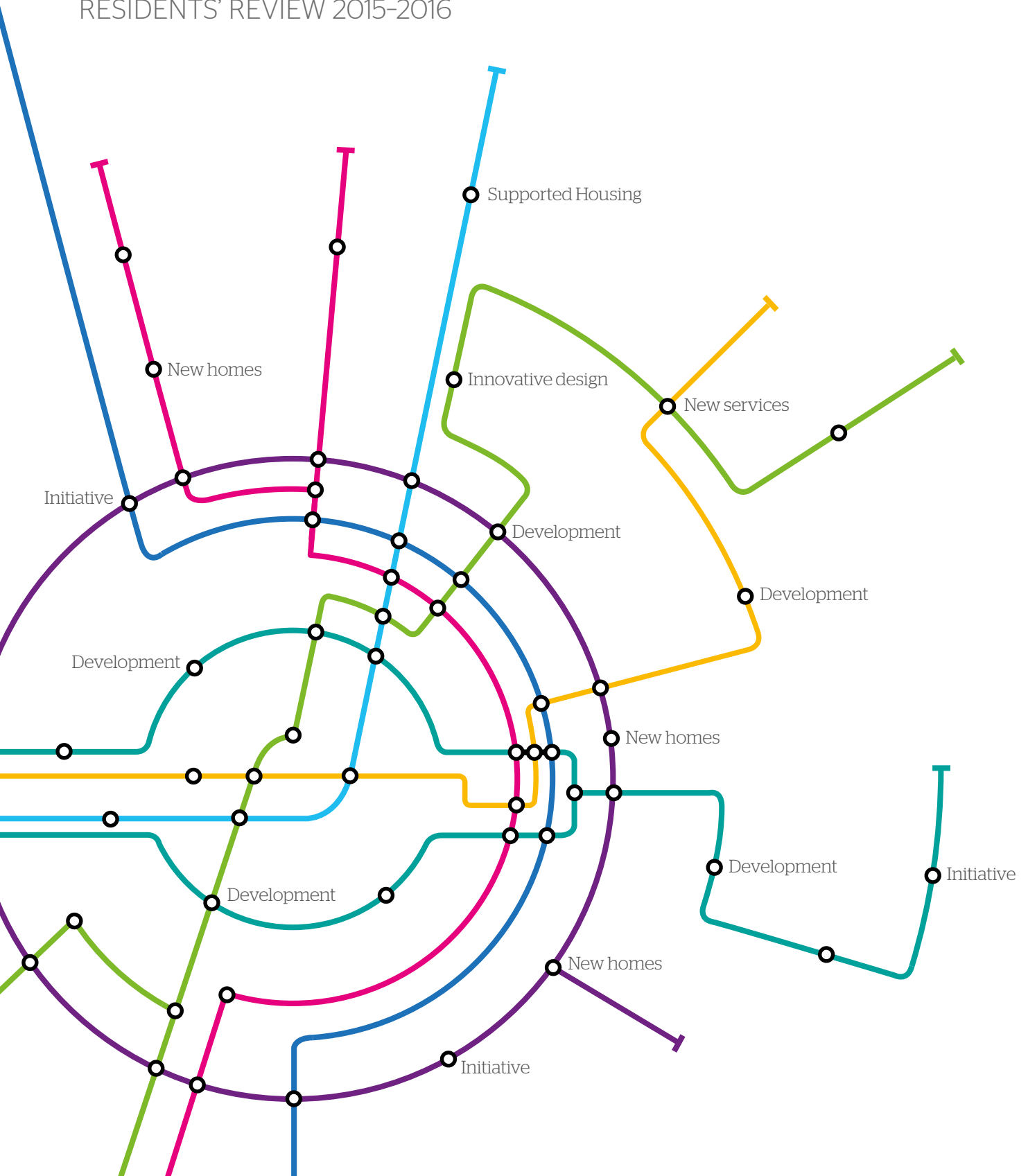


New connections for London

RESIDENTS' REVIEW 2015-2016



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Young residents with England midfielder Ryan Mason at Brook House Primary School, part of our Cannon Road development in Haringey.



Annual review

for residents 2015-2016

Welcome to Newlon's annual review for residents. The purpose of this report is to let you know how well we have performed during the last year and how we have tried to improve. You can also find out news about the support services we offer both to our residents and the wider community.

It's been a year of change for us. We've overhauled the way we are structured to create new specialised teams, modernised how we deliver our services and sought ways to adapt to the difficult financial climate. All this while continuing to build high quality affordable homes to help with the chronic housing shortage in London.

Going forward we aim to further improve the way we connect with our residents and work with all our partners to ensure we continue to provide good quality services.

Improving our services and providing value

Newlon is a not for profit charitable housing association, so in addition to providing new homes for people in housing need we aim to provide reliable and high quality services to our residents.

This means being careful in how we invest our money and seeking to be as efficient as possible in our spending, while always looking for ways to improve how we are run.

Our objectives are:

- To maximise the number of good, affordable homes we build to help address the housing demand in London.
- To provide reliable, high quality services to our residents.

Over the last year we have made a number of changes to improve services and provide value for money.

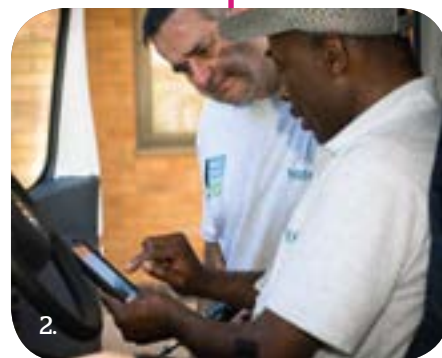
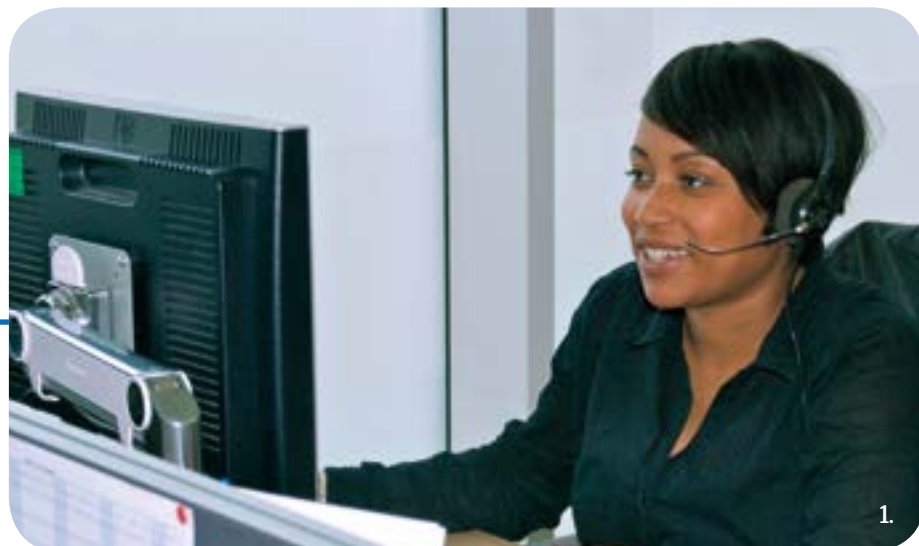
New service model

In April 2015 we changed the way we operate. We replaced our Housing Management Officers with teams that specialise in a particular area and expanded our Service Centre. We think this is key to providing more reliable and cost effective services.

Each team has direct responsibility for improving performance against specific targets and delivering savings.

How effective has this been?

- The Service Resolution Team has improved the way complaints are handled, increasing satisfaction in this area from **50% to 73%**.
- The Lettings team have reduced the number of days it takes to let an empty property from **39 to 32 days**, to ensure people are housed as quickly as possible.
- The Enforcement team have reduced legal costs to deal with anti-social behaviour from **£26 per property in 2012/13 to just £13**, whilst improving satisfaction.



1. Service Centre Advisor
2. Wates handyperson service
3. Volunteers at the Barnsbury Community Garden
4. New homes in Enfield
5. Newlon Star Awards

New Service Centre systems

We have implemented innovative new systems in our Service Centre. This helps our Customer Service Advisors deal with enquiries more quickly by putting summaries of procedures and useful forms at their fingertips.

How effective has this been?

Since introducing these changes we have seen significant improvements in residents' satisfaction with the service we provide:

- +5% ▲ Satisfied with Newlon overall.
- +8% ▲ Satisfied with the ability of staff to deal with queries quickly and efficiently.
- +5% ▲ Found staff to be helpful.
- +7% ▲ Said their query was dealt with first time.

A better service has led to a reduction in the number of calls – a good indication that we are dealing with more enquiries first time.

Online Knowledge Base

We have created a database of commonly asked questions on our website, to help people to get answers without having to call us.

How effective has it been?

We have seen a month by month increase in the number of people using the Knowledge Base. This is just a part of our continuing focus on digital communication.

Challenges we are addressing

While we have achieved a steady increase in satisfaction with customer services, we know there is still work to do. For instance, we have not yet seen similar increases in satisfaction with the repairs service:

- 4% ▼ % satisfied with the repairs service you received on this occasion.
- || % satisfied that their repair was completed right first time – No change.

We know how important repairs are to you so, as you will see over the following pages, this is something we have been concentrating on and are making every effort to improve.

Overall, we think our strategy is delivering results. We are continuing to build new housing and our ratio of new homes to existing homes is consistently above average. We want to improve services without exceeding average costs in London and we are beginning to see results.

As a result we are confident that we are delivering good value for money for residents, and strive to continue to improve going forward.

Helping us to get better

Our residents play a key role in influencing and improving the services we provide. In the past year we have worked hard to get more residents involved in shaping our services, reviewing our performance and in decision making, through joining groups such as our Residents' Forum and Residents' Services Committee.

We have tried to improve how we communicate about involvement opportunities and be clear about the level of commitment they require.

In October 2015 we held our first ever Newlon Star Awards to celebrate the increased involvement of our residents and their contribution to their local communities. People were nominated by fellow residents, our staff, partner organisations and local community groups, and the winners were presented with their awards at a special ceremony held at Tottenham Town Hall.

Congratulations to our winners and thank you to all of our partner organisations, including Wates Living Space, who helped to organise, sponsor and support the awards and to anyone who nominated residents.

Find out how you can get involved at www.newlon.org.uk/residents/getting-involved.



Repairs **performance** and stock improvement

A warm welcome to Wates

In August 2015 Wates Living Space started work as our new main responsive repairs and maintenance contractor. They were appointed through a tendering process involving residents.

We have a team from Wates based at our Head Office working directly with our Service Centre and Property Services team. This allows them to liaise in real time to allocate and review works.



Improving our repairs service

Some of the most common issues residents contact us about are to do with repairs. So we strive to ensure our repairs service is efficient and delivered to the highest standards.

Repairs completed in target time

2014/15	91%
2015/16	89%

We aim to complete all emergency repairs within 24 hours and all non-emergency repairs within 20 working days, with an average of less than 10 days.

In 2015/16 we completed 89% of our repairs on time. This fell short of our 95% target.

A primary reason for this was the changeover period from our old contractor to the new one. We also overhauled the IT system to create a more integrated service. The fact we only suffered a small drop was relatively good given these big changes.

Repairs performance towards the end of the year rose, so by March the performance of our new contractor was surpassing that of our previous one. Coming into this year we are already seeing further improvement.

We understand it is vital for residents that we get this right, so we are carefully monitoring the performance of our new contractor.

Looking after our properties

In 2015/16 Newlon carried out 1,214 full property condition surveys as part of our ongoing programme to visit and assess all our properties more than 20 years old at least once every 5 years.

These surveys help us decide which improvement and major repair works we carry out to residents' homes.

Last year we carried out improvement works to 595 rented properties. This included the installation of 320 new boilers, 105 new kitchens and bathrooms, and 79 whole property window upgrades.

Our new boilers increase the energy efficiency of homes and potentially deliver savings of up to £50 per year on heating bills.

We are also investing in other improvements such as LED lighting in communal areas, which can cut maintenance costs and deliver savings of up to 70% compared to traditional light bulbs.

During 2015/16 we spent £4.2 million on responsive repairs and £2.5 million on planned maintenance.

Keeping our residents safe

Safety is very important to us, so we spent over £900,000 improving fire and electrical safety equipment in our older blocks of flats by fitting new emergency lighting in common parts.

We carried out over 1,300 asbestos surveys. Fortunately we found very little asbestos containing material requiring removal.

We also commenced a programme of electrical wiring safety testing to all properties over five years old.

By the end of the year all our properties had a valid fire risk and gas safety assessment. Going forward we aim to maintain these high standards, to ensure our residents are safe in their homes.

Lettings and income

Housing people more quickly

Social rented and Affordable Rent housing

Number of lets	248
Number of re-lets	60
Average time to re-let a home	32 days

Intermediate rent housing

Number of Intermediate Rent lets	191
Number of Intermediate Rent re-lets	71
Average time to re-let an Intermediate Rent home	36 days

Over 2015/16 we helped hundreds of people benefit from a Newlon home, completing a total of 248 lets for social rented and Affordable Rent homes and 191 for Intermediate Rent.

In addition, to ensure people waiting for homes are housed as quickly as possible and to maximise the income we get, we make sure when a property becomes vacant it is let again as quickly as possible.

Last year our average re-let time – the period between a home becoming vacant and the next resident moving in – was 32 days for social rented and Affordable Rent properties, ahead of our 35 day target and a significant improvement compared to last year.

Our performance with Intermediate Rent properties, which is largely aimed at Key Workers, was less positive, which at 36 days was short of our 28 day target. However, in the second half of the year we achieved a 27 day average turnaround time.

The recent improvement is largely down the appointment of a new contractor and streamlining of our processes, a trend we intend to continue going forward.



Reducing our arrears

Overall arrears as percentage of rent due

2013/14	3.87%
2014/15	3.62%
2015/16	3.55%

We rely on residents to pay their rent as we use the income to fund the services we provide.

In 2015/16 our overall arrears were 3.55%, a continued improvement in this area. It was a challenging year as many residents faced cuts to benefits in the form of the benefit cap, bedroom tax and loss of discretionary housing payments. However, through our support for residents affected by these changes we have minimised the number falling into arrears.

When people struggle to pay their rent we agree realistic payment plans to help them. We assist them with their claims for discretionary housing payment if they are eligible, as well as referring them to our Community Services team for benefit and debt advice. Last year we referred 101 people for such advice.

Where residents do not pay their rent, even after our best efforts to help, as a last resort we may repossess their property. Last year we carried out 11 such evictions. However, through the support we have provided we are pleased that this is a reduction from the previous year.



Swapping your home

If you live in a social rented home and want to move to another one then we recommend a Mutual Exchange.

This enables you to swap homes with another Newlon tenant or a tenant from another housing association or local authority. Our Mutual Exchange Board contains an up-to-date list of Newlon residents looking to move. In addition there is Home Swapper, the largest national organisation for social housing residents wishing to move.

Last year we carried out 30 Mutual Exchanges. To find out more go to www.newlon.org.uk/residents/moving-home.



1. Wates handyperson service on call
2. Newly let homes in north London
3. Brook House Primary School built by Newlon as part of the Cannon Road regeneration project

Your neighbourhood

Tackling anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) covers a wide range of unacceptable activities that can blight the quality of community life. Examples of ASB include noise nuisance, fly-tipping, loitering, vandalism, drug dealing, harassment and threatening behaviour. We understand it is important to residents' quality of life so we monitor ASB carefully.

Satisfaction of residents with the way their ASB case was dealt with

2013/14	78%
2014/15	82%
2015/16	84%

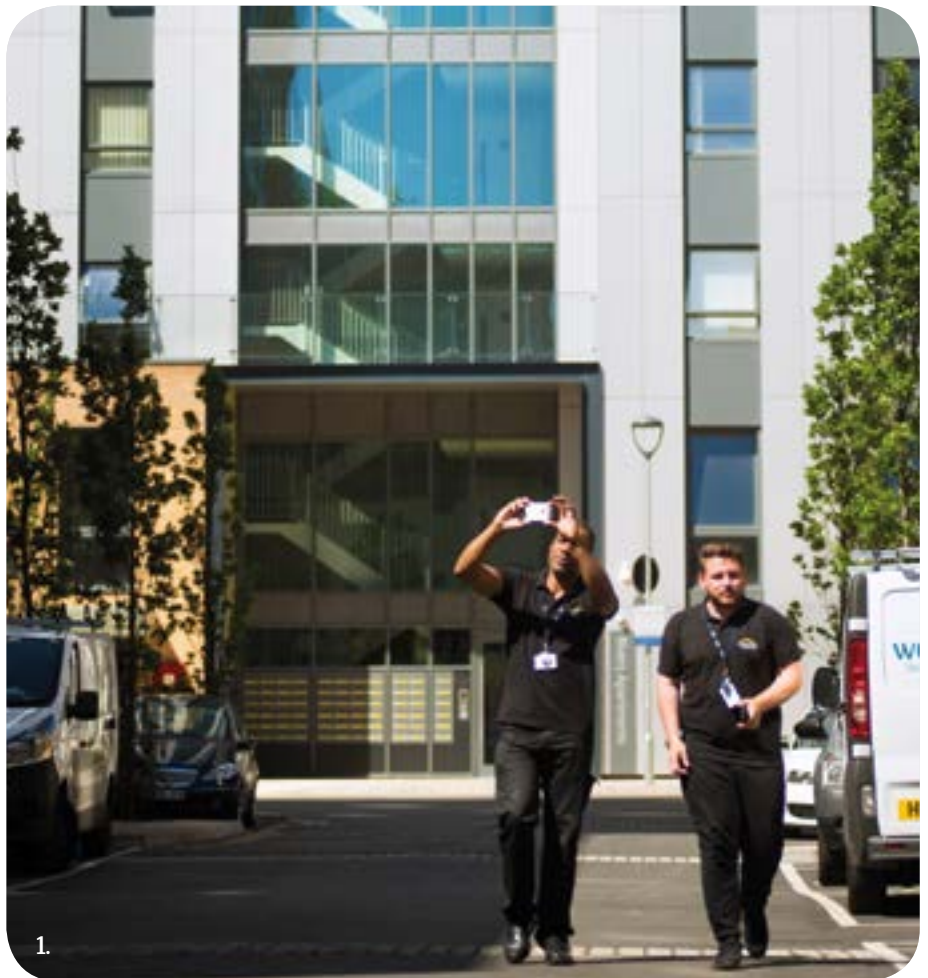
Percentage of ASB cases responded to within target

2013/14	100%
2014/15	97.9%
2015/16	97.6%

Dealing with ASB and issues around tenancy breaches is a complex and sensitive area of work so we are pleased that over the last few years there has been a consistent improvement in satisfaction of how we have handled ASB cases, significantly above our 75% target.

The number of cases we responded to within our target times, which are set according to our 2-10 policy - acknowledging within two working days and responding in full within 10 - is high. It has slipped marginally from previous years, but this is mainly due to a larger than normal number of cases reported and still exceeds our 95% target.

We are also proud that an independent survey undertaken by respected organisation Housemark ranked us as having the highest satisfaction from residents with ASB case handling in London.



Maintaining estate standards

We aim for an ambitious target of 90% of all our estates being in a good or fair condition. Monitoring this helps us to assess whether our cleaning services are delivering value for money as well as helping identify estates requiring improvement. In 2015/16 82% met the standard. To improve this we appointed a new grounds maintenance contractor and introduced a handyperson service. We are already seeing significant improvements as a result, which we are aiming to sustain going forward.

A more efficient inspection service

As part of our new service model we set up an estate inspection service with a team of Estate Inspectors visiting all our stock, including street properties, on a regular basis. They carry out health and safety checks, test equipment and report any communal repairs issues in real time using mobile technology.

In order to improve the service further we have also set up a dedicated handyperson team, which includes a qualified electrician. When the Estate Inspectors log issues they come directly to the team, who can then follow-up and complete any non-emergency and non-complex communal repairs.

This combination of new teams working together and using smart reporting technology is helping to ensure estate repairs are completed more quickly and cost effectively.

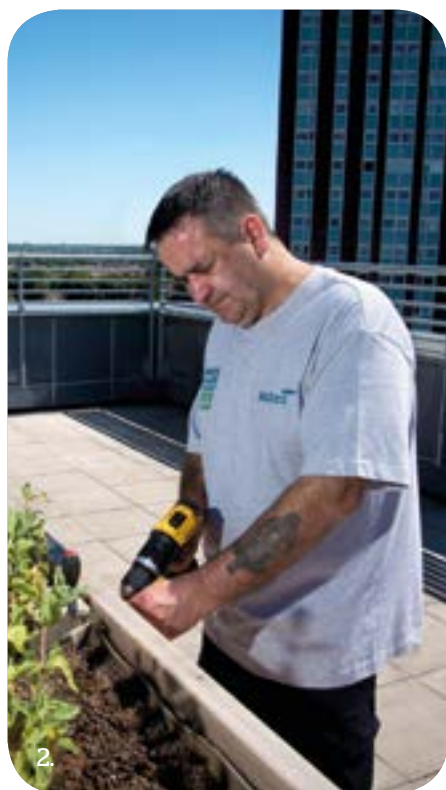
Complaints

Newlon takes complaints seriously, not only because we want to ensure our residents are satisfied, but also because they enable us to identify the weaknesses in our services and how we can improve. We aim to respond fully to complaints within 10 working days.

In 2015/16 we received 354 complaints and answered 93% in time. This is an improvement on the previous year, and above our 90% target.

Top three subjects about which complaints were made

Repairs	63%
Customer care	9%
Local estate issues	6%



1. Estate Inspectors on patrol
2. Repair work by Wates handyperson service
3. Concierge monitoring CCTV at one of our larger housing schemes

Learning from our complaints

We regularly review complaints and discuss lessons we can learn from them and what we can do to avoid such complaints in the future. Over the last year we have analysed and taken actions around issues including the following:

- Complex repairs: Issues have been raised about how complex repairs are managed and communicated with residents. We have appointed a team to specifically tackle these issues and improve the service.
- Failed and repeat appointments: There has been a rise in the number of complaints surrounding failed appointments and repeat visits by contractors. We have decided a supervisor should attend in instances where this is a problem.
- Case management: We have made enhancements to our IT systems to ensure information is better shared across the business, speeding up response times to residents.

We believe it is important to have residents involved in complaint resolution to ensure that the process is transparent and that we are seeing issues from residents' perspectives. As a result we continue to keep residents involved in reviewing and refining our complaints process.

Our complaints procedure

If you need to make a formal complaint we will manage it as follows:

Stage One

When you contact us to make a complaint it will be logged as a Stage 1 complaint and our Service Resolution Team will deal with your enquiry and give you a full response within 10 working days.

Stage Two

If you are unhappy with the response you receive at Stage 1 you should appeal within 28 days. Your complaint will then be reviewed by a Complaints Panel, which is made up of residents.

Housing Ombudsman Service

If you are still not happy with our response after Stage 2 you can contact the independent Housing Ombudsman Service. The Ombudsman has the power to look into complaints against us from our residents, but will only get involved once our complaints procedure has been followed.



Building strong communities

Our Community Services team provides services and activities to support our residents and build strong communities, through employment and financial help and by managing our community spaces and community-based activities.

The team help residents who:

- Are seeking work, or are employed part-time but looking for full-time work.
- Are interested in training or developing new skills.
- Need help with finances, benefit claims and debts, including rent arrears.
- Want to take part in health and wellbeing activities in their community.

One of the team's most successful activities during the past year has been providing volunteering opportunities to help people gain the experience needed for entering full-time employment. You can read one success story in our case study about Bahar Khan, which you can find on page 11.

The team also has an in-house specialist providing residents with advice and support to ensure they claim all benefits they are entitled to. This is important for those facing financial hardship and has helped minimise the impact of recent reductions in welfare benefits. More than 100 residents were helped last year.

The team also offer a wide range of activities at our two community hubs, the Barnsbury Estate Community Centre in Islington and Repton Street in Limehouse. One recent highlight of their work was being awarded Sports Organisation of the Year by Sport Islington, for the health and fitness courses at Barnsbury.

A year's work also came to fruition at the Barnsbury Estate with the opening of the new Community Garden, which hundreds of volunteers helped create. The garden provides an attractive, secure and peaceful resource for the residents and community groups who use the Community Hall.

Other achievements:

We worked with more than

1,200 + **500**
Newlon residents non-residents

in the areas we operate in, to build better and stronger communities.



Our employment project trained **62 residents**, found **38 residents** paid employment and secured **5 apprenticeships**, getting people into work and furthering their careers.

Our digital inclusion project provided training for **113 residents**, helping people to **connect with one another** and the services we offer online.



Our in-house Welfare and Financial Inclusion Officer brought in over

£20,000

of backdated housing benefit, maximising the income of **residents experiencing financial hardship** to give them **stability**.

You can get in touch with the team by contacting communityservices@newlon.org.uk or **020 7033 4605**.

Farewell Sue - our story in a nutshell

In July 2016 Sue Jones retired following a career spanning an extraordinary 45 years with Newlon.

When she started in 1971, we had four staff and six homes. During the next 45 years we have added nearly 8,000 more homes, had four different Head Offices and provided affordable housing to thousands of people. As a Lettings Officer throughout her career, Sue helped a large proportion of these people to move in and many of our residents continue to think not of Newlon but of Sue as the person who gave them their home.

Her encyclopedic knowledge of our properties and residents will be missed, as well as her cheery presence in the office and her commitment to helping people, which is at the heart of our work. Farewell Sue and thank you for being part of Newlon's story for so long.





Support into work

Newlon resident Bahar Khan, is one of the recent successes of our employment programme. He initially registered his interest with our Community Services team as he wanted to gain work experience in an administrative or customer service role. With assistance from our Information, Advice and Guidance Officer, he successfully applied for a three month volunteering opportunity with Newlon's Asset Management team.

During the course of his placement an opportunity came up in the Lettings team for a position as a temporary administrator. Bahar secured the position and his contract has now been renewed.

Having achieved his goal of securing full-time employment he is keen to recommend the service to other residents: "I would advise people to get in touch as it provides a great opportunity to get experience and gain new skills. I'm really thankful to Newlon."



Supporting vulnerable people

Outward is the Newlon Group's specialist care and support provider. They work with more than 1,000 people who need extra help to live their lives and realise their potential, providing a range of specialist services for older people, people with mental health issues and those with learning difficulties.

They also run Nutley Edge, a specialist rural retreat in East Sussex, to provide vulnerable people with the opportunity to enjoy a break while continuing to benefit from the care and support that they need. A further 1,000 people have been beneficiaries of the Volunteer and Befriending Service Outward provide in the London Borough of Hackney.

They have enjoyed a successful year, despite the challenging funding environment.

Working in partnership with Newlon a major highlight of the last year has been the opening of Desmond Court. This is a state of the art scheme where people with often complex learning difficulties can be provided with the specialist support they need to live full and independent lives. We are truly proud of this new development and the level of service we can provide to residents at the scheme.

Another recent highlight was Outward's team at the Selwyn Road supported living service in Tower Hamlets winning the 2016 Supporting Older People with Learning Disabilities Award.

These are just a few examples of the indispensable work that Outward do to support vulnerable Newlon residents and many other people in the communities we serve.

You can learn more about Outward by going to www.outward.org.uk.



1. Nutley Edge holiday cottages
2. Outward customer away day at Nutley Edge
3. Desmond Court opening



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Newlon Housing Trust is a charitable housing association

Group Chief Executive: Mike Hinch Chair: Sarah Ebanja

Newlon Housing Trust is registered with the Homes and Communities Agency L0006, Inland Revenue charity no. X21906/1, Community Benefit Society 18449R.

Access Homes HA Ltd is registered with the Homes and Communities Agency SL3605, Community Benefit Society 24992R.

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Newlon Fusion is a company limited by guarantee - company no. 4000022, registered charity no. 1119673.

NewlonBuild Ltd is a registered company - company no. 7884092.

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