

Newlon News



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Welcome to our Spring newsletter

In this edition you can find out how the Resident Services team support our residents. There is also an update from our Residents' Forum, which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. You can also read about recent policy changes we have made, as well as how you can give feedback on our services.

Coronavirus update

We are asking any residents who contract coronavirus, or are required to self-isolate, to let us know about this if they contact us to book a repair or an appointment.

Easter closing times

Our offices close at 5pm on 9th April and re-open on 14th April. During this time our contractors will only provide emergency repairs, such as for total electricity loss and major leaks.



Follow us on Twitter
at [@NewlonHT](https://twitter.com/NewlonHT)

Residents' Forum

update from the Chair



Lloyd Gale-Ward, Chair

The Residents' Forum is a group of residents who meet every three months to look at Newlon's work and monitor performance.

- Newlon's Head of Repairs and Maintenance, came to talk about how communal repairs are identified and reported by Estate Inspectors. Repairs reported this way go direct to contractors. Results show this increases the accuracy and speed of these repairs being completed.
- The repairs app, which contractors give to residents to provide feedback after a visit, was also discussed. A number of residents stated how surprised they were with the high satisfaction rate of 95%. As this figure is not in line with data from other surveys, more research will be carried out.
- We heard how past DIY decorating workshops were successful and popular with residents. More are planned for the future, which residents will be told about.
- We talked about the most recent mystery shopping – where selected residents contact Newlon to measure how well services are delivered, based on pre-written scripts given to them. The results showed a small improvement but work still needs to be done. Newlon has identified some solutions which we hope will improve results further, including customer service training and better procedures for checking shared email inboxes.
- An update was given on the progress of the Resident Involvement Strategy. We heard how two residents had taken part in recruitment panels, with other Forum members stating an interest in being involved in the future.
- The Forum was also informed that Newlon are undertaking a procurement process for key contracts, including estate inspection and grounds maintenance. Look out for ways to have your voice heard.
- Finally, we said goodbye to Karen Orr, Senior Resident Involvement Officer, who has left Newlon to work for Shelter. On behalf on the Forum I would like to thank Karen for her hard work, energy, enthusiasm and commitment in working with residents. We wish her well.

Take the lead and form a Residents' Association

We encourage and support residents to set up a Residents' Association to act as a voice for their estate or area. These bring people together to ensure that we are providing the standard of service that we should be, and to make the most of their community through projects and social groups. We have advice for getting started in the Residents' Association handbook on our website, which includes all information you need to know as well as a draft code of conduct and constitution.

Newlon may offer support to residents setting up a Residents' Association such as start-up funding, help towards running costs and training.

You can download the handbook on our website or email getinvolved@newlon.org.uk.



Remember to extend your lease

If your lease was originally granted in the 1980s or 1990s, it is likely that the term was 99 years and this means that the remaining term of your lease may have shortened significantly.

If you have less than 80 years remaining on your lease, we would encourage you to think about extending it. This is important as a shorter lease can affect the value of your property and increase the risk of lending against it.

If you are a 100% leaseholder you automatically have a legal right to extend your lease. If you are a Shared Owner, we will offer you an informal lease extension at our discretion.

In order to obtain a lease extension, you must satisfy the following conditions:

- Your existing lease must be for a term exceeding 21 years.
- You must have owned your property for two years.

Your lease will be extended for a further 90 years plus the unexpired term left on your lease. There may be occasions where the term can be less, which will be dependent on whether we own the freehold of your home and the number of years we have left on our head lease.

It is worth seeking independent financial and legal advice before you consider a lease extension.

If you would like to find out more then please contact our Resident Sales Manager, Olu Adedokun-Abiiba, on **020 7613 7480**, who will be able to guide you through the process. You can also email resident.sales@newlon.org.uk.



Stay safe: service your gas appliances

Gas appliances can be a hazard if they are not properly maintained. A poorly maintained gas appliance may produce carbon monoxide, which can be fatal if breathed in, or be a fire risk.

If you are a leaseholder or Shared Owner then it is your responsibility to make sure your gas central heating system is serviced every year. You must use a Gas Safe registered engineer. We recommend you purchase a British Gas 3 star service agreement or equivalent.

You can find a Gas Safe Registered engineer at www.gassaferegister.co.uk.



Our subletting rules

Shared Owners cannot sublet or allow somebody else to occupy either part of or the whole of their property, except in exceptional circumstances. You are also not permitted to use Airbnb or any other short term rental scheme. However, if you have staircased to 100% ownership of your property, you should be able to sublet. We will need to be made aware of who will be living at the property and, as you are responsible for the property, you must provide a relevant forwarding address and contact details.

Fire safety update for Shared Owners and leaseholders

Following the Grenfell Tower fire the Government has issued a succession of advice notes and guidance which require building owners to review the fire safety of external cladding and insulation, external fire stopping and all internal fire stopping measures.



As a response Newlon has set up a special projects team and appointed specialist fire safety engineers and forensic architects to carry out a programme of investigation works. We are making good progress with these works and are prioritising investigations for buildings over 18 metres and those with any kind of external cladding. Where we are carrying out investigations we will notify residents before works commence and will update them on the outcome as soon as we are able to.

In order to follow Government guidance we have increased the number of fire warden services and patrols at buildings and developments where remedial fire safety works are required. This has resulted in a significant increase in costs and we are doing everything we can not to pass these back to residents. To cover these costs we may be reducing or postponing some activities such as cyclical decorations. As we work through any fire safety works and inspections the need for additional wardens will reduce and we will be able to reintroduce our full programme of cyclical decorations.

Selling, staircasing or re-mortgaging your home

We realise that some leaseholders and Shared Owners are currently finding it difficult to sell, staircase or re-mortgage their home because of the approach lenders are taking to the Government's advice notes.

Many lenders are asking for an EWS1, a standardised form signed off by a specialist fire safety engineer to assess a building's fire safety compliance. This process is taking place for many thousands of buildings nationally and we have no control over the lead time for receiving an EWS1 for any individual building. In some cases lenders are also asking for a cladding compliance certificate, which could be dependent on any remedial works being completed and certified by a specialist fire safety engineer.

If you are considering selling your home it is a requirement of your lease that you inform us of your intention to do so, even if you are a 100% leaseholder. We recommend contacting us before you incur any costs or make any long-term plans dependent on being able to sell your home. Should you wish to proceed, we will assist as much as possible with the process, but this will be at your own risk and we will not be able to refund fees if the process is unsuccessful.

In the current environment if you wish to apply to staircase this will be at your own risk and we will not be able to refund fees if the process is unsuccessful.

For any enquiries about selling or staircasing please email resident.sales@newlon.org.uk.

Option to sublet

We have introduced a new policy to allow people to sublet if they want to move, but are struggling to sell their home because of issues related to the Government's fire safety guidance. Applications can be made via our website by filling in the form at www.newlon.org.uk/residents/home-owners/subletting.

Contacting us about fire safety

If you have any questions or enquiries about fire safety please email firesafety@newlon.org.uk. If you have a more urgent enquiry please call our Service Centre on **020 7613 8080**. In an emergency please always dial 999.

Further information about our approach to fire safety, investigation works and advice relating to selling or staircasing can be found on our website at www.newlon.org.uk/fire-safety.

Interested in getting involved?

We are looking for residents who can help us with designing, selecting and monitoring upcoming contracts. We're also looking for residents to take part in interview panels when we hire new staff here at Newlon.

You can also get involved in other ways - including joining our Residents' Forum, Readers' Panel, Complaints Panel or becoming Mystery Shoppers.

What are the benefits of getting involved with us?

- Help us improve our services and have a greater say in your community.
- Socialise with other residents.
- Develop new skills and experience.
- Get rewarded for some activities and out of pocket expenses.

If you want to find out more then get in touch for an informal chat by calling **020 7613 8084** or emailing getinvolved@newlon.org.uk.

Getting results through the Newlon Jobs Fair

By Paula Williams, Information, Advice and Guidance Officer

On 15th May we will hold our seventh Newlon Jobs Fair. The previous ones were a great success, and I hope this year will be even better!

At last year's event two of our residents met with our contractors Amber Constructions and Lightside. Both were offered work placements. After impressing their new employers, they were soon offered full-time employment.

These kinds of work placements are a great way to showcase your skills and get the references that employers are looking for. We are pleased that 85% of our work placement candidates go on to achieve employment.

Our employment programme, Step Forward, also gets great results. I am happy to report that 35 residents found employment in the last year, including six who are now working at Newlon.

The programme also supports Newlon residents with training, and many of these skills have also helped residents get jobs.

We are proud that Newlon's Resident Services team – and specifically Step Forward – was shortlisted for three Housing National awards in 2019. These include the



UK Housing Awards, in the Resident Employment and Training category, as well as the prestigious **Guardian Public Service Awards**, in the Recruitment & HR category.

I am in my 10th year of service at Newlon and I am passionate about supporting our amazing residents. When a resident achieves something, whether it is through completing a course, starting a work placement or becoming employed, there is no better feeling.

If you would like more information about the upcoming Jobs Fair, or if you require support in accessing training or employment, please book an appointment by calling **020 7033 4605** or emailing **community.services@newlon.org.uk**.

Have a Spring holiday at Nutley Edge



Are you looking for an affordable getaway?

If so, then Nutley Edge Cottages could be the perfect destination. Nutley Edge belongs to Outward, a charity that supports vulnerable people in north and east London.

All profits from Nutley Edge go to providing better care and support services. So your stay will be benefiting some of London's most vulnerable people.

Nutley Edge sits in eleven acres of rolling countryside on the edge of the Ashdown Forest in East Sussex, located just an hour from London by train and easy to get to by car. You can pick from twelve cottages that sleep up to four people, and also have the option of staying in our 17th century Old Farmhouse, which sleeps up to eight. There are also glamping tents kitted out with a double bed and two single camping mats with sleeping bags, with access to compostable toilets, a shared kitchen area and individual fire pits.

There are good rates for Newlon residents.

To learn more about Nutley Edge and book your stay please visit their website at **nutleyedge.org.uk** or call **01825 712 377**.

Celebrating engagement at the Residents' Forum's 20th anniversary



By Jeannie Lowen, resident and Forum member

I was delighted to recently attend a special celebration for the Residents' Forum. The Forum marked its 20th anniversary with an event held as part of the end of year Christmas celebrations at Newlon. It was an opportunity to meet with both Newlon staff, Forum members and other residents participating in resident involvement activities.

Resident engagement groups help Newlon keep in touch with the lives of residents, focusing on how issues impact their everyday experiences.

Newlon's Director of Housing, Bill Henderson, acknowledged the valuable, positive contribution the Forum makes to the organisation. He commented:

"We do sometimes get things wrong and we need to hear about and talk about how things can get better".

Similarly, it's important to hear not just about problems but also when things are running well. Bill noted how motivating it is to hear good feedback and remarked how pleased he was when

Lloyd and Blossom, Resident Forum and recently appointed Newlon Board members, observed how hard the Board works to get things right.

The Forum has proven itself to be a valuable resource as, alongside other resident engagement initiatives, it provides the opportunity to look in detail at how things are working for everyone.

Bill Henderson went on to pay tribute to Karen Orr, Senior Resident Involvement Officer, as she was moving on to take up a position with the charity Shelter.

"During her five years at Newlon she has revived the Forum with her practical, 'get on with it' attitude, and her ability to raise difficult issues with even the most senior staff".

Finally, the longest serving Forum members, Sylvia and Wendy, wrapped the event up. They both helped establish the Forum at the very beginning and recalled how it had grown from a small local initiative into the vital resource it is today.

Checking your identity to keep your data secure

Keeping your data secure is important to us. So if you contact our Service Centre, we will ask you some basic security questions including your name, address and contact details. This will ensure that we do not accidentally disclose personal data to a third party.

In addition, certain queries require us to carry out further checks. This includes tenancy management issues, rent queries, and requests for keys and fobs. In cases such as these you will be asked questions such as your date of birth and when you last made a rent or service charge payment.





Our Mystery Shoppers help us improve our services

Mystery Shoppers are Newlon residents who we ask to measure how well we deliver our customer service through telephone calls or via email. They assess how queries are handled, based on pre-written scripts we give them. Mystery Shoppers ask staff about topics ranging from fire safety to antisocial behaviour and tenancy issues.

Our most recent mystery shop results highlighted some key challenges in responding effectively to resident enquiries. Although Mystery Shoppers commented on how helpful staff were, it was clear improvements can be made.

These results highlighted the need for staff to take greater responsibility in responding to queries and implement clearer guidelines for checking group email inboxes.

They also found significant delays between initial resident contact follow-up, specifically when Shoppers sought more technical or detailed information.

On the positive side Shoppers reported having good interactions with our staff. Telephone responses were identified as being of a particularly high standard and Mystery Shoppers commented on how professional the Service Centre Advisors were. They told us that they felt listened to and received clear, helpful answers to their queries.

Overall, we will be promoting a culture of better staff responsiveness and there will be a refresher on our service standards.

You can read about our service standards at newlon.org.uk/residents/service-standards.

How are we doing? Feedback about our cleaning



From 2nd January Smarter Services Limited, who we have been using on some of our estates for many years, became the sole cleaning company we use across all properties.

If you have any comments about the cleaning please let us know. Visit newlon.org.uk/contact-us or call **020 7613 8080**.



Tackling ASB

Our Enforcement team deals with antisocial behaviour (ASB), in close partnership with the police and local authorities. ASB includes noise nuisance, harassment and vandalism.



How to report it

If you feel threatened call the police. Call **999** in an emergency, or **101** if you are not in immediate danger. The police will not normally attend noise nuisance matters. Instead you should call your council's ASB or noise line, who will assess the complaint and arrange to visit depending on the urgency.

If you feel comfortable doing so you should consider talking to the person responsible before contacting your council as they may not realise they are causing a problem. In other cases of ASB, or if you have already reported noise nuisance to your council, call us on **020 7613 8080** or email asb@newlon.org.uk.

Caron finds success through Step Forward

After taking a break from her job as an Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Officer at a Further Education College, Caron decided she wanted to develop a new career.

The opportunity to do just that arose when she called Newlon's Service Centre to report a repair and heard a message while waiting to get through about the upcoming Jobs Fair. She got in touch with our Resident Services team and registered onto the employment programme, Step Forward.

She met with Paula from Newlon's Resident Services team, and explained that she was looking for employment in a customer-facing role. She knew that she had transferable skills but was still looking for some professional development.

Caron attended the Jobs Fair in May, met a few of the construction industry companies there and left her CV with them. Out of this came an offer of work experience as a Resident Liaison Officer (RLO) at Amber Construction.

The company work with local authorities and housing associations to do home improvements. They were impressed with her experience in communicating with people and offered her a full-time job.

As a RLO Caron liaises with customers and contractors. First she worked on kitchen and bathroom refurbishments and now in the roofing division. Her experience as an IAG officer and her personal experience as a housing association resident have been perfect for her new role. She is also finding that her skill set is developing as her role in the company expands.

Amber Construction have been impressed with her hard work and commitment, adding:

"She has thrived in the role and proven to be a great asset for our company".



In addition to her new job, Caron has also benefited from the training and development side of the Step Forward programme. She attended a five week personal development course which looked at everything from interview techniques to exercise and healthy eating advice. She found the course inspiring and it gave her the confidence to transition into her new career.

She is also studying for a Level 2 Leadership Certificate, which will directly help her to develop her career. It doesn't stop there though, as Caron is now thinking of training for a role in construction, and is looking forward to the opportunities ahead.

If you know anyone who would benefit from the Step Forward programme, then get in touch with the Resident Services team on **020 7033 4605** or email community.services@newlon.org.uk.



Events in your area



Antiques Roadshow

When? 17th May 2020

Where? Forty Hall, Forty Hill, EN2

Cost? Free

Join Fiona Bruce and the Antiques Roadshow team at Forty Hall. All are welcome to bring along objects to see if the team can reveal more about what they are and where they come from - and give a valuation. You will be able to go behind the scenes and may have the chance to have your item featured in the programme.

fortyhallestate.co.uk

Dragon Egg Hunt

When? 3rd - 18th April 2020

Where? Museum of the Order of St John, EC1M

Cost? Free

Come to the Museum of the Order of St John and search for hidden eggs with Gozon the dragon-slayer, Knight of St John. Free drop-in activity, part of the museum's free family programme. See their website for more information and other family events.

museumstjohn.org.uk/events

Easter Victoria Park Race

When? 10th April 2020

Where? Victoria Park E9

Cost? £20

Spend Good Friday morning running a 5k, 10k or Half Marathon around the wide, flat paths of Victoria Park, making for the perfect opportunity to test out a new distance or a timed personal best. There will be plenty of helpers to keep you on track and cheer you to the finish line. Book online first.

runthrough.co.uk

The Great Egg Roll

When? 12th April 2020

Where? Lauderdale House, N6

Cost? £8.50

Come to the Tea Lawn to get creative making and decorating your own Easter egg. Then roll up for the Great Egg Roll. Prizes will be awarded for the best decorated egg and the winners of the Egg Roll. Then head to the Lower Terrace for the mini Easter Egg Hunt. Everyone leaves with a chocolate treat.

lauderdalehouse.org.uk

Easter Adventure Quest

When? 10th - 13th April 2020

Where? Kenwood House, NW3

Cost? £1

Join the hunt for dragon eggs on a legendary quest this Easter holiday. Crack the clues as you and your family follow the trail through the grounds. Intrepid adventurers who track down the dragon egg will get a certificate and treats from Hotel Chocolate. There is no need to book.

english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/kenwood

Planet Play at Easter

When? 14th - 17th April 2020

Where? Chickenshed Theatre, N14

Cost? £7

Especially recommended for very young children, join the Tales team for a fun and interactive sensory session based on the stories and fables from their older children's show, Tales from the Round Table. This will be an immersive opportunity for children to get involved. Book on their website.

chickenshed.org.uk

IWA Canalway Cavalcade

When? 2nd - 3rd May 2020

Where? Little Venice, W2

Cost? Free

The IWA Cavalcade is a unique waterway boat gathering organised by volunteers, that has taken place at Little Venice since 1983. In this two-day event there will be activities for all the family with a pageant of boats, trade shows and stalls, live music, kids' activities, competitions, morris dancers, a real ale bar and more.

waterways.org.uk/events_festivals/canalway_cavalcade

Barnsbury Estate news



Barnsbury Community Centre Jays Street, Islington, N1 0FE

We run a wide range of activities in the Barnsbury Community Centre for Barnsbury Estate residents. Recently we have added some new free programmes. These include:

- Helping residents to access training and jobs.
- Community Programmes that deliver health and wellbeing activities.
- Funding that supports vulnerable residents.
- Benefits advice, rent and tenancy support from Newlon staff (by appointment).

If you are interested in taking part in any of these programmes please call **020 7033 4605** or email **community.services@newlon.org.uk**. Or you can stop by the Estate Office.

Barnsbury activity schedule

Monday	Time
Exercise classes for women	10am - 11am
Tutors United - Maths and English tuition	4pm - 6pm
FWC Kung Fu (fee applies)	6.30pm - 8.30pm
Tuesday	Time
Exercise classes for women	10am - 11am
Free coffee and craft workshops for women	11am - 12pm
Wednesday	Time
Zumbini	10am - 11am
Yoga (Fee applies)	1pm - 2:15pm
Men's exercise classes	2:30pm - 3:30pm
Thursday	Time
Messy play Activities	10am - 12pm
Exercise classes for women	5pm - 6pm
Generation Z Youth Programme	6pm - 8pm
Friday	Time
Employment and training opportunities (Newlon residents only)	9.30am - 5pm
Effective Martial Arts, for kids aged 6-13 (fee applies)	4.30pm - 5.30pm
Saturday	Time
General use	
Sunday	Time
Communalism - Philosophy (Second Sunday of each month)	1pm - 3pm

Bring out your artistic side



Newlon is launching a fully funded arts programme at Barnsbury, run by artist Nailah Daley-Allen. This will include a series of sessions where local Newlon residents can come together and explore their creativity. The sessions will take place on 20th, 21st, 22nd, 24th and 29th July, from 4-6pm.



Need a space to hold an event?

The spacious hall in the Community Centre is available for hire. Newlon residents can get 50% off the usual cost.

You do not have to live on the Barnsbury Estate to hire it. Find out more by getting in touch.

Reviewing our policies



We regularly review our policies and procedures to ensure our services are as effective as possible. Here are a few recent examples of where we have made changes:

Succession

All household members – and not just the applicant themselves – need to provide evidence that they have lived in the property for the qualifying period. If household members cannot provide this evidence, or the evidence clearly shows that they moved in after the tenant died, the application will be considered for the successor alone and may result in a smaller property being offered.

Intermediate Rent tenancies

At the end of the fixed term tenancy period for Intermediate Rent tenants, where there has not been no change of circumstances and no breach of tenancy then a new three year fixed term tenancy can be offered. Previously this was a two year tenancy.

ASB

Our ASB policy has been updated so the definitions and procedures are much clearer to staff. This should help us to ensure our ASB prevention and enforcement process is as effective as it can be.



Dispose of bulk refuse properly

Bulky rubbish, such as unwanted furniture, will not be collected as part of regular refuse collections. Bulky items cost Newlon a lot of money to remove, which is rechargeable to residents. Contact your local council to find out how to dispose of bulk refuse properly.

Going digital



Residents' portal pilot underway

We are currently piloting a new online portal which will provide residents with a secure online space to carry out a wide range of services. The portal will allow you to do things such as report communal repairs, check your payments and update contact details. If the pilot is a success then we will deliver a wider rollout. We will keep you updated on the progress.

Service Centre gets an upgrade

We are implementing a new system within our Service Centre to help improve the way we manage calls. It will help our Service Centre Advisors to more effectively deal with calls when they come in and should increase the speed at which we can handle enquiries.

Do it online

Don't forget that you can already undertake a range of services without having to call us. You can explore our online Q&As, pay your rent by text or through the allpay app, report a repair via our online system, or use our website's 'live chat'. Go to newlon.org.uk/residents/do-it-online to find out more.

Kids' Quiz!

Below are 6 words which are all to do with Easter. See if you can unscramble them.

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1) tubrelfyt | 4) loctacoeh |
| 2) babrit | 5) kichc |
| 3) skebat | 6) rtesae gesg |

Please email your answers to newsletters@newlon.org.uk, with the words Kids' Quiz in the title, along with your name, age and full address. Or post them to **Newlon Kids' Quiz, Newlon House, 4 Daneland Walk, Hale Village, N17 9FE.**

You can only enter the quiz if you are aged 11 or under.

Answers must be received by **10th April 2020**. All correct entries will go into a draw, and one lucky winner will get a £20 voucher which can be used at a range of high street stores.



Be environmentally friendly by getting your newsletters digitally

We can send our newsletters digitally to your email address. This is both faster and more environmentally friendly. If you want to receive them digitally rather than in hard copy then please get in touch at newsletters@newlon.org.uk

Write for your newsletter

Do you have an idea for an article for this newsletter? We welcome articles from residents of all ages. If we publish it we will send you £20 in vouchers of your choice! Send your article idea to kieran.hurley@newlon.org.uk, or post it to **Kieran Hurley, Newlon Housing Trust, 4 Daneland Walk, Hale Village, London, N17 9FE.**

Newlon House, 4 Daneland Walk, Hale Village, London, N17 9FE
Telephone: **020 7613 8080**

Email (general enquiries): customerservice@newlon.org.uk
Email (repairs): repairs@newlon.org.uk
www.newlon.org.uk

Newlon Housing Trust is a charitable Housing Association

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