



50 years of Newlon

RESIDENTS' REVIEW 2017-2018

celebrating

50 years

Looking after your home

A sharp focus on safety

The terrible tragedy at Grenfell Tower has refocused our ongoing commitment to maintaining residents' safety and ensuring we maintain our stock to the highest standard.

We are continuing to invest heavily in carrying out Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) as well as gas, electrical and water safety checks, and we have a dedicated team working in these areas.

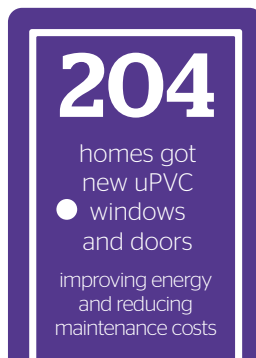
FRAs are being conducted to a higher level than previously. Where appropriate this involves intrusive inspections to check hidden fire stopping and the construction of buildings.

We have introduced a fire safety training strategy to ensure staff have the qualifications and experience needed, ranging from professional qualifications for senior staff to awareness courses for Estate Inspectors.

Maintaining and improving homes

A key part of the service we provide to residents is our stock improvement programme, which includes ongoing works to ensure that people's homes are maintained to a decent standard.

More than **800** homes benefited from works completed during 2017/18 – doubling the previous year's programme.



Looking forward we have put in place a programme which will effectively double annual spending on stock improvement.



Effective repairs service

We appreciate how frustrating it can be when something needs fixing, which is why we invest time and money into our repairs service. Through the hard work of our contractors and handyperson service last year 95% of communal repairs were completed in our target times and the average time to complete repairs was kept under 10 days.



Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

We aim to tackle instances of ASB, such as noise nuisance, vandalism, loitering and harassment, as quickly as possible. Last year both response times and satisfaction levels showed improvement from the previous one.

- We dealt with **384 ASB cases**.
- **99%** were answered within target time.
- **83%** of residents were satisfied with the way we handled their case.

You can contact us about ASB issues by emailing asb@newlon.org.uk or calling **020 7613 8080**.

Get involved – shape our services

We aim to provide excellent services and like our residents to help us achieve this, by offering a range of formal and informal ways to get involved. These range from one off involvement, such as filling in surveys or taking part in a community event, to reviewing our performance and making decisions through joining groups such as our Residents' Forum and Scrutiny Panel.

It has been a successful year for resident involvement:

- 803 of our residents participated in involvement activities last year, including many who undertook multiple activities, for example our Complaints Panel met 23 times.
- 330 residents from eight of our schemes took part in surveys about where they live and the services they pay for. Feedback from these surveys directly impacted on changes to either services or facilities we provide.
- 29 of our most involved residents took advantage of free training to improve their existing skills to help gain more confidence in their contributions. They took part in e-learning, conferences, workshops and external courses which best suited their needs.
- The Complaints Panel worked with us to review our complaints process. They suggested ways we can learn from complaints. We are collaborating together on developing a better way of recording complaints and ensuring lessons are properly learned.
- We worked with residents to establish or relaunch residents' groups on their estates, supporting events and initiatives to help make this happen. In the coming year we will be assisting residents who want to learn from other groups which are currently working well.
- We partnered with other housing providers to offer a wide range of free training courses for residents living in Tower Hamlets including in IT, DIY and health and safety. This is something we want to continue in future.
- Our repairs contractor Wates and the Dulux Painting Centre put a Scrutiny Panel recommendation into action when they helped us organise a painting workshop for residents. Participants were taught the basics of decorating inside their homes through hands-on lessons.

Nefateri, who took part with ten other residents, said:

"My favourite part was learning about the importance of undercoating your painting, as this gives a much more professional finish. If I hadn't received this information I would have just painted over the top of what I already have in my home."

- A small group of Residents' Forum members presented their ideas to us about energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives. One of these is feeding into the development of the Community Services team's 'money management' pilot programme, giving debt and energy saving advice to our residents.
- Promoting awareness of the work of our Scrutiny Panel is now part of new staff induction.
- After feedback from local residents' groups we developed a route for them to make joint complaints about their unresolved issues using our existing complaints process.
- Twelve members of the Readers' Panel put their skills to use in reviewing our repairs leaflet. They helped produce a leaflet which is more concise and easier to understand.

803
residents

took part in resident
involvement activities

 **330**
residents from 8 schemes
took part in surveys about where they
live and the services they pay for

29
residents

benefitted from free training
to improve their skillsets

Sonia - making a difference on the Forum

"Being a member of the Residents' Forum is an opportunity to learn about Newlon and how it is run. I care about my community and it is important that our landlord listens to and understands our concerns, and allows us to give feedback.

The Forum is also a good way to meet your neighbours as well as Newlon residents from elsewhere. I enjoy the company of other residents on the Forum - we take issues seriously but we also have a good time doing it."



Residents' Forum

Want to get involved yourself?

Talk to our Resident Involvement team by emailing getinvolved@newlon.org.uk or calling **020 7613 8084**.

Community Services supporting our residents

Over 3,000 
visits by Newlon residents to our community spaces last year



Jeremy Corbyn visits Barnsbury Community Garden

Our award-winning Community Services team works directly with residents to build strong communities through supporting people into employment, providing benefits advice and by managing our community spaces.

The team helps residents who:

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

Thousands of residents benefited from our services during the past year, for which the team was shortlisted for the UK Housing Awards for 'Outstanding Approach to Income Management', as well as the TPAS Awards for 'Excellence in Community Action'.

Key achievements

Help with finances

One key role of the team is to help residents through difficult financial times by providing advice and support or referral to specialist agencies. Our experienced in-house welfare benefits adviser has helped our residents claim thousands of pounds in benefits they are due.

144
case registrations
were made
last year

 **£85,000**
in housing and welfare
benefits were secured
for residents

Getting people into work

The team's employment programme tackles the barriers to getting into work and provides access to hundreds of training and job opportunities. The programme also offers valuable work placement experience, and opens up routes to a range of careers. It offers access to face-to-face advice, live vacancies and appropriate referrals to training and employment services.



130 residents registered for our
employment pathway services

50 achieved employment

85 accessed training

19 took part in work placement and
apprenticeship opportunities



We are also proud that
over 10% of Newlon staff are Newlon tenants.

Improving community facilities

The team provides vibrant, cost-effective local halls and spaces for residents and the local community to take part in health and wellbeing programmes and other activities.

Barnsbury Community Centre in Islington is our flagship facility and one of two main spaces that the Community Services team manages - the other being at Lascar Wharf in Tower Hamlets.

- Over 3,000 Newlon residents used the community spaces last year, where we provided exercise programmes, tutoring, gardening programmes and allotments, access to childcare services and training courses.
- With the help of our residents and local organisations, such as the Islington Bangladesh Association, the green space behind the Barnsbury Community Hall has been transformed into a great space for people to enjoy.

Want to hold an event at Barnsbury? Get in touch with the Community Services team to find out how.



Islington Bangladesh Association at the
Barnsbury Community Garden

MAITE'S EMPLOYMENT JOURNEY

Newlon resident, Maite, has been on an interesting journey to find work. Born in Paris, she moved to London as a teenager. She worked as a steward on a major airline and more recently for a train company. During a stay in Cameroon she worked at a youth centre teaching young people how to use social media responsibly and helping them secure new facilities. Her family still live in Cameroon and to reconnect with her roots she entered the Miss Cameroon beauty contest - and won.

In April 2017 she attended one of Newlon's jobs fairs as she was looking for a new career. She then started working closely with Paula, Newlon's Information, Advice and Guidance Officer.

Paula suggested that she do some work experience with her, where she carried out a range of duties including registering new clients, setting up online courses and managing hardship funds. She was also signed up for a course in Information, Advice and Guidance. This gave her exactly the experience she wanted.

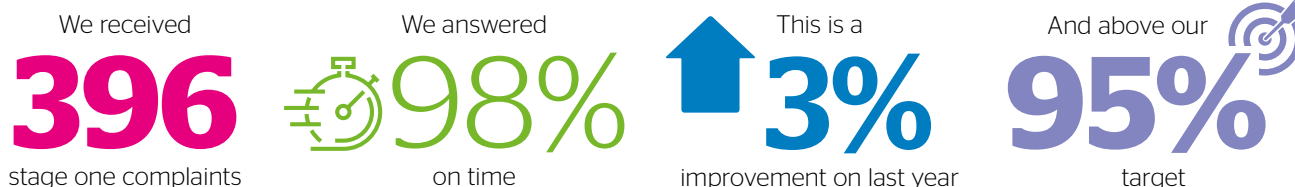
Not only did Maite receive helpful guidance from Paula in securing her long term goal, but she was also able to help other Newlon residents in their own journeys toward employment.

If you want help or advice from our Community Services team then get in touch by emailing community.services@newlon.org.uk or calling **020 7033 4605**.

Complaints – putting things right

Our aim is to provide the best service we can, so we take complaints seriously. We try to resolve them as quickly as possible and to ensure residents are aware of how their issues are being handled.

Last year:



Learning Lessons

We don't just try to resolve complaints – we also try to learn from them. We discuss what went wrong and what we can do to avoid such problems in the future.

Last year we took actions around issues including the following:

- In a few heating repair cases the agreed procedure of sending a supervisor round after a set number of visits has not happened. This has been raised with our contractors.
- There have been some complaints about our response to CCTV requests when items have been stolen. Our Estates team are working closely with our Concierge and door entry phone contractors to agree how CCTV recordings are stored so they are more accessible if the police request them. We do need to receive a police request in order to release CCTV footage.
- Our Property Services team have changed their approach to tiling in bathrooms.
- We have increased the number of stage two complaints our panel reviews each month.

Our complaints procedure

If you submit a complaint we manage it as follows:

- When you first make a complaint it will be logged as a **'Stage One'**. Our Service Resolution Team will deal with your enquiry and respond within 10 working days.
- If you are unhappy with the response you can appeal within 28 days. These **'Stage Two'** complaints will then be reviewed by a Complaints Panel, which will include other Newlon residents.
- **Housing Ombudsman**. The Ombudsman has the power to investigate complaints against us, but will only help after our complaints procedure has been followed.

You can find out more about our complaints process on our website www.newlon.org.uk.

Keeping homes occupied and arrears

Our Income and Lettings teams play a key role in ensuring we can collect rent to help pay for maintaining homes, developing new affordable housing and moving people in and out as quickly as possible.

Housing people quickly

In order to ensure people waiting for homes are housed as quickly as possible and to maximise the income we get to invest in new homes and better services, we make sure when a property becomes vacant it is re-let as quickly as possible.

Our new systems, better communication and improved ways of working - and the hard work of our repairs contractors - meant last year we recorded some of our best ever performance figures.

Social rented and Affordable Rent housing

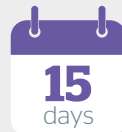
Number of lets



Number of re-lets



Average time to re-let



2017/18

Intermediate Rent housing

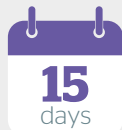
Number of lets



Number of re-lets



Average time to re-let

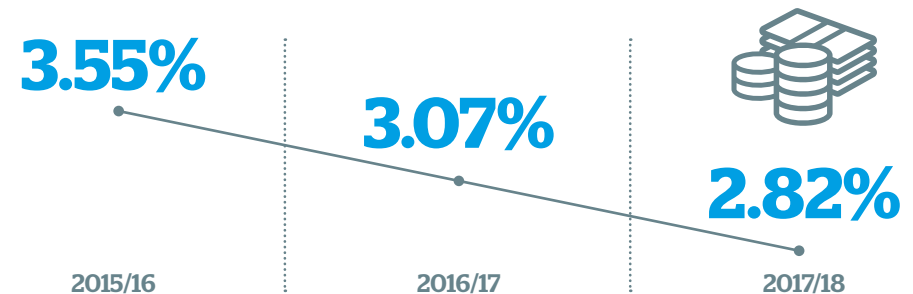


2017/18

Keeping arrears low

We rely on residents to pay their rent so we can use the income to invest in the services we provide and develop new homes. A key part of this is good performance in rent collection to ensure low arrears. Our Income team works hard to achieve this, working with residents and referring them to support services when they need help tackling their debts.

Overall arrears (as percentage of rent due)



At the end of 2017/18 overall arrears decreased to 2.82%. This was despite the number of tenants on Universal Credit more than doubling, which we were concerned would have a negative impact on rent collection. But the Income team have worked with these tenants from the start of their claim to try to ensure this did not happen.

The Income team also referred 163 residents to our Community Services team for independent welfare benefit and debt advice and assistance with more complex issues. Their joint aim is to help residents in arrears keep their tenancies and avoid hardship and eviction.

Income Officers attend sign-ups so new tenants can see exactly how much rent they will need to pay and what their benefit entitlement will be. They also undertake affordability checks to determine whether potential tenants can afford the property.

The number of evictions last year decreased slightly to 14. Eviction is always a last resort when all other options are exhausted.

Another success of the Income team in the last year has been to increase the number of quarterly rent statements sent by email from 73% to 80%. This not only reduces administrative costs but is more environmentally friendly. We hope to further increase this figure in the coming year.

If you need help with your rent payments get in touch with the Income team by calling **020 7613 8080** or emailing **income@newlon.org.uk**.

Helping vulnerable people

Outward is the Newlon Group's specialist care and support provider. Last year we worked closely with them so they could continue their good work in supporting more than 1,000 people who need extra help to live their lives and realise their full potential.



Church View

New supported housing

Towards the end of the financial year **Doubleday Court** in Leyton took on its first residents. The development provides 12 spacious flats for adults with learning disabilities. Two of the homes are available through the Home Ownership for people with Long-Term Disabilities (HOLD) scheme, giving the residents a secure future living independently with support where needed.

Last December works at **Church View** in Walthamstow were completed. The property was redeveloped to meet the needs of older people with learning disabilities and mobility problems, with accessible bathrooms, an adapted kitchen, a lift and a large garden. There are also large lounges – so residents can enjoy spending time together.

Getting customers involved

Residents at Doubleday Court and Church View were among the many Outward customers who have taken part in Outward's **gardening competition**. The competition promotes wellbeing by encouraging people we support to develop new skills and by getting staff and residents working together to improve their local environments. As one support worker said: "it lifts spirits - everyone enjoys being in the garden".

Outward's focus on promoting wellbeing also extends to sports. During the year, they set up a **football team** with the people they support and went on to win three successive South London Special League tournaments in a row.

The team was presented with their awards at a glittering ceremony in April. Recognising the importance of the ceremony, Outward's Abul Bashar said that team members do not normally get an opportunity to dress up for the evening and be recognised for their achievements.

Sport was one of the activity breaks on offer at Nutley Edge, Outward's holiday retreat in the peace and quiet of the East Sussex countryside. **Nutley Edge** provides a variety of supported activity breaks for adults with learning and other disabilities, and it has continued to thrive during the year. Newlon residents can also book discounted breaks at one of Nutley Edge's attractive self-catering cottages. For further information visit www.nutleyedge.org.uk.

For further information about the work Outward does visit their website at www.outward.org.uk.



Outward choir in action



Doubleday Court opening

Celebrating 50 years

In 2018 Newlon reached our 50th birthday. You can join in the celebrations by nominating a fellow resident for the Newlon Star Awards. Find out more at www.newlon.org.uk/residents-star-awards. You can also learn more about our story at www.newlon.org.uk/us.



Newlon House – 4 Daneland Walk – Hale Village – London – N17 9FE

T: 020 7613 8080

E: customerservice@newlon.org.uk

www.newlon.org.uk

Newlon Housing Trust is a charitable housing association

Group Chief Executive: Mike Hinch Chair: Sarah Ebanja

Newlon Housing Trust is a Community Benefit Society, company no. 18449R, registered with the Regulator of Social Housing no. L0006, HMRC charity reference no. EW91301, VAT registration no. GB778532683.

Access Homes is a Community Benefit Society - company no. 24992R, registered with the Regulator of Social Housing SL3605.

Outward Housing, trading as Outward, is a company limited by guarantee - company no. 02151434, registered charity no. 800529.

Newlon Fusion is a company limited by guarantee - company no. 04000022, registered charity no. 1119673.

NewlonBuild Ltd is a private limited company no. 07884092.

Finsbury Park Homeless Families Project is a company limited by guarantee - company no. 2879813, registered charity no. 1030970.

NewlonInvest is a private limited company - company no. 09492006.

Designed and produced by Glendale Creative www.glendalecreative.com

© Newlon Housing Trust 2018. All rights reserved.