exercises.	Resident Involvement Officer to reach out to residents for new shoppers and organise their training.	Resident Involvement Officer	Ahead of next MS exercise.	

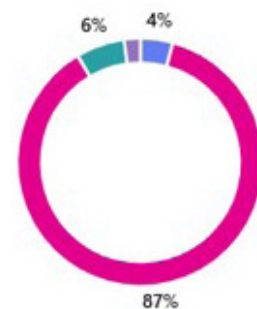
APPENDICES

Email enquiries

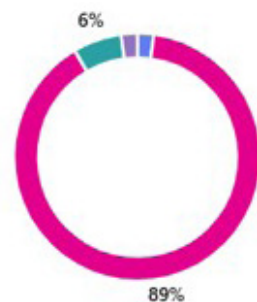
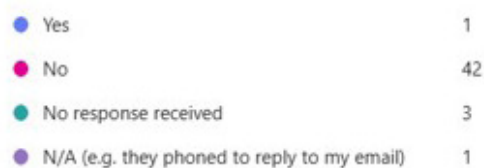
3. Did you feel that you received the information you needed? Please refer to the scenario outline if you have been provided with one.



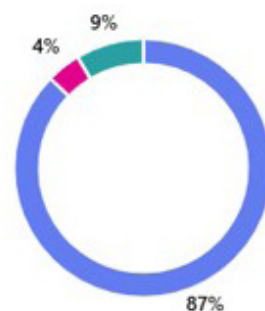
6. Were there any errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar?



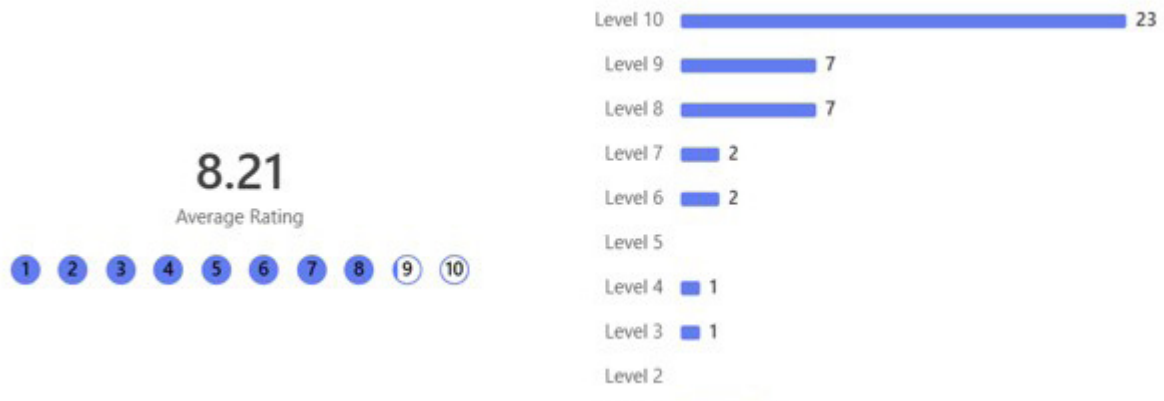
7. Did the email contain any abbreviations or acronyms without telling you their full meaning?



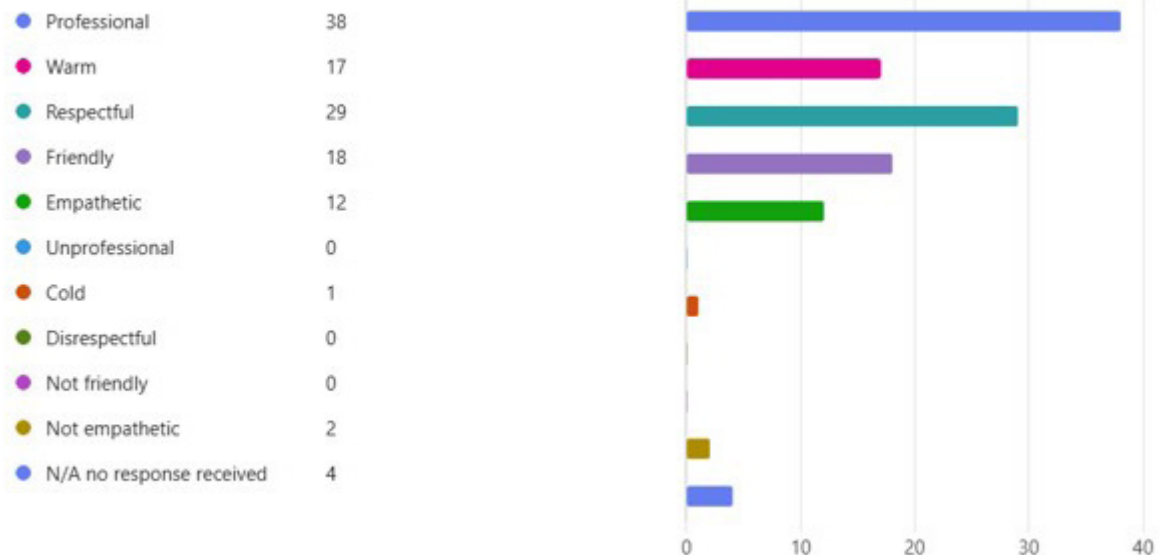
8. Was the response easy to understand and to the point?



9. Please rate how valued you felt from the email response, 1 the least valued and 10 the most valued.

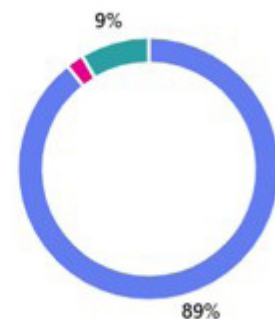


9. Overall how would you describe the content and tone of the email? You can select multiple answers.



3. Did the email contain a name, role and department?

Yes	42
No	1
No response received	4



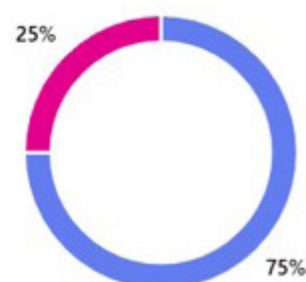
Selection of email enquiry feedback

- Very good – leaflet attached with information.
- Overall, I was satisfied with how my email was handled. The response was quick, helpful and professional.
- A very clear and sympathetic answer. Friendly tone, my only issue was the head of service charges only signed off with his first name. I checked to see if his name was in the email address but it was the general service charge address.
- The information I requested was given in full.
- It was fine but didn't answer the question I asked
- Very good – lots of attachments.
- It was easy to understand. A fast response too but no auto reply was received with this scenario. Maybe this was turned off in error?
- While I acknowledge that I was directed to a relevant website link, I feel that the response I received did not fully address my request.
- I was very impressed with the response provided, which was both empathetic and highly professional. The officer went the extra mile by making a phone call, and this gave me a strong sense that my case was genuinely cared for and taken seriously. Overall, I felt valued as a tenant, and my queries were handled with the utmost concern and attention. This level of service is greatly appreciated and reflects very positively on the team.
- Good empathetic response
- Polite email but they could not answer the question.
- No response received!
- Answered short and sweet
- Very late! However, good information given.

Phone enquiries

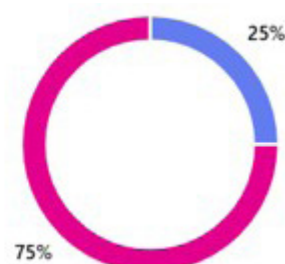
3. Was the issue dealt with?

● Yes	3
● No	1
● Other	0



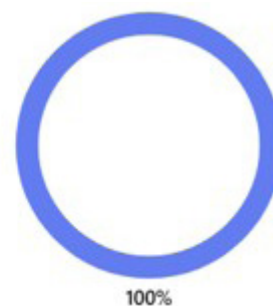
6. Did you take the Queue Buster option?

● Yes	1
● No	3
● No response received / Not applicable	0



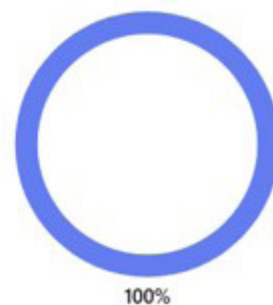
8. Did the officer or advisor ask your name?

Yes	4
No	0
No response received	0



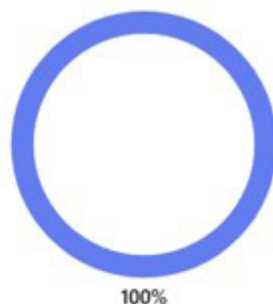
9. Did the officer or advisor give their name?

Yes	4
No	0
No response received	0



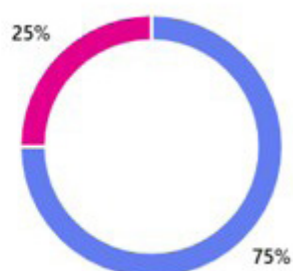
10. Did the officer or advisor listen?

Yes	4
No	0
No response received	0



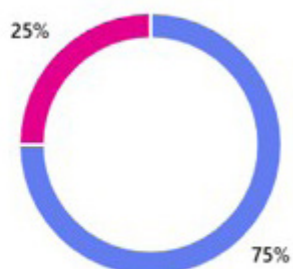
11. Did the officer or advisor answer your query (within their remit)?

Yes	3
No	1
No response received	0



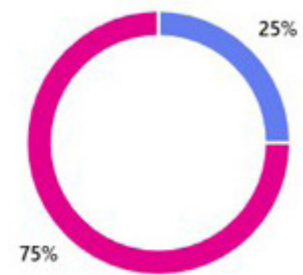
12. Were you satisfied with the response you received?

Yes	3
No	1
No response received	0



13. Were you placed on hold at all during the conversation?

Yes	1
No	3
No response received	0



Selection of telephone enquiry feedback

- Overall, I was not satisfied with the waiting time, as my call took 36 minutes to be answered. However, once I got through, the call handler was helpful and dealt with my query effectively.
- The Officer sounded quite enthusiastic and willing to help.
- The call was professionally managed, the operator was polite and friendly and clearly keen to provide me with the correct information. I was encouraged by the fact that she wanted to take advice so that she could give me accurate and up to date information and she returned my call as promised. Overall, very good.
- Not able to send internal policy, I was very surprised at this answer.