



Making a
difference
everyday

Residents' review
2021/2022



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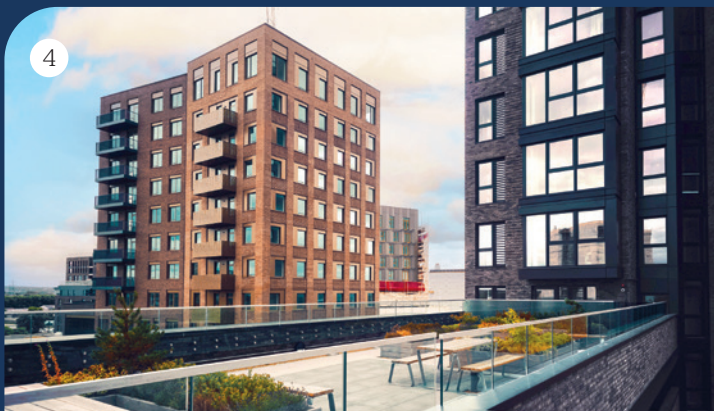
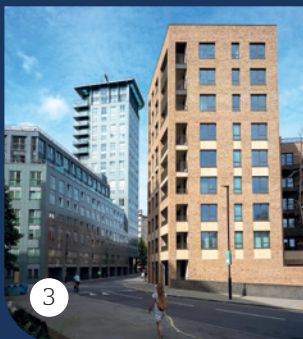
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Mike Hinch
Group Chief
Executive

A message from our Chief Executive

Welcome to our annual report to our residents for 2021-2022.

This reports sets out our overall performance for the last year.

It reflects the areas residents have told us are important, demonstrates early adoption of new satisfaction measures from the Regulator of Social Housing and meets the expectations of the Social Housing Regulation Bill and the Housing Ombudsman.

You can find a scorecard detailing our overall performance by service area at the end of this report.

The last year was very challenging for providers of social housing and society as a whole and we realise that many of our residents have faced a difficult time. We continue to work hard to support residents experiencing hardship, maintain tenancies and improve services.

In many areas Newlon has performed well. This includes continuing to provide all of our key services during the year. Unlike many similar organisations we did not need to reduce the services we provide or move to an emergencies only repairs service at any stage.

We have also done well in meeting our mission of providing new affordable homes in north and east London. We completed 262 new affordable homes last year and continue to develop homes to meet local housing needs at a higher rate than most housing associations.

In this report you can also read about how providing housing, supporting people into employment and the work we do to support the most vulnerable members of our communities make a positive difference to our residents' lives on a daily basis.

We have faced challenges throughout the year from the pandemic and issues that have impacted our suppliers and contractors such as staff and supply chain shortages, as well as increasing costs and inflation.

Residents' satisfaction which initially rose at the start of the pandemic has declined during the year. Although this is common across the social housing sector and for many public services we are determined to fix this. Regaining your trust and providing improved services you can rely on is our top priority.

To start this we have introduced Trust Newlon.

Trust Newlon is a programme that focuses on improving in the four key areas residents have told us are most important:

- Delivering reliable repairs.
- Being easy to deal with.
- Improving our places.
- Helping to maintain stable and lasting tenancies.

We are introducing new ways of working to support Trust Newlon such as our complex repairs unit.

This report reflects the Trust Newlon priorities that residents have told us are important for each of these areas and what we are doing to address these issues.

Safety in your home

We are committed to ensuring that our residents can live safely in their homes. To achieve this we carry out a range of regular safety checks as well as an ongoing programme of inspections and where needed remedial works to meet building safety requirements introduced since the Grenfell fire.



Regular safety check performance

We carry out a regular programme of inspections making sure that gas, water, electricity and lifts are compliant with the latest safety requirements.

In addition to these checks, we have a programme of fire risk assessments and asbestos safety management.

We achieved good results with compliance for safety checks being carried out during 2021-2022:



Gas safety
99.8%



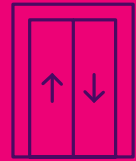
Electrical safety
97.5%



Fire safety
100%



Water safety
100%



Lift safety
100%

Allowing access

We have fallen slightly below the 100% target for gas and electrical safety checks where we have been unable to access people's homes to carry out the safety tests.

These checks are important for your safety and the safety of other residents in neighbouring homes, please ensure you allow access for these checks to be carried out.

New building safety legislation

The Fire Safety Act (2021) and Building Safety Act (2022) introduce a wide range of new requirements for building owners. These include requirements to carry out additional safety tests in communal areas and to people's front doors and the introduction of a new building safety regulator. We are taking a number of steps to prepare for these requirements.

These include:



Appointing a new building safety team with a responsible person in place to oversee building safety compliance for taller buildings.



Digital mapping of our blocks above 11 metres in height.



Working on an engagement approach with residents for discussing safety decisions.

We will be communicating with residents on a regular basis about these changes during the year ahead.





Delivering reliable repairs

Providing a reliable repairs service is a key part of our day to day work. We want residents to be able to report repairs easily and to trust that we will provide a prompt and reliable service.

Our performance in this area for the last year presents a mixed picture:



95.4%

of responsive repairs were completed right the first time, which is an improvement on the previous year.



However, overall satisfaction with repairs dropped to

49.2%

This is a significant cause for concern. Satisfaction with repairs is a major driver for residents' overall satisfaction. It is really important that we understand the gap between believing we are doing well with getting most repairs right first time and the low levels of satisfaction.



Surveying with residents shows:

- That you think repairs are sometimes poor quality, with some repairs not completed and not enough checking the workmanship.

As part of **Trust Newlon** we are working to improve diagnostic skills in the service centre and reviewing the way we inspect and sign off the quality of repairs.

- **You said** that you report problems with leaks and damp many times, but we take too long to repair them and even when they are fixed, they come back.

In response to this as a key part of **Trust Newlon** we have established a 'complex repairs unit'. Through the complex repairs unit we are improving the management of multi-trade repairs as well as using data to identify and plan potential work before it becomes an issue. Residents can now report issues that are unresolved after more than one visit directly to the team by emailing dmtf@newlon.org.uk.

Please only email this address for reporting persistent issues where we have previously attempted a fix but the problem has not been resolved. Please report all first time repairs to repairs@newlon.org.uk, call us on **020 7613 8080** or use the My Newlon portal - <https://my.newlon.org.uk>.

We used this approach to revisit homes where complex issues with leaks, damp or mould had been reported so that we could carry out surveys and works, even though we initially thought any problems had been resolved. In around 50% of cases we carried out further works to fix persistent problems.

- **You said** that communal areas can appear uncared for with repairs needed but no checks to see if the work has been carried out or if it has been completed properly.

Through **Trust Newlon** we will improve the condition of communal areas by linking estate inspections with planned works, improving the response to communal repairs and monitoring the quality of work completed through increased inspections.

1. Onsite at Patchworks
2. Coffee and craft session at Barnsbury
3. Millstream Tower from Tottenham Hale station

Being easy to deal with

- **You said** we can be hard to contact and too often you have to chase us up.

As part of **Trust Newlon**, we are reviewing our service standards with residents and promoting the My Newlon portal as a way of residents contacting us. My Newlon is a quick and easy way to review information such as rent and service charge statements, report repairs and make payments.

More than 1,900 Newlon households are now registered for My Newlon.

We will focus on warmth and empathy when talking to you and will build on recent improvements in complaints handling to help resolve issues more quickly.

- **You said** that sometimes you report the same thing repeatedly.

We will make better use of data and resources to identify repeat repairs to reduce the need for residents to chase us up.

Effective handling of complaints

Another aspect of being easy to deal with is being able to sort out complaints as quickly as possible so residents do not need to complain for us to get things done.



Just under 99% of all stage 1 complaints were responded to within the agreed timescale during the last year.



Overall satisfaction with complaint handling improved slightly to just under 90%.



The total number of complaints received during the year increased very slightly from 682 to 694. As the number of homes increased this shows that for the first time in a number of years the rate of complaints has stabilised.



Another positive indicator is that the number of complaints progressing from stage 1 to stage 2 reduced by nearly 50% from 162 to 93, showing that we are starting to do better at resolving complaints earlier.

Newlon has a two stage complaints process which is fully compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's code and we self-assess against the code annually.

Information on how to complain if you are unhappy with a service and about the Ombudsman's code can be found at www.newlon.org.uk/residents/making-a-complaint.

Listening to you

We provide a wide range of opportunities for residents to let us know their views and get involved in the way we are run.

This includes our Residents' Forum, support for local residents' groups and associations, opportunities to take part in formal training with tenants' engagement organisations like Tpas and our Think Tank. The Think Tank provides a quick and easy way for residents to get involved with us. We also currently have two residents on the board and a further two residents co-opted onto our Resident Services committee which is part of the Board structure. Information on how you can get involved and have your say can be found at www.newlon.org.uk/residents/getting-involved.

Residents' satisfaction that Newlon listens to their views and takes notice of them fell to 48.1% last year from 55% the year before.

This is disappointing and we will be working hard to improve in this area. How we engage with our residents is increasingly important and we will be developing approaches as part of **Trust Newlon** to ensure we listen effectively and act on residents' views.



Improving our places

We are committed to providing people with secure, well-maintained homes, creating sustainable communities and providing opportunities for community engagement wherever possible. Our performance in managing anti-social behaviour (ASB) and maintaining communal areas are a key part of this.

ASB - our performance

62.5% of residents were satisfied with our handling of ASB in the last year. This is a significant improvement on the previous year and we are committed to improving this further.

Some specific areas of concern remain – specifically around building security.

You said:

- 1 in 5 residents do not feel safe and secure in their home.
- Newlon does not take building security seriously.
- “Walking past a broken security door makes me think Newlon does not care.”
- We want our post and packages to be safe.

We will:

- Review priorities in relation to security repairs especially in ASB hot spots.
- Deliver effective escalation of specialist security repairs.
- Continue to develop our approach to tackling ASB.
- Work with residents to identify secure delivery arrangements for post.

Managing communal areas

Management of communal areas is another service area which shows a mixed picture:

99.6% of communal areas achieved a fair or good rating in the last year.

We are working to move more from fair to good as part of our ongoing approach to improving the management of communal areas.

This is an improvement on the year before and is based on inspections by estate inspectors and resident inspectors.

However, surveying of residents shows a significant level of concern with the management of communal areas.

You said:

- Communal repairs take a long time or are not completed and are poorly communicated about.
- Repairs often reoccur without the root cause being identified.
- Newlon communicates with leaseholders but not tenants on planned works.

We will:

- Improve response to communal repairs raised through inspections.
- Improve conditions by linking estate inspections with planned works.
- Introduce more effective monitoring and quality checks.
- Improve communications to ensure that residents are informed and engaged about cyclical works – the routine maintenance tasks that we carry out on a regular basis such as painting and decorating the outside of your home.



1. Modern living at Dominion Apartments
2. Enjoying an Easter activity break at Nutley Edge
3. Central London street scene at Triton Square

Investing in your homes

We are committed to increasing investment in our existing homes, which has been restricted in the past few years due to the high level of spend required for fire safety works and interim safety measures.

This includes a major programme of investment in new roofs and completing works in 100 additional communal areas this year in addition to our existing programme.

We also have a £2m annual programme in place for kitchen and bathroom replacements.



Stable and lasting tenancies

We believe that it is really important that people can maintain their tenancies and live in their homes for as long as they want to or need to.

To address this we provide a range of services to support residents facing hardship and to help residents find employment.

We also review specific areas of concern that might stop people from maintaining their tenancies and will address these as part of our Trust Newlon approach.

You said:

- ASB is a major reason for residents feeling unsafe in their homes.

We will:

- Establish measures for hate crimes.
- Improve our responsiveness for security related repairs in ASB hot spots.
- Establish how we can better support vulnerable residents who are victims or involved in ASB.

You said:

- There are issues with the quality of workmanship when moving in.

We will:

- Introduce calls to check there are no issues in the first two weeks of a tenancy.
- Review viewing arrangements, property induction and property information provided at lettings.

You said:

- Increasing service charge costs are a concern and services often don't deliver value for money because nobody checks they are done.

We will:

- Improve liaison with residents on service charges and improve transparency of charges.

How we use money

The White Paper for social housing recommends that social housing providers report on two specific areas about how they use money – executive remuneration and management costs. Management costs reflect how effective we are at running services for a reasonable level of cost and whether we deliver overall value for money.

Executive remuneration

In 2021/2022 our Chief Executive earned £167,121.

This is difficult to compare directly to other organisations, although the social housing sector magazine Inside Housing publishes an annual survey on Chief Executive's salaries. This provides some grounds for comparison. In terms of overall salary, pay per home managed and Newlon's turnover our Chief Executive's pay is generally slightly lower than comparable organisations, including many organisations outside London where wages are usually lower.

Overall Executive remuneration was £773,154. This includes the salary of the Chief Executive, all Newlon Directors and the Chief Executive of Outward/Group Director of Supported Housing and Care.

Newlon has a salary policy of benchmarking all salaries at the median point for the sector and reviews are carried out regularly on this basis. This is designed to ensure staff are fairly remunerated and that we can attract high quality people to work for us while not overpaying.

Management costs

Our management costs were £1,020 per unit (home) slightly above target but below the median for comparable organisations. This reflects an increase in the cost of some services and insurance premiums over the year. Overall it shows that we provide good value for money to our residents relative to comparable organisations.

1. Dominion Apartments
2. Enjoying an Easter activity break at Nutley Edge
3. Millstream Tower

Making a difference everyday

Jacky's journey

Mum of two, Jacky is one of the many satisfied beneficiaries of Newlon's Step Forward programme, which supports residents to find employment.

Jacky had been working for a few years as a 'Travel Trainer', helping young people with a variety of needs, to travel independently. However, when the pandemic struck she was made redundant.

Around this time, she received one of the regular emails promoting help to find employment through Step Forward. At first Jacky didn't think that this would be suitable for her as she thought the programme wouldn't be able to help her find a job in travel training, but she thought she would give it a go and got in touch.

To her surprise Paula, from Newlon's Resident Services team, who runs the programme, assured her that she would be able to find suitable vacancies as well as providing CV and interview advice and support. At the same time Paula referred Jacky to some partner agencies, including Dress for Success, who provided her with free interview clothes.

One of the vacancies Paula found was for a local authority 'Travel Buddy', which involves travel training for children and young people with a wide variety of needs, accompanying them to and from school. Jacky applied for the job and was shortlisted. The interview was carried out via video and she was offered the job the next day.

Jacky has now started work as a Travel Buddy and finds the job very rewarding. She says it can be challenging sometimes but she is very passionate about helping people in need.



First steps to home ownership

The Government has been looking at options to support social housing tenants to own their homes for a number of years.

Although some pilot schemes have taken place as yet no decisions have been made on whether a nationwide scheme will be introduced or how it would be funded.

Newlon will update residents as and when there are any further developments in this area.

In the meantime we are major providers of Shared Ownership in north and east London. Shared Ownership can be an affordable way for many social housing tenants to take a first step on the property ladder. You can find out more about affordability and the properties we have on offer by visiting www.newlonliving.co.uk.



Making a difference everyday

A new Newlon resident tells us how becoming a Shared Owner at Millstream Tower has given her a sense of pride and achievement

One of Millstream Tower's new residents is Keshia, who works as an information governance manager for an NHS trust and has lived in North London all her life.

"I grew up in Islington and lived with my parents in social housing, eventually moving out to rent privately in Archway. After a few years I decided that I wanted to explore other housing options and remembered that a friend had previously bought a Newlon Shared Ownership property.

Being close to my parents in Islington and to my friends in Walthamstow, Millstream Tower is the perfect place to call home. Having the major transport interchange of Tottenham Hale on the doorstep is a real bonus and with all the regeneration going on in the immediate vicinity, I'm actually really excited to see how the 'Heart of Hale' develops over time. The retail park close by makes shopping very easy, but what really sets Millstream Tower apart is its location near to fantastic green spaces. It's so important to me that I'm close to the natural environment and with Tottenham Marshes and Walthamstow Wetlands just a short walk away, I know that I can enjoy being outside in nature whenever I feel the need to be."

Keshia works from home and so it was essential that her apartment could accommodate this.

"Buying a new build property meant that my home was ready for me to move straight into. The high specification fitted kitchen has every appliance included and the bathroom feels so luxurious. My desk is by the floor to ceiling windows, so it's flooded with natural light and is a lovely bright place to work during the day. I also get to enjoy the sky garden on the seventh floor, it's such a stylish outside space to sit back and relax in whilst enjoying the stunning views.

As soon as I found out that buying a Newlon Shared Ownership property could work out less expensive than renting privately, I knew that I was ready to become a homeowner."

Keshia says that owning her own home has had a positive impact on her whole life.

"As a young black woman, I feel empowered to own my own home. I have strong feelings of pride and accomplishment, and knowing that this is mine for as long as I want it gives me such a wonderful settled feeling. After the last few difficult years that we've all had, I am looking forward to positively building a future for myself in my very own Shared Ownership home."

Annual report card - the year in numbers

Performance area	Target March 21	March 21	Target March 22	March 22
Keeping properties in good repair				
Decent Homes Standard compliance	100%	100%	100%	100%
Responsive repairs completed right first time	93%	93.20%	93%	95.40%
Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance service	-	56%	-	49.2%
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall condition of your home?	72%	69%	69%	60%
Maintaining building safety				
Gas safety	100%	100%	100%	99.80%
Electrical safety	100%	97%	100%	97.50%
Fire safety	100%	100%	100%	100%
Water safety	100%	100%	100%	100%
Lift safety	100%	100%	100%	100%
Satisfaction with the health and safety of your home	-	77%	-	66%
Effective handling of complaints				
Percentage of complaints responded to within agreed timescale	-	98%	-	99%
Satisfaction with complaints handling	90%	89%	90%	89.80%
Respectful and helpful engagement				
Satisfaction that Newlon listens to your views and takes notice of them	-	57%	-	48.10%
Responsible neighbourhood management				
Percentage of communal areas meeting the required standard	96%	99%	98%	99.60%
Satisfaction with handling of anti-social behaviour	80%	53%	80%	63%
Overall satisfaction				
Overall satisfaction with the service Newlon provides	76%	71%	71%	58%



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Newlon Housing Trust is a charitable housing association

Chair: Aman Dalvi OBE Group Chief Executive: Mike Hinch

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

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