

# Newlon News



## What's inside...

Update from Residents' Forum Chair

Our services - current situation

Getting ahead with Step Forward

## Welcome to the autumn edition of Newlon News

Inside you can find an update on services as we gradually return to normal following the lockdown period, an update from our Residents' Forum Chair and more.

Please note that our Head Office continues to remain closed to visitors in line with Covid-secure working practices. We will update you as soon as there are any changes to arrangements. We appreciate your patience.

The Residents' Review - our annual report for residents about our performance in the last year - has also been sent to you with this newsletter.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for including in this newsletter please contact us by emailing [newsletters@newlon.org.uk](mailto:newsletters@newlon.org.uk).



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# 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.

It has been a challenging year so far for Newlon, and we are undergoing some big changes.

Newlon's current Chair, Sarah Ebanja, will end her tenure this year and the process for appointing a new Chair is underway. I will join Newlon's Chief Executive and two current Board members on the selection panel for the new Chair. Then in December there will be a formal Board vote on the recommended candidate.

A number of high value resident service contracts will be retendered this year. I am pleased to report that the Resident Services team are actively seeking resident involvement in the shaping of these new contracts. It is great that Newlon is taking this approach as it means residents, including myself, have a greater say in the services we receive and pay for.

Our Chair recently made a statement on the Black Lives Matters movement to staff. Commenting on how the impact of the death of George Floyd would have hit people differently, and that it was important we express, discuss and share our feelings - and then to consider thoughtfully what can be done to eliminate racism and oppression in all guises.

Throughout the pandemic, which has hit us all hard, Newlon has continued to provide its services to its residents, largely with staff working remotely. While the impact of coronavirus has been a challenge, it has enabled teams to work in ways that prior to Covid-19 would have seemed impossible.

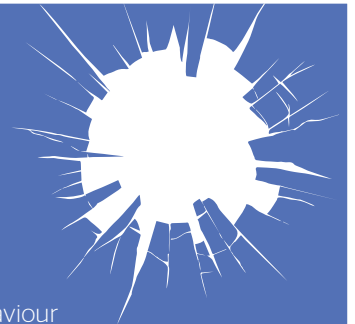
Newlon's senior management team are exploring new ways of working and innovations. This gives rise to the possibility of changing the way some services are delivered in the longer term, for the benefit of residents.

## 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.



## 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.

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](mailto:asb@newlon.org.uk).

## Visiting our offices

Our Head Office at Tottenham Hale remains closed to the public. Please do not visit as we will not be able to see you. We will update residents as soon as the building is re-opened.

We are currently trialling a partial return to office based working but the majority of our staff continue to work from home and only a small proportion can be in the office at any one time to meet Covid-secure guidelines.

In the meantime if you need to contact us call **020 7613 8080** or use one of the dedicated email addresses you can find on our website at [www.newlon.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.newlon.org.uk/contact-us).

The Barnsbury Estate office has now re-opened for a short period each week to deal with urgent enquiries from residents.

We are also re-opening our community halls with safety measures in place to minimise the number of people who can use them at any one time. If you are interested in using either of these facilities at Barnsbury or Limehouse please email [community.services@newlon.org.uk](mailto:community.services@newlon.org.uk) or call **020 7033 4605**.



## 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](mailto:resident.sales@newlon.org.uk).

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## 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.



# Get permission for home improvements

If you are a Shared Owner and want to make some improvements to your home then you should seek our permission first, to ensure you are not breaking any building regulations and to make sure you meet the requirements of your buildings insurance policy.

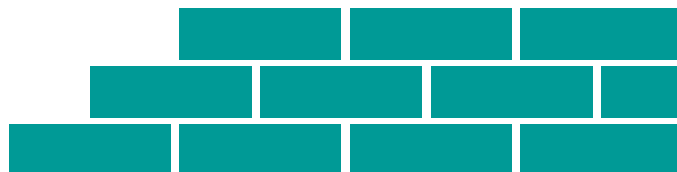
These include major or structural improvements, for example installing double glazed doors or windows, fitting a new kitchen or bathroom, adding extensions, conservatories or loft conversions.

It is important you seek our consent before you start works, as otherwise we may ask you to reinstate the property to its original condition if it does not comply with regulations.

You will also need to agree for us to come to inspect works before they commence, during the works and after completion, if we request to do so.

In addition you should also check your lease to see if it states whether you are allowed to carry out such improvements.

To discuss this please contact our Service Centre on **020 7613 8080** or email **customerservice@newlon.org.uk**



## How we handle complaints

We strive to provide the best possible service, but there are times where you feel we may have fallen short. As a result we have a formal complaints policy which we make sure we follow if someone decides to submit a complaint.

### Our complaints process

#### Stage One

When you contact us to make a complaint it will be logged as a stage one complaint and our Service Resolution Team will deal with your enquiry and give you a full response within 10 working days. Where this deadline cannot be met due to the complexity of the case you will be advised when you will get a response.

#### Stage Two

If you are unhappy with the response you receive at stage one you should contact us to appeal within 28 days. Please state why you are unhappy with the stage one response, what issues remain outstanding and what you would like Newlon to do to resolve the matter. Your complaint will then be reviewed by a Complaints Panel which will include residents.

### The Housing Ombudsman Service

If you are still not happy with our response after stage two 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 help once our complaints procedure has been followed.

### Who can complain?

- Any Newlon resident.
- Anyone who has applied to be housed by Newlon.
- Anyone who pays a service charge.
- A group of residents who wish to complain about common issues (explicit consent should be obtained by named residents who are part of the group).

### Exceptions

Some issues may not follow our normal complaints process. In these cases we may follow a different procedure instead, or you may be directed elsewhere. Such issues may include complaints subject to legal action, such as if there is an upcoming court hearing, and issues which occurred more than a year ago.

When handling complaints we will always ensure that your personal details are kept confidential.

To make a complaint please go to **[www.newlon.org.uk/residents/making-a-complaint](http://www.newlon.org.uk/residents/making-a-complaint)**.



# This new century

**By Jeannie Lowen, Newlon resident**

One day during a rush hour lockdown, I emerged onto the sparsely occupied forecourt of Liverpool Street Station. Like nearly everyone else there I was clad in a pale blue face mask. It suddenly felt unreal, I was in a cinematic moment - a scene in some futuristic dystopian movie - but not an entertaining one. Even the colours here were desaturated tonal greys and blues. I looked at a passing commuter as he hurried past and, just from nowhere, I felt a momentary wave of sadness - maybe this was how our lives would be from now on. Drained of colour and everyone distant.

The world has changed utterly but I don't think we really know it yet - I realised I still expect things to return to normal, but actually they never will.

2020 is when the 21st Century, this new century, finally made itself felt.

Nobody knows how it will play out, it is impossible to plan a future. This is not the nuclear holocaust that haunted the vision of the future from my childhood. This is our own unique unfathomable future.

I now fill my time with tiny daily routines - I'm learning French on a phone app, I do a short guided meditation via another app and a twice weekly pilates session from memory. In the autumn I'll be doing this via Zoom, as the adult education centre I attended will not open until next year. I'm joining the online class to keep our tutor employed. I'm struggling to achieve much else.

Neighbours are busily decorating and reorganising their flats. I expect it may be to better accommodate their new work-home requirements. Some are also cocooning, enveloped in self-care while the world prepares to emerge transformed and renewed.

Midweek I cycled into the city. There were people wandering around but it was a strange scene. Many places are closed, a few offices barely open and many not. I wondered what will become of these big office blocks if they are no longer required.

There is a lag where the old world hasn't yet caught up with the new reality. I am surrounded by huge city building sites. These projects are stuck in a loop of the 20th century model. Maybe these large windowed high-rises will have a future as vertical farms. Once when I lived off the Commercial Road, I had a vision of a car-less future where the big roads had become fruit orchards and there was free healthy food for everyone. This strange idea doesn't seem so outrageous now!

This reminds me that along with my childhood fretting about nuclear Armageddon, I was strangely obsessed by crop rotation. I spent ages working on a system for work rotation. How a society could be restructured so activities could be shared fairly. Part-time flexible occupations with rotating activities throughout the year.

I mention these thoughts because I expect we will need to fundamentally rethink the way society operates. And although the transition will be difficult there is hopefully an opportunity for something better to arise.



Residents at the Barnsbury Centre garden, pre-Covid.

## Centres continue to be at heart of the community

We have been working hard to maintain community wellbeing programmes despite the major impact of coronavirus.

These include online tutoring courses provided by our excellent partner, Tutors United, as well as nursery provision at our Lascar Wharf community centre where Global Kids Daycare provided care for children of key workers, even throughout the height of the lockdown.

On the Barnsbury Estate in Islington, we were forced to close the centre for the safety of community members, but we re-opened as soon as we were able to in August, having put in place measures to ensure the safety of those who attend.

Newlon has been a leader in this area, as we are one of the only housing associations to have opened its community centres.

A few of our regular hirers have returned – those who can provide activities that are safe and allow for social distancing. The nursery, Tiddley Tots, has also re-opened to support children and families.

Although we are not accepting any one-off bookings at present, we are still here for residents, ensuring that the front reception at Barnsbury and our offices are open on a limited basis in the mornings, five days a week.

We have also been supporting our vibrant community gardens in the past couple of months, both at Barnsbury and Samford House, where an active group of volunteer residents have been tilling the soil. The gardens that we create not only improve the look of the estate, but also provide fruit and vegetables for healthy eating, as well as a place to relax in a welcoming outdoor space.

Please contact us if you have any questions about the community centre or wellbeing activities, and any ideas for ways in which we can further support our residents.

You can email us at [community.services@newlon.org.uk](mailto:community.services@newlon.org.uk) or call on 020 7033 4605.



## Reviewing our policies

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

### Deposits

The procedure for deposits was updated to make clear that we will not accept deposits for rented properties from third parties.

### Pests

We have updated our pests policy to make it clearer what our responsibilities are depending on the type. For example, we will handle prevention measure for some pests, but not for bedbugs.





## Update on fire safety works

As communicated in previous newsletters Newlon is carrying out a programme of fire safety inspections in line with Government guidance following the Grenfell Tower fire. This involves intrusive testing to check the safety of external cladding, insulation and fire stopping and also internal fire stopping measures.

We have set up a special project team to oversee these works and are prioritising taller buildings above 18 metres or those with external cladding materials that could be of additional concern in line with Government advice.

We have recently appointed a Resident Liaison Officer, Anita Collopy, so that we can communicate more directly and frequently with residents where investigations are required or where remedial fire safety works are taking place.

The actions of lenders in response to Government guidance are continuing to make it difficult for some leaseholders to sell, re-mortgage or staircase their homes. This is a national issue and is not only impacting Newlon residents. We are working with partners across the affordable housing sector to lobby for changes to try and improve this situation.

If you are thinking of selling, staircasing or re-mortgaging please contact our Resident Sales team before incurring any costs by emailing [resident.sales@newlon.org.uk](mailto:resident.sales@newlon.org.uk).

Where people are unable to sell their home due to lenders' actions in relation to Government guidance, but do need move, we can support leaseholders by allowing them to sub-let subject to certain conditions. You can find information about this at [www.newlon.org.uk/fire-safety](http://www.newlon.org.uk/fire-safety).

## Update on form EWS1 for buildings under 18 metres

If you are selling your home you may be asked to provide form EWS1, a standard fire safety compliance certificate specifically developed for taller buildings over 18 metres or those with external cladding materials which could be a cause of concern.

Our fire safety consultants QFSM are working through a programme of providing form EWS1 for our buildings over 18 metres or those with certain external cladding materials. As intrusive investigation works are required before an EWS1 form can be issued quite a lengthy programme is required to complete the necessary inspections for all of our buildings that could need one.

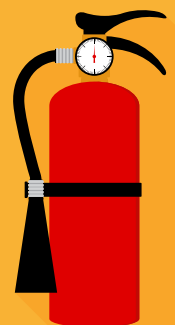
In a few instances people selling their homes have been asked to provide an EWS1 where they live in a building which is lower than 18 metres in height or has no cladding which would be a

cause of concern. In these cases we are not going to be able to provide an EWS1. We will be able to help you confirm to lenders that the building is under 18 metres and does not have cladding which requires an EWS1 and will do our best to support you through the sales process.

Given the number of buildings nationally that could require an EWS1, the limited number of accredited experts that can sign the forms, the works required to complete them and the requirement to prioritise certain types of buildings, this sort of request is not practical and could take many years to fulfil.

### Contacting us about fire safety

If you have any enquiries relating to fire safety please email [firesafety@newlon.org.uk](mailto:firesafety@newlon.org.uk). If your enquiry is more urgent call our Service Centre on **020 7613 8080**. In an emergency always dial 999.



# Take a break at Nutley Edge



If you are after a quiet countryside retreat then you should consider Nutley Edge Cottages.

Nutley Edge belongs to Outward, a charity that supports vulnerable people in north and east London. All profits they make go to providing better care and support services. So your stay will benefit 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 a number of cottages, including a 17th century Old Farmhouse, which sleeps up to eight.

In addition there are glamping tents kitted out with a double bed and two single camping mats with sleeping bags, with access to compostable toilets and individual fire pits.

There are good rates for Newlon residents.

Measures have been put in place to ensure Covid-secure guidelines are followed.

To learn more about Nutley Edge and book your stay please visit their website at [nutleyedge.org.uk](http://nutleyedge.org.uk) or call **01825 712 377**.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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**

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