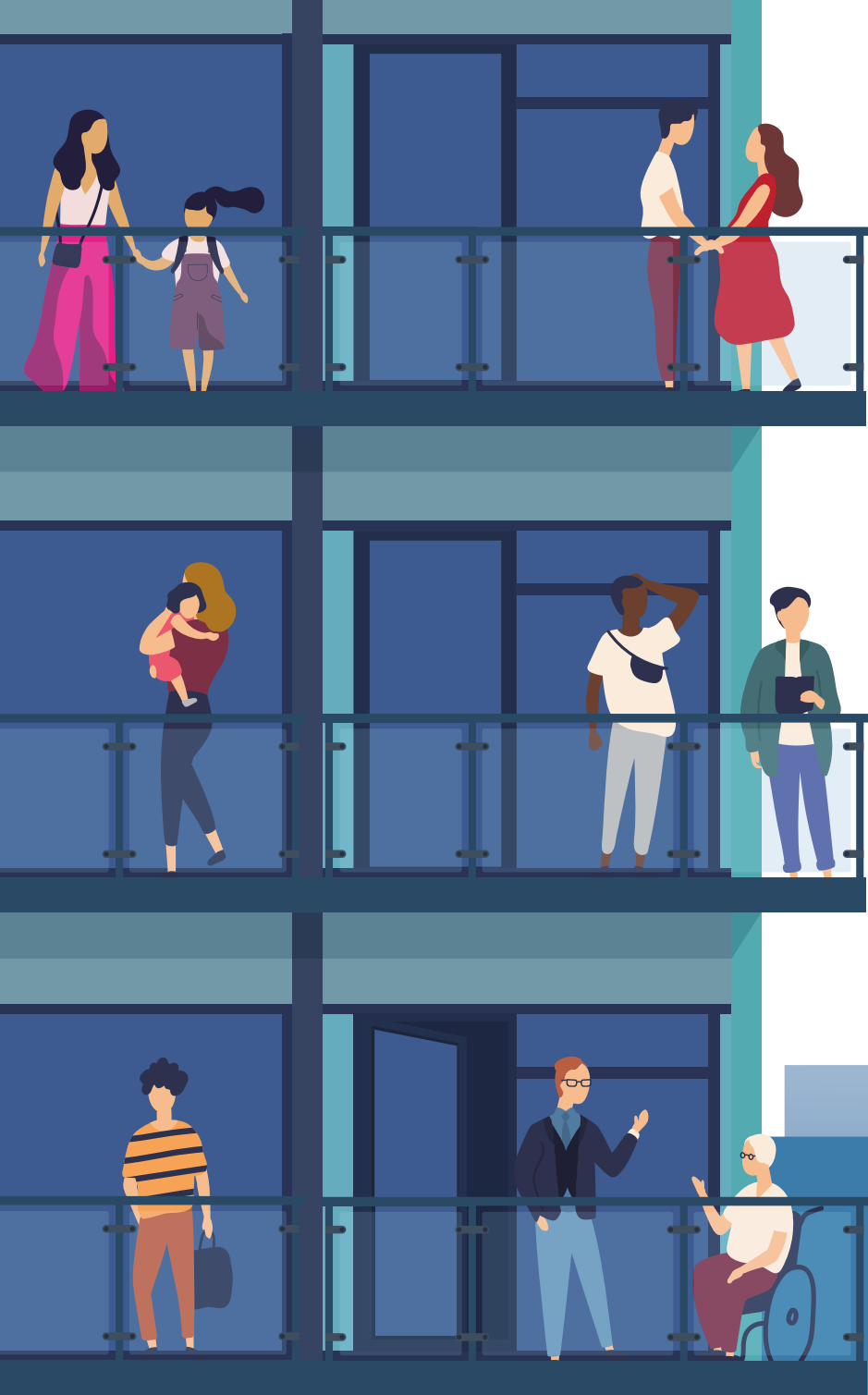


Residents' Review

2018-2019



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Star Awards 2018



Barnsbury Garden



Buxton Garden





Napier Court

Annual review for residents 2018–2019

Welcome to Newlon's annual review for residents. The purpose of this report is to let you know how well we have performed over the last year and how we have tried to improve. You can also find out news about the additional services we offer both to our residents and the communities in which they live.

Last year brought some changes. Our Community Services and Resident Involvement teams merged to become the new Resident Services team, with the aim of improving the way we support our residents and the opportunities we can provide for them. It was a successful year for our care and support partner, Outward, as well. You can read all about the good work they do inside.

During the year we also relaunched our website to make it easier to navigate and more mobile friendly.

We undertook a lot of work around fire safety last year, an area we know matters greatly to our residents and which we take very seriously.

In addition we pushed ahead with our ongoing commitment to provide more affordable homes.

In the years ahead we aim to further develop the way we work with our residents and partners to make sure we continue to provide good quality services for everyone.

How we report on performance

We provide an overview of our performance annually in the Residents' Review. You can also find information on our ongoing performance in a range of service areas on our website at newlon.org.uk/us/performance. If you would like to find out more about our financial performance we publish accounts in late September of each year, including a Value for Money overview, which explains how we are seeking to maximise our investment in new and existing homes. These can be found at newlon.org.uk/publications/annual-reports.

Performance at a glance

This table shows our overall performance for the last three years in key areas. For overall tenant satisfaction our performance of 74% is just under the median for London housing associations of 75% and has improved for each of the past three years.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Target 2019/20
Overall tenant satisfaction	72%	73%	74%	75%
Satisfaction with complaint handling	82%	89%	90%	90%
Repairs completed within target times	94%	96%	95%	95%
ASB cases responded within target times	98%	99%	97%	100%
Estates in good or fair condition	99%	97%	95%	96%

The Resident Services team – helping communities thrive

This past year our Resident Involvement team joined with our Community Services team to become Resident Services. This has enabled us to expand and enhance the ways we support residents and provide improved channels for getting involved.

Whether a resident is looking for work, interested in developing skills, needs help with finances, wants to take part in health and wellbeing activities or is interested in helping to improve the services Newlon provides – the team is there to make it happen.

Over the past year many of our residents benefited from the services we provide.

Getting people into work

Our employment programme tackles barriers into work and provides access to many training and job opportunities. It also provides valuable work placements, advice and referrals.

Many of those signed on to our employment programme end up working for us. We are proud that over 15% of our staff are Newlon residents, putting them at the heart of our organisation.

We are pleased to have been shortlisted for the UK Housing Awards in the Resident Employment and Training category which recognises the hard work the team does.

132

residents registered for employment services

38

got into work

57

had training to improve their skills

14

secured work placement opportunities

15%

of Newlon staff are Newlon residents



Paula, Employment Advisor, with employed residents

Helping with finances

We know it is a challenging time for many people, particularly with the expansion of Universal Credit, demonstrated by a significant increase in complex welfare benefits cases last year.

The team can guide residents through these difficult financial times by providing direct support or referrals to specialist agencies. Our experienced in-house welfare benefits advisor has helped residents claim thousands of pounds in benefits they are due.

We have also set up an in-home support programme for residents who struggle with technology and are moving onto Universal Credit.

In addition we have a hardship fund, generously supported by SPH Friends, an external charity. This fund supports the most vulnerable Newlon households with grants to pay for furniture or kitchen items. In 2018/19, we were pleased to secure twice the amount of income received in previous years and distributed **£60,000** in funds to over **150** households. We were also approved for the BBC Children in Need Emergency Essentials Programme, which supports young people living in extreme poverty.



Signposting those in need

Where we feel residents may need further help we provide access and referrals to established key programmes. This includes the award-winning SHINE Programme which provides energy saving advice and home visits, as well as Angelic Energy, a social housing focused utility company. We also offer referrals to debt advice organisations such as Step Change and Capitalise.

If you would like employment advice or help with finances please book an appointment by calling **020 7033 4605** or emailing **community.services@newlon.org.uk**.



Newlon's jobs fair a success

In May Newlon's Resident Services team hosted a jobs fair. More than 75 residents attended the event at the Engine Room in Hale Village, Tottenham Hale. Attendees got access to information and advice to help find a job, make a career change or undertake a work placement. There were hundreds of job and training opportunities available from partners including CCS, Smarter Services, Amber Maintenance, Lightside, Barclays, AIM Hospitality, CONEL, New City College, K10, Love London Working and Outward.



Getting involved – shaping our services

We aim to provide excellent services and our residents help us achieve this, through a range of formal and informal ways to get involved. These include completing surveys, taking part in community events, reviewing our performance and making decisions by joining groups such as our Residents' Forum and Scrutiny Panel.

Last year:

1,215 
residents
took part in resident involvement activities

 **721**
residents completed surveys
about the cleaning service where they live,
to help shape the new cleaning contract

39 
residents
undertook training to improve their skills,
including courses, workshops and conferences



2018 Newlon Star Awards

Residents' Forum's focus on performance and repairs

Over the last year the Residents' Forum has helped to make a difference in a number of ways. They chose one of their members to be the 'performance champion' for the group, highlighting issues with how our services are performing to help us improve them. In addition, the Forum suggested we should have more flexible repairs appointments, so we introduced Saturday appointments for residents.

More Resident Inspectors recruited

We recruited eight new Resident Inspectors over the last year. They carry out joint inspections with our Estate Inspectors to assess the standard of cleaning, communal maintenance and garden upkeep. This is a popular role and our Estate Inspectors have given good feedback about the added value Resident Inspectors bring to their work.

Supporting our residents' groups

During the year we supported 13 residents' associations and groups and published an updated handbook to help them in their work.

Residents' help with website redesign

Our new website went live in January 2019. The Readers' Panel helped test and provide valuable feedback on the site.

Newlon residents shine at the Star Awards

Our second Star Awards event was held last November. The awards recognised the achievements of those people who have been involved in improving services, supporting fellow residents and contributing to the communities where they live.

A ceremony and dinner was held at Tottenham Town Hall where the winners were presented with their awards. The event was hosted by the BBC radio presenter Dotun Adebayo and Newlon's Chair, Sarah Ebanja. Guests enjoyed a meal and live entertainment, including a performance by the Tottenham Community Choir.

Two Forum members were part of the planning group and helped design the event. We received over 100 nominations for the awards from residents, customers, staff and Board members. More than 90 people attended and the feedback was excellent.

Community facilities continue to thrive

We provide local halls and spaces for residents and community members to take part in health and wellbeing programmes and other activities. Barnsbury Community Centre and Lascar Wharf are two of our key facilities. Last year we provided services to hundreds of residents in our community spaces including exercise and gardening programmes, tutoring and access to child care.

How a residents' association made a difference

"Residents have come together on notable occasions to improve services they receive. The residents' association at Isobel Place worked with Newlon to reduce the cleaning service charge by 50%, whilst maintaining the quality and satisfaction levels. Another area in which they had an influence was parking enforcement. A new service was trialled at Isobel Place and it will be expanded to other Newlon sites soon. This highlights how the perspective of residents can drive improvements."

Lloyd Gale-Ward, Chair of Isobel Place Residents' Association and Newlon Resident Board Member



Lloyd Gale-Ward



Blossom Shakespeare

Resident Board membership doubles

We recently increased the number of residents who sit on the Newlon Board from one to two. Local resident groups were instrumental in advertising the vacancies and we received many applications, demonstrating the breadth of talent amongst our residents.

From a strong field we are pleased to welcome Lloyd Gale-Ward and Blossom Shakespeare to the Board, who will provide a valuable role in overseeing and shaping the way we are run.



Residents' Forum

Keeping homes occupied and reducing arrears

Housing people quickly

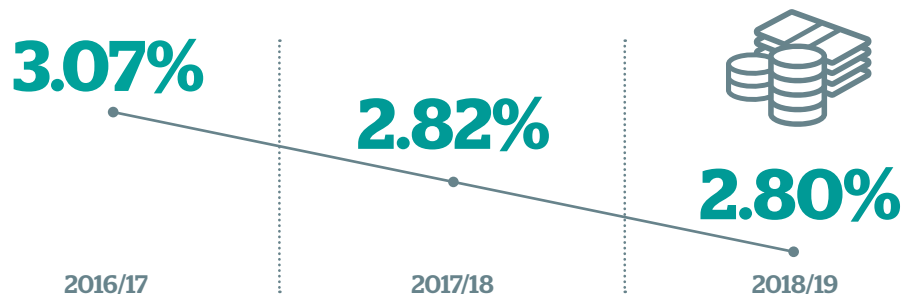
Our Income and Lettings teams play a key role in ensuring we can collect rent to help pay for maintaining homes, developing new affordable housing and moving people in and out as quickly as possible.

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 - along with the hard work of our contractors - meant last year we continued to record excellent performance figures.



Reducing our arrears

Overall rent arrears as % of rent due



Last year saw another reduction in overall arrears to 2.8%, despite the increasing number of Universal Credit (UC) cases which continue to increase weekly. The Income team work with residents affected by UC from the start of their claim to help bring stability.

When people struggle to pay their rent we agree realistic payment plans to help them. The Income team referred 119 residents to the Resident Services team for independent welfare benefit and debt advice and assistance with more complex issues. The two teams work closely together with a joint aim to help people sustain tenancies and avoid hardship and eviction.

With the help of our in-house welfare benefits adviser we secured £145,000 in benefits. 36% of these cases required assistance with UC.

Income Officers carry out affordability tests at the beginning of a tenancy so new residents can see exactly how much rent they will need to pay, they calculate the amount of benefits tenants are entitled to, and they assist with claims. They also advise whether a tenant is better off claiming UC.

Where residents do not pay their rent, even after our best efforts to help, then as a last resort we may repossess their property. However, through the support we have provided we are pleased that the number of evictions was low last year - with only 11 taking place.

Another success of the Income team in the last year was increasing the number of quarterly rent statements sent by email, from 80% to 86%. Sending statements digitally not only reduces administrative costs but is more environmentally friendly. We hope to further increase this figure in the coming year. Work is also progressing well on an online portal for residents to access their rent account and other services.

Finally we are proud that Newlon was shortlisted for Outstanding Approach to Income Management at the UK Housing Awards last year, recognising our hard work in this area.

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**.

Looking after your home

Effective repairs and investing in homes

We appreciate how frustrating it can be when something needs fixing, which is why we invest time and money into our repairs service. We also have a large stock improvement programme, which includes ongoing works to ensure that people's homes are maintained to a decent standard.

- **£10.96m** was spent on repairs.
- **£5.6m** spent on home improvements.
- **1,429** homes improved through planned works.

Focus on safety

We are committed to ensuring that our residents can live safely and securely in their homes. In recent years this commitment has been matched with an increased investment in health and safety related activities.

In the past year we carried out an extensive programme of electrical testing, as well as a major programme of electrical, fire, gas and water safety inspections. We have also invested in providing key staff with nationally accredited NEBOSH health and safety training. This allows them to provide advice and act as safety advocates across a range of our services. It is also a vital part of maintaining an everyday culture of health and safety at Newlon.

We are also responding proactively to the Government's review of building materials and are undertaking our own reviews of all our buildings over 18 metres in height. This includes assessing the materials used in their construction, as well as undertaking a programme of fire risk assessments and additional inspections by specialists.

Where we find that changes need to be made, we will take action and update residents about the steps required.

100% of properties have a valid fire risk assessment

100% of lifts are certified as safe

100% of our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard



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 satisfaction levels showed improvement from the previous year and the number of cases we responded to within our agreed target times remained high.



We dealt with **333** ASB cases



97% were responded within target time



85% 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**.

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:

We received
396
stage one complaints

We answered
 **98%**
on time

Common complaints

Although we receive complaints about a variety of issues, there are a few key areas which most are about.



3 out of every **4** complaints

are about repairs, including how long it has taken and the quality of the workmanship.



over **5%**

were related to asset management which includes cyclical and maintenance works.



under **5%**

were about estates issues, such as parking and grounds maintenance.

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:

Scaffolding:

We recognised that our contractors' management of scaffolding needed improvement, as some residents told us they were not informed in advance of it being put up or taken down. We now get contractors to write in advance to residents to let them know and provide advice about contacting their insurers, where necessary.

Leaks:

The management of leaks can be a complex situation as it can often be hard to identify the source of a leak, it sometimes involves multiple residents and Newlon's responsibilities can differ depending on whether a resident is a leaseholder or rents. We devised a process which makes it clearer and our responses more consistent, as well as creating a better information leaflet.

Complaints Panel:

We reviewed how the Complaints Panel was working. Two members of the Residents' Complaints Panel attended the Resident Services Committee to feedback on their experiences and this will be an annual event now.

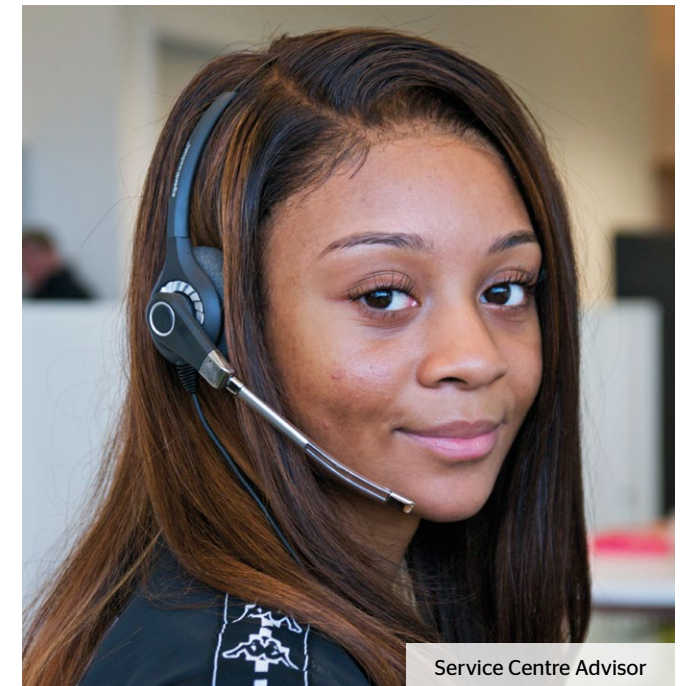
Revising our complaints policy

We regularly review all our internal policies. Over the last year we revised and refined our policy on complaints to ensure it reflected any changes needed and was as clear as possible.

Our complaints procedure

If a resident raises an issue with our service we have a specialist team who will aim to resolve it as quickly as possible. However, if they are not satisfied and wish to make a formal complaint we manage it as follows:

- It will first be logged as a **'Stage One'**. Our Service Resolution Team will respond within 10 working days.
- If they are unhappy with the response they can appeal within 28 days. These **'Stage Two'** complaints will then be reviewed by a Complaints Panel, which will include other Newlon residents.
- If they are still unhappy with our response after 'Stage Two' they can contact the independent **Housing Ombudsman Service**.



Service Centre Advisor

Outward - increasing independence and promoting wellbeing

During 2018-2019 Outward, Newlon's care and support subsidiary, delivered essential services to more than 1,400 people. This included providing services for people with learning disabilities, autism, mental health issues, young people at risk and those who require support due to age. Outward provided support across ten London boroughs enabling people to improve wellbeing and maintain and increase their independence.



Outward football team



Summer Ball

Personal wellbeing

A sense of wellbeing comes from being active and engaged in our communities, spending time with friends, being healthy and fit and also having time to relax and enjoy life. Outward has invested and prioritised projects that maximise opportunities for improving wellbeing among the people they support.

This includes the annual gardening competition which sees many people, regardless of disability or barriers, spending time in the fresh air to make their outdoor spaces - ranging from balconies to gardens - look beautiful.

The Outward football team, known as Vallance Disability Football Team, have continued with their winning streak, taking home the Canary Wharf Group's Team of the Year Award. The team, who didn't know each other before playing football together, have worked on developing greater confidence and independence and as a result have become friends for life. They can be proud of their achievements.



Outward Volunteer Awards

Worthy of recognition

The achievements of residents and staff at Doubleday Court, our state of the art scheme for adults with learning disabilities, were recognised through being a shortlisted finalist in the national Learning Disabilities and Autism Awards. During the year Outward also recognised the amazing work of their staff through an Achievement Award evening. This ensured that staff working directly with vulnerable people are recognised for going above and beyond, and demonstrating Outward's key values of Engaging, Enabling and Empowering in their work. Outward are immensely proud of the dedication of their staff.

The Newlon 'Star Awards' also recognised achievements with a 'Personal Achievements' Award category for people supported by Outward. With so many stories of people overcoming barriers and challenges due to their disability or life circumstances it was so hard to choose a winner. However, James from Bromley took the award as the judges were impressed with his "cheerful attitude to life in the face of adversity".



Buxton Garden



If you require this publication in a different format such as Braille or large print, please contact us by emailing customerservice@newlon.org.uk or you can call our Service Centre on **020 7613 8080**.

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Newlon Housing Trust is a charitable housing association

Chair: Sarah Ebanja Group Chief Executive: Mike Hinch

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