

Newlon News



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Welcome to our summer newsletter

In this edition there is the regular update from our Residents' Forum. You can learn about the benefits of using Newlon's online self-service portal as road-tested by a resident. You can also find out about our new approach for handling complaints more effectively and some of the great free activities on offer for you to enjoy this summer in your local area.

Visiting our offices

In common with many other organisations Newlon has adopted hybrid working. This means that the majority of staff members are spending part of the week working from home and part of the time in the office.

Our head office remains closed to visitors, except by appointment. If an appointment has been arranged for you this means that the member of staff you need to see will be in the office on that day rather than working from home. Please do not come to our offices unless you have a pre-arranged appointment as we will not be able to guarantee that someone will be available to see you.

If you are due to attend an in-person event at our office, please reschedule if you develop any cold, flu or COVID symptoms.

We can also arrange to carry out appointments through video conferencing such as Zoom. Separate arrangements are in place for our residents on the Barnsbury Estate and at the Royal Free Hospital.



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

Residents' Forum

update from the Chair Lloyd Gale-Ward

May's Residents' Forum was a hybrid affair with residents and Newlon staff taking part, both online and in the Boardroom at Newlon Head Office in Tottenham Hale.

I was unable to attend this meeting, so Newlon's Senior Resident Involvement Officer, Emma Preston-Dunlop, kindly took the helm.

First up on the agenda was Forum Governance with a view to proposing improvements and enhancements. Discussions were held around the continuation of regularly reported items. While it is useful to hear from the Newlon lead on specific items, some residents felt that they did on occasion make meetings feel less forum-like, and that in turn made the residents' roles become more passive. It was suggested that a more 'Question and Answer' style approach be adopted, with contractors being invited to attend the Forum and answer residents' questions first hand. The option of having hybrid meetings was praised for working well and being inclusive.

Next up we discussed Service Standards, where we heard from a resident about their experience of Newlon communications. Newlon's newsletters were commended for being clear and concise. However, they felt that improvements could be made regarding how repairs were handled between the various teams involved. In their case ineffective communication led

to wrong details being recorded and passed on, resulting in the resident needing to chase for updates and ultimately in a delayed repair.

Discussion was had on this and it was very useful for Directors Sarah Shaw and Symon Sentain to hear resident feedback first-hand, allowing them to take it directly to their respective teams and to make improvements.

Head of Resident Engagement, Graham Watts reported the latest mystery shopping results. These involved 18 mystery shoppers across two months and 49 separate inquiries. 84% met the Newlon Gold standard, 2% Silver and the remaining 14% were Bronze. Positives were taken that there were zero 'no replies' reported.

Points were raised about how Newlon teams and contractors should work more closely, as perhaps more verbal communication would reduce misunderstandings and misinterpretations. It was felt contractors should be held more accountable, and this is something the Director of Property Services, Symon Sentain, is actively seeking to improve. One of the identified improvements was responsibility being taken when issues or repairs are shared across teams.

If you have any questions about aspects of resident involvement please email getinvolved@newlon.org.uk.

Mystery Shopping

Like many similar organisations Newlon uses Mystery Shopping exercises as one way of checking the quality of services that residents receive. We carry out three Mystery Shopping exercises every year where resident Mystery Shoppers check our staff's responsiveness to emails and telephone enquiries. They test how we are performing against some of the key principles outlined in Newlon's service standards, particularly staff responsiveness and performance against '2-ten' (responding to enquiries within two working days and replying in full within ten).

This is a positive outcome as it represents an increase from our winter results (77% Gold level). Mystery Shoppers also commented on how positive their interactions were with staff and that responses were professional, well explained and informative. We need to continually work on improving our response times and be looking for further ways to improve our '2-ten' responsiveness. Resident Mystery Shoppers were largely content with how their queries were handled and the information they received. However, we need to aim to ensure that all email responses are concise and easy to understand.

Reports are circulated to the Residents' Forum, staff and the Newlon Board, and they provide recommendations for improvements at Newlon.

Being a Mystery Shopper involves a dedicated group of residents, trained and supported to measure how well we deliver our customer service through scripted telephone calls or emails. We provide Mystery Shoppers with a £50 gift voucher for their time and skill. Completing an exercise takes up to one hour.

If you're interested in becoming a Mystery Shopper, please contact us on **020 7613 8084** or email getinvolved@newlon.org.uk.

Our recent spring 2022 exercise results are as follows:



84%

84% of enquiries (36) were responded to effectively and met the full Gold level standard.



2%

One enquiry (2%) met the Silver level.



14%

Six enquiries (14%) did not meet the 2-ten standard and are classified as Bronze level.

Testing the My Newlon Portal

by Jeannie Lowen, Newlon resident

I usually reach for my phone to report repairs. However, the lines can be really busy and you can be waiting for some time to get through. My other method of contact is via email, although my inbox is so bombarded with incoming messages, it can be difficult to keep track. Therefore, I decided to try out the updated portal facility to report a repair.

The portal is accessed under the My Newlon button on the website. You do need to sign in which at first can be off-putting if, like me, you always forget the login details. Don't let this put you off! The portal has been totally updated and is user friendly, it's definitely worthwhile testing it out. You can now easily reset your password and save your login details on the browser for quick future access.

I can see a lot of work has gone into this service and once set up it offers a quick route to check rent statements, pay rent, report routine repairs and book appointments directly with Newlon contractors. You can report anti-social behaviour and also access the newsletters and annual reports.

I recently used it to report a repair and a communal issue. I found My Newlon works well on mobiles and desktops.

The options are clear, it guides you through the sections to fill in. This is to direct the repair to the correct engineers. The breakdown of the report helps to allocate the job to the relevant contractor and I found it worked smoothly and quickly.

I reported a problem with my sash window, which is not listed as a separate category but I reported it under wooden window frames. The great thing is I was able to immediately choose a time slot that suited me. And, impressively, I had a text confirmation of the appointment before I'd even logged out.

I also reported a communal issue. You find this under My Local Area. During the recent high winds of Storm Eunice, we had a garden wall blow down. The wall had been rebuilt but some of the ensuing garden waste had not been collected. I reported this as bulk rubbish and surprisingly some of it was collected the next day. This is a big job and the clear up is still in progress.

Whilst jobs are open you can see how they are progressing. You can review past jobs under the completed option.

I asked my neighbours if they had used the portal. A couple were resistant due to past login issues. However, two who had used it think the new system is brilliant. After my initial resistance to use this route, I now have to agree that it really is *"...the quickest way to report routine repairs..."*

These routine issues reported via the portal clear up the phone lines, both for Newlon staff, and residents with pressing, unique issues. It takes a little getting used to but once you have seen how it works, I expect most people will find it the most efficient method to arrange repairs.

my**newlon**

Ten things you can do in your My Newlon online self-service portal at any time of the day (or night).

1. Pay rent.
2. Check rent statements.
3. Find out about estate inspections (if you live on an estate or in a larger block).
4. Report anti-social behaviour issues.
5. Report routine repairs.
6. Book appointments direct with Newlon contractors.
7. Choose a time slot to suit you for repairs.
8. Check how jobs are progressing.
9. Access newsletters and annual reports.
10. Update your details.

The portal provides a more efficient way to contact Newlon and residents are encouraged to use it for all the reasons listed above.

It has been designed to be easy to use, with a straight forward sign in process and clear guidance when filling in the sections. You can access My Newlon via the homepage of our website at www.newlon.org.uk or by going to my.newlon.org.uk.

You will need your seven digit agreement reference or tenancy number to sign up. You will find your agreement reference or tenancy number on any rent statements or correspondence from Newlon.

If you are the lead tenant and you are unable to locate any Newlon documents that contain your seven digit agreement reference or tenancy number, please contact the Service Centre on **020 7613 8080** and one of the team will assist in recovering it for you.





Wellbeing programmes at our Community Spaces

Newlon's community centres offer a range of wellbeing programmes for individuals and families.

The following programmes take place at the Barnsbury Community Centre N1 0FE.

- Family art sessions – this programme aims to help build creative skills and also helps to develop life skills such as communication, confidence and awareness. There are limited spaces so please register by calling or texting **07487 708 115** or by emailing **info@niartfr3edom.com**. The sessions run twice a year for six sessions at a time in May-June and Sept-Oct.
- Exercise classes (women only) – focusing on physical fitness, health and wellbeing, led by a professional instructor. Coffee and craft sessions are also available. Please email **vibert@gmx.com** or just turn up and register.

Day	Exercise Class	Coffee & craft sessions
Monday	10 a.m. – 11 a.m.	
Tuesday	10 a.m. – 11 a.m.	11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Thursday	5 p.m. – 6 p.m.	

- Islington Bangladesh Association (women only) - is offering free exercise and fitness classes from Yoga to Aerobics. If you like to take part please contact **asad@ibal.org.uk** or call **0207 713 8971**.

Day	Time
Wednesday	10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Thursday	9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

- Islington Bangladesh Association (men only) - is offering a free exercise and fitness class. If you like to take part please contact **asad@ibal.org.uk** or call **0207 833 2608** or **0207 833 0591**.

Day	Time
Monday	11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

- Philosophy discussions - Dr. Bill Thompson is a philosopher and architect who has lived on the Barnsbury Estate for over 30 years. Philosophy meetings take place between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. on the second Friday of each month. Please drop into Barnsbury Community Centre to register your interest or call **020 7833 9493**.
- Tutors United – this programme delivers confidence boosting, attainment raising online tutorials to primary school pupils in school years 4, 5 and 6 (age 8 -11 years old). Tutorials take place on Mondays during term time from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. Spaces on the programme are limited so sign up now to secure your child's place. If your child doesn't receive a space straight away, they will be put onto our waiting list and you will be contacted when a space becomes available. To sign up, please fill in our online registration form at: **tutorsunited.org/register-your-child** or email **lizzy.gribble@tutorsunited.org** if you have any questions.
- Gardening - we have continued to maintain gardening spaces at the Barnsbury Estate with help from our local volunteers managed by Islington Bangladesh Association. For more information email **asad@ibal.org.uk** or call **020 7713 8971**.
- Youth Club (for all Islington residents) Creative youth club services for 11-19 years old, run by GenZ, is held at the centre on Thursday evenings between 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Please email **GenerationZ@email.com** to find out more or to sign up.

All these services are free of charge to Newlon Residents. If you want more information about our community centre well-being programmes contact the Resident Services team at **community.services@newlon.org.uk**.



Taking action on damp and mould

contact us if you are experiencing persistent problems

As reported in the spring newsletter we have set up a new team to take action to deal with persistent problems with damp, mould and leaks.

If you are experiencing significant or long-term problems with these issues in your home and we have not recently contacted you, or if you have had repairs or works carried out but are still experiencing issues, please contact us by email at DMTF@Newlon.org.uk.

This is the email inbox for our team working specifically on issues resulting from damp, mould and leaks. One of our team will then contact you to review the problems you are experiencing and assess the best course of action.

Using the Think Tank to review Newlon's Service Standards

As an organisation, we have service standards to deliver, how we deliver them affects our relationship with you as residents.

We are using some Think Tank members as a focus group which is a great way to listen to what residents have to say. We are currently assessing the way in which services are delivered, and how we want to improve them so we are asking various questions, such as:

- Are we respectful and empathetic as a landlord?
- What would you change?
- Is our written communication presented in a friendly way, easy to read, avoiding jargon and a paternalistic tone?

Working together with residents on core aspects of our service standards, and making sure that all aspects of Newlon Gold and the '2-ten' approach (responding to enquiries within two working days and replying in full within ten) are understood means they remain relevant to both staff and residents, and have a measurable impact.

The longer term

When reviewing our service standards, we want to ensure that they meet resident expectations, and that we hear residents' opinions on key areas. They need to reflect how residents feel and what they want, and that can only happen via two way communication. We want to ensure that our main contractors and subcontractors engage with and incorporate Newlon Gold and the '2-ten' into their working practices on a daily basis.

The residents' voice is central, and vital, to our service standards. Thank you to the Think Tank members undertaking this important work with us.

RESIDENT
think
tank

Managing complaints in a better way

In 2021 we made some major changes to the way we handle complaints, designed to improve the handling time, reduce escalations and help us meet the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

Newlon's complaints performance has improved

Over the last year we have significantly improved the time taken to respond to complaints and have seen escalations reduce. Since August 2021, we are pleased to report that 98% of stage 1 complaints and all stage 2 complaints have been responded to on time.

We still receive a high number of stage one complaints, but we have become better at resolving these and are finding that the average number of cases escalating to stage two has almost halved in the last year. This shows that we are doing better at putting things right at an earlier stage.

Improvements have been shown in the Ombudsman findings

If residents are still not happy with how we have handled their complaint at stage 2 level, they have the right to go to the Housing Ombudsman for further support.

The Ombudsman publish their findings and we are pleased to report that from 20/21 to 21/22 we have reduced the proportion of cases with the most serious ruling of 'maladministration' and reduced the level of 'service failure' cases, whilst increasing the proportion of 'reasonable redress' (this is where we have addressed and resolved the complaint satisfactorily in the Ombudsman's opinion).

You can find out more about our approach to complaints and how we comply with and self-assess against the Housing Ombudsman's code online at www.newlon.org.uk/residents/making-a-complaint.



Fire safety in the home – chargers and batteries

Did you know that the London Fire Brigade attend on average 24 fires each week that have been started by chargers, batteries and cables?

Fire risks of batteries and chargers explained

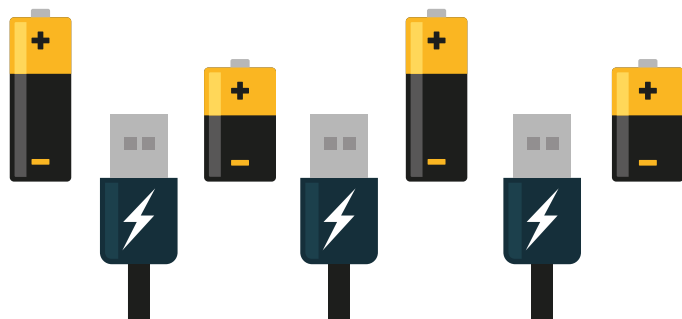
How safe is your bedside table? Do you pop your phone on to charge before bed? Maybe you love to watch TV on your laptop or tablet in bed – plugged in to keep the screen bright, of course? Let's take a closer look at how many of us use everyday electrical items and the fire risks we can leave ourselves open to without realising it. But first let's start at the beginning.

What is a Lithium-ion battery?

Lithium-ion batteries or li-ion batteries (sometimes called LIBs) are the lightweight, rechargeable batteries that power our phones, laptops and cameras. They're found in many electrical devices from mobility scooters to e-cigarettes, and are used safely by millions of people every day. However, there are some things you need to know when it comes to fire safety, chargers and batteries.

Are Lithium-ion batteries dangerous?

When used properly they are not dangerous, but batteries can present a fire risk when over-charged, short-circuited, submerged in water or if they are damaged. It's really important to charge them safely too.



Firefighter safety tips for charging your devices

- Always use the charger that came with your phone, tablet, e-cigarette or mobile device.
- If you need to buy a replacement, always choose a branded, genuine product from a supplier you can trust. There are lots of fakes out there, and it can be difficult to spot the difference.
- Avoid storing, using or charging batteries at very high or low temperatures.
- Protect batteries against being damaged – that's crushed, punctured or immersed in water.
- Don't leave items continuously on charge after the charge cycle is complete – it's best not to leave your phone plugged in overnight for example.
- Never cover chargers or charging devices – that includes using your laptop power lead in bed.
- When you travel, avoid keeping all your items containing lithium-ion batteries together, especially on a plane. Check with your flight carrier for additional information or advice.
- Don't overload your sockets – learn more about how much is too much by visiting www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/electrical-items/cables-fuses-and-leads/

Did you know?

Counterfeit electrical chargers can be deadly – many fail to meet UK safety regulations leading to fires and injury. What may seem like a bargain at the market isn't worth the risk when you consider that it could cost a family member's life.

Check your home is safe by using the London Fire Brigade's simple Home Fire Safety Checker

Try the London Fire Brigade's Home Fire Safety Checker

It only takes a few minutes to check your home and get tailored advice for your family.

www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/home-fire-safety-checker-hfsc

Ground rents

Ground rent is a charge that a leaseholder may be required to pay annually under the terms of their lease to their landlord or freeholder. The government has recently announced that they will abolish ground rent. On the 30th June they introduced a new law called the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022. It means that if any ground rent is demanded as part of a new residential long lease, it cannot be charged at more than the cost of one peppercorn (nil) per year. However, the new legislation does not apply to existing leases therefore it will not have retrospective effect on any current lease with ground rent provisions.

If your lease states you have to pay ground rent this will usually be after you have carried out a final staircasing or as required in your lease and you may be able to reduce the ground rent to peppercorn by extending the lease. It is also important for you to consider the costs involved before deciding to extend your lease. To find out more about extending your lease, please email resident.sales@newlon.org.uk.





Secret History of our streets

We provide more than 8,200 homes, ranging from new build developments to 18th century street properties. Many have fascinating histories. Here we continue our regular feature exploring some of these stories.

A slightly different take this time as we take a trip along the River Lea, which passes through the boroughs of Waltham Forest, Haringey, Hackney and Tower Hamlets. Newlon has many homes near to the course of the Lea and some of our residents even live by the river itself.

Geography

The River Lea is often referred to as London's second river and rivals only old father Thames in terms of its length and the way it meanders through several counties and many of the boroughs of North and East London. The source of the river is at Leagrave Marsh near Luton in Bedfordshire and it then flows through the quiet landscapes of Hertfordshire, Essex and the former county of Middlesex before reaching the urban sprawl of London and its final outfall into the River Thames at Limehouse.

History

The River Lea was one of the earliest river navigations and was thriving long before the age of the canals. The evidence of humans using its waters go back into prehistory with the remains of a Bronze Age canoe found near Walthamstow marshes.

In medieval times wheat was transported by barge to watermills on the river. Barley and malt were also taken down the Lea to London's breweries. London Manure (human waste) and building materials such as timber and bricks were also transported by barge.

The marshes and fields alongside the River Lea provided rich pastureland and agriculture. They were used to grow hay which was in great demand to feed the many horses in London. The river could then be used to transport the crop to London.

Lea, Lee or Ley?

The original spelling was Ley but since 1570 all acts of parliament say Lee. As a result, most official names have been spelt Lee, e.g. Lee Conservancy Board (1868), Lee Valley Regional Park (1967).

The first occurrence of Lea was probably on a map dated 1576, and most maps since have continued to call the river the Lea, but refer to the canalised sections as the Lee Navigation. North of Hertford, the river is therefore nearly always known as the Lea. South of Hertford, although the Lee Navigation and River Lea are often two separate channels running side by side, they often join up for a distance, and most maps now say 'River Lea or Lee' to cover both possibilities.

Gunpowder

The first record of gunpowder manufacture at the Royal Gunpowder Mills on the Lea Valley site was in 1665. It was a perfect location to harness the natural power of water to grind and process the explosive ingredients using 13 huge water-propelled millstones. Workers grew ten-fold during the First World War to a total of 6,000. Half of these were women, most of whom had previously been housewives or had domestic jobs but were mobilised by the war effort. During the Second World War the mills worked on RDX the vital component of the 'bouncing bomb' of the Dam Buster raids, a morale boosting turning point in the war. The River Lea also provided excellent transport links for the gunpowder.

London 2012 Olympic Legacy

The River Lea runs directly through the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, forking into the waterways that once served the Victorian industries of Stratford and Hackney. By the 1990s these waterways were heavily silted and largely unnavigable. It wasn't until the decision was made in 2005 to award London the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games that the area's fortunes began to turn around. Between 2005 and 2012, more than £50m of investment was made by various Government agencies to transform the waterways of the Lower Lee Valley.

FREE summer activities for you to enjoy



10 years on Olympic and Paralympic exhibition

When? Open every day until September 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Where? Lee Valley VeloPark, E20.

Cost? Free

Visit this exhibition and find out about the sporting, economic and wellbeing opportunities generated by the Games, the journey of the Paralympics movement and the remarkable changes to Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Take a selfie with the London 2012 mascot Wenlock at the exhibition, and relive Team GB and Paralympic GB's success at the Olympic and Paralympics. Medals, the Olympic and Paralympic torches and part of the Olympic cauldron are also featured at the exhibition.
www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/whats-on/events/2022/04/10-years-on-olympic-and-paralympic-exhibition

Howzat! New cricket pitches installed in Enfield

When? Everyday

Where? Pymmes Park N18, Jubilee Park N9, Ponders End Recreation Ground EN3 and Church Street Recreation Ground N9

Cost? Free

If you love nothing more than a game of cricket with family and friends, head to the east of Enfield, where four cricket pitches have been installed to encourage more people from a range of backgrounds to take up the sport. The artificial grass pitches have been installed at Pymmes Park, Jubilee Park, Ponders End and Church Street Recreation Grounds following £25,000 in funding from the London Cricket Trust, Middlesex County Cricket Club and the England and Wales Cricket Board.

www.activeenfield.uk

Holiday fun at Hackney Museum

When? Tuesdays to Saturdays, from Friday 22nd July until 31st August.

Times? Tues & Wed: 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Thurs: 9:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Fri: 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Sat: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Where? Hackney Museum, E8

Learn about life in Hackney with Hackney Museum's fun hands on activities. You can live like Anglo-Saxons and load the Saxon boat or try some fishing, learn about Victorian toys and try on historical costumes, find out how people travelled in and around Hackney by being a bus driver on a number 38 bus. For families and people with children.

hackney-museum.hackney.gov.uk/

Summer lights

When? Until Saturday 20th August

Where? Canary Wharf, London, E14.

Cost? Free

Celebrate the beauty of natural light and the long summer days by exploring the outdoor areas throughout Canary Wharf. They have been transformed into sparkling, colourful and inviting spaces with 11 new installations, as well as 6 permanent pieces. These stunning installations will come to life at sunrise as the daylight shines through and refracts, creating beautiful patterns, reflections, and vibrant colours.

canarywharf.com/whats-on/summer-lights-jun-aug-2022/

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 newsletters@newlon.org.uk.

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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