

# Newlon News



**Jacky's journey - one residents' route to employment.**

Find out more on Page 10.

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## Welcome to the autumn 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 and find out what Newlon are doing to support residents through the cost of living crisis, including our Step Forward programme to help residents find employment. Along with this edition of the residents' newsletter, you will find the Residents' Annual Review. It contains information about how we are tackling repairs and complaints, and introduces our new initiative 'Trust Newlon'.

### Christmas closure - advance notice

Our offices, including the Barnsbury Estate Office will be closed for the Christmas and New Year break. Friday 23rd December will be our last working day and we will reopen on Tuesday 3rd January. During this time our contractors will provide emergency repairs only. Emergencies include total electricity loss and major leaks. In these instances our contractors will 'make safe' and may be able to do a full repair provided extensive works are not needed. If additional works need to be approved we cannot do this until we reopen. If you have an emergency repair during this period please phone **020 7613 8080**, where a recorded message will direct you to the contractor providing cover. Please note that we will not be able to reply to any text messages or emails over the closure period.



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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.

August's Residents' Forum had to be rescheduled due to building damage at Newlon House caused by heavy rain.

After some technical issues, we met online, and were greeted by the interim Head of Resident Services, Miles Lanham.

For this meeting we were joined by two Newlon Board members, Ed Ihejirika and John Cross. They spoke about the increasing complexity of managing housing associations, and reflected that it would be useful to help residents understand the many regulatory and governance requirements Newlon faces.

The Senior Building Safety Manager, gave a presentation on the Building Safety regulations currently making their way through the legislative process. And again touched on the complexities of managing buildings.

There was some challenge from forum members about providing quick and easy ways of sharing building information. However, it was made clear that due to legislation and vast amounts of data, that only a Building information modelling system would be fit for purpose. Newlon is currently investigating ways to share this important information with residents.

Away from the complexities of managing housing and building information, an update was provided on how Newlon is progressing with the distribution of its Hardship Fund. In the first part of 2022 more than £18k had been made available to over 75 residents. In the main, support went towards items such as cookers and fridge-freezers as well as bedroom furnishings. Food vouchers and support for utility bills have also been made available.

If you are concerned about, or are already experiencing financial difficulties you can contact Newlon to access advice, help and support. If you need to speak someone about your financial situation, please email a member of the Resident Services team at **[community.services@newlon.org.uk](mailto:community.services@newlon.org.uk)** or give them a call on **020 7613 8080**. We are here to help.

If you have any questions about aspects of resident involvement please email **[getinvolved@newlon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@newlon.org.uk)**.

## Financial inclusion

We know that as a nation we are seeing price rises in all areas of our lives, especially in fuel, food and energy. Our residents have said to us that they would like more financial support and information during this 'cost of living crisis'. We are also very aware that some of our residents may be experiencing severe financial hardship.

We want you to know that we have listened to your concerns and have set up a 'Financial Inclusion Taskforce.' This has been specifically created to ensure that any resident who finds themselves in financial hardship has a quick response to their situation. The task force will be able to offer benefit advice, may be able to provide help with emergency grants and can point residents in the right direction for additional support from their local authority.

Our Resident Services team already provide the following:

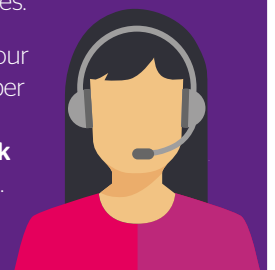
- Help to make sure residents are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to.
- Support for residents in severe need by helping them apply for emergency grants from our hardship fund.

- Support for residents to find employment through our Step Forward programme, as well guidance about upskilling which will help when applying for better paid jobs.

Looking to the future we are currently:

- Building up a database of support agencies in each borough where we have housing so that we can direct residents for additional help.
- Looking at introducing budgeting help and advice for residents.
- We have introduced a new Tenancy Sustainment Officer role to support residents most at risk of not being able to maintain their tenancies.

If you need to speak someone about your financial situation, please email a member of the Resident Services team at **[community.services@newlon.org.uk](mailto:community.services@newlon.org.uk)** or give them a call on **020 7613 8080**. We are here to help.



# Free employment advice, training and upskilling for Newlon residents



## You said:

We want Newlon to provide a personal approach to help us gain employment and to support us when it's time to further our career development.

## We have:

That's why we created the 'Step Forward' programme. It provides residents with opportunities for employment, training, qualifications, work experience, CV preparation and interview techniques. The Step Forward programme continues to evolve as the needs of our residents change over time.

We currently offer support with...

- Searching for a job.
- Finding free training and education opportunities.
- Guidance on writing CVs, covering letters and job applications.
- Interview skills and techniques.
- Getting work experience, placements, volunteering or apprenticeship opportunities.

"Through the Step forward programme, I attended three online workshops called Make your CV shine, Interview skills and Jobs search better. I was referred to the recruitment service and with guidance from Paula, I started applying for jobs. I am very thankful for all the help I received and am proud to say that I am now employed!"

**Frederico, Haringey**

For more information please email Paula Williams at **community.services@newlon.org.uk** or call **07879 555 565**.

## mynewlon residents' portal the easy way to contact us and report issues

## You said:

We want to be able to contact Newlon quickly and easily to report a range of issues or check information.

## We have:

Developed the My Newlon portal for this purpose. It's easy to use with a straight forward sign in process and clear guidance when filling in the sections. You can use it to do the following things 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.

So far approximately 1 in 3 of all potential My Newlon users have signed up to use the portal and this number continues to grow. If you want to become the next My Newlon portal user, just visit the website **www.newlon.org.uk** and click on the 'mynewlon' button or go straight to **my.newlon.org.uk/signin**.

You will need your seven digit agreement reference or tenancy number to sign up. You can find these 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.







# A 'bite size' guide to the Social Housing White Paper

The Resident Services team have received quite a few requests for a 'bite size' guide to the Social Housing White Paper, so here it is.

In November 2020 the Government published the 'charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper'. This sets out the actions the Government will take to ensure that social housing customers are safe, are listened to and live in good quality homes.

This is a very significant and important change within the housing sector and, along with other providers, Newlon are responding proactively to it, and because of this, we wanted to let you know more about it and its significance to you.

## What is a 'White Paper'?

White papers are policy documents produced by the Government that set out their proposals for future legislation.

Because of their complexity, it can take a number of years before the proposals in a White Paper become law. Sometimes they don't. The Social Housing Regulation Bill (2022) which is working its way through the legislative approval process includes many of the proposals from the White Paper.

## Who does it affect?

The White Paper is a charter for everyone living in social housing, so it has a positive impact on you as residents. The overarching themes include building and customer safety, and customer voice.

It will also affect Newlon as a business. We will have new regulations to follow and work is taking place to implement the requirements.

## Why has this White Paper been written?

The tragedy at Grenfell Tower in June 2017 raised critical questions for everyone involved in social housing, including residents, landlords, developers, and local and national government.

The government states it is committed to learning from the lessons of Grenfell. They have established an independent public inquiry and started implementing the recommendations of its phase one findings. Through the Building Safety Bill they are undertaking the most significant changes in building safety for a generation.

The government's Green Paper in 2018 sought residents' views in a 'Call for Evidence' on a wide range of potential changes, and they received over 1,000 responses. Many customers reported positive experiences, but others did not. They heard concerns about safety and quality; of complaints being handled slowly or poorly; and about residents feeling they were not listened to, or not treated with respect. The latest input, from the White Paper, will be panels drawn from 250 residents who will give their input to government, and three Newlon residents have put themselves forward as potential members of those panels.

## What does this White Paper say?

- The White Paper presents a charter setting out seven commitments that social housing residents should be able to expect from their landlord.
- It presents a range of different initiatives and legislative changes, building on proposals set out in the 2018 Green Paper and the review of the 'Call for Evidence'.
- The overarching themes are building and resident safety, and resident voice. It also aims to deliver the improvements in transparency and accountability promised in the 2018 Green Paper.
- To ensure landlords comply with the charter, the White Paper outlines plans for new regulation and a strengthened Housing Ombudsman. These plans will include regular inspections for landlords with more than 1,000 homes, regulation on consumer standards, removing the serious detriment test (which currently prevents the Regulator from intervening in cases unless it has reason to believe tenants are at risk of a 'serious detriment'), and new powers for the Ombudsman to issue complaint handling failure orders. Complaint handling failure orders ensure that a landlord's complaint handling process is accessible, consistent and enables the timely progression of complaints for residents.
- Social landlords will also have to report against new resident satisfaction and income/expenditure measures, with an expectation that residents should be able to access key information from their landlord.
- The paper proposes a potential review of the Decent Homes Standard (the minimum standards social homes are required to meet), new nominated responsible person(s) for health and safety and consumer standards, and an intention to tackle anti-social behaviour by clarifying the roles of different agencies.

## The White Paper seven commitments

- 1 To be safe in your home. We will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
- 2 To know how your landlord is performing, including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
- 3 To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly, with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
- 4 To be treated with respect, backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants.
- 5 To have your voice heard by your landlord, for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its board. The government will provide access to help, if you want it, for you to learn new skills to ensure your landlord listens.
- 6 To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in, with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
- 7 To be supported to take your first step to ownership, so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow.

Meeting the White Paper commitments are reflected in our Values and how we report performance in our annual resident's review.

## Recent updates to policies and procedures

### Changes to the complaints procedure



#### You said:

We are unhappy with the way Newlon resolves our complaints.

#### We have:

Listened and changed the way we log complaints. Our complaints procedure now states that if we are unable to provide an explanation and a resolution to the resident's dissatisfaction at the first point of contact or if a resident is dissatisfied with the handling of repairs/repetitiveness of the issue, then this will now be logged as a formal Stage 1 complaint.





## Wellbeing programmes at our Barnsbury Community Centre

The following wellbeing programmes for individuals and families take place at the Barnsbury Community Centre, N1 0FE. The Centre is easily accessible by public transport and the majority of activities are free or low cost and open to all Newlon residents.

- Family art sessions – this programme aims to help build creative skills but it 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@nairtfr3edom.com**. These family art sessions run twice a year for six classes at a time during May-June and Sept-Nov.
- Exercise classes (women only) – focusing on physical fitness, health and wellbeing of our residents, led by a professional instructor. Coffee and craft sessions are also available. Please email **juliet.vibert@gmx.com** or just turn up and register.
- Philosophy discussions – Dr Bill Thompson is a philosopher, an architect and has lived on the Barnsbury Estate for over 30 years. Philosophy meetings take place between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on the second Friday of each month. Please drop into Barnsbury Community Centre to register your interest or call **020 77833 9493**.
- Tutors United – this programme delivers confidence boosting, attainment raising online tutorials to all Newlon residents who are primary school pupils in school years 4, 5 and 6 (aged 8 – 11 years old). Online 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 **malique.zephar@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**.
- 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 **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.

Day	Exercise Class	Coffee & craft sessions
Monday	10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	
Tuesday	10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Thursday	5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	

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 free exercise and fitness classes from Yoga to Aerobics. If you would like to take part please contact **asad@ibal.org.uk** or call **020 7833 2608** or **020 7833 0591**.

Day	Time
Thursday	11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

# Update on recent fire and building safety legislation

The Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Building Safety Act 2022 have introduced a wide range of new requirements for landlords and building owners. Some of these are already in force and others are being introduced gradually over the next 12-18 months.

As part of being prepared for some of the key changes set out in the legislation we are recruiting a new building safety team as we will be required to have a nominated responsible person to oversee safety compliance in our taller buildings. This team will take on this role and will be overseen by our Senior Building Safety Manager.

We are also using new technology to create digital twins of all our buildings over 11 metres in height, or with at least five storeys.

This will allow us to make safety information securely available to specialists such as the London Fire Brigade and the new building safety regulator as well as residents. Information including Fire Risk Assessments will be made readily available to residents using this application.



From the start of 2023 we will need to carry out annual inspections of front doors for all homes and quarterly inspections of all fire doors in communal areas. These increased inspections will help to maintain safety in our housing, but will also create some additional costs for residents who pay service charges.

The new legislation also creates a requirement for us to consult and engage with residents on any decision relating to building safety where they live. We are developing ideas on how best to do this and will be consulting residents on proposals in the near future.

For any enquiries relating to fire safety you can email us at [firesafety@newlon.org.uk](mailto:firesafety@newlon.org.uk).



## Kids in Motion at the Barnsbury Community Centre

### “We Explore, Learn & Grow in Motion”

Kids in Motion is a brand-new nursery based at the Barnsbury Community Centre.

It offers a nursery and early education academy programme that provides children with a safe, joyful and engaging learning environment. Kids in Motion has designed its own unique curriculum that follows the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) standards which encourages learning in the natural way; by moving, doing and exploring. By providing fun, hands-on activities and additional enrichment programmes, Kids in Motion helps children to develop physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally.

Kids in Motion is open from Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Two and three year old funded places are available.

There's a Baby Room, Toddler Room and a Pre-School Room and plenty of outside space with a personal growing area.

For more information please email [islington@kidsinmotion.co.uk](mailto:islington@kidsinmotion.co.uk) or call **020 8075 6500**. Alternatively drop into the Barnsbury Community Centre for a chat or a viewing.

# An Interview Panel

**Jeannie Lowen** Newlon resident

My resident involvement activities have led me to participate on interview panels for Newlon.



Recently I joined the Service Centre team interview panel. It was the first time this team had a resident join them. As a resident I bring a different perspective, such as: how it feels to be on the phone trying to resolve an issue; the waiting, sometimes the slight panic – if it's a crisis; the need to have clear and calm communication from the service centre; and sometimes a sympathetic ear.

It was insightful to join the Service Centre team for the day. As a resident one is not always aware of how each department within the organisation operates.

The Service Centre team is the human face of the Trust, the means whereby residents reach Newlon in a crisis. Therefore, it is potentially one of the more stressful roles. One thing I did note on my visit was what a supportive and friendly team it seems to be.

I am also acutely aware of how it feels to be the interviewee.

I expect many of us know the stresses of being scrutinised on the other side of the table. Nerves are fine and if you have been invited to interview that means the organisation really wants to see you. It is time consuming running interviews therefore you want the candidates to do well and you want the positions to be filled.

Interviews are a two-way process, although it may not feel like it. It is good to be aware that it is an opportunity for you the candidate to assess the organisation and see if the position and the team is right for you.

The panel members do not always agree, as each member brings their own perspectives and experience. There is a score sheet which helps to assess how fully the questions have been answered and the required proficiencies met.

Occasionally you have a real stand out interviewee. I was on one panel where the short list was a bit of a mix – one candidate looked like they did not even know what the position was or anything about the organisation. That was a very quick interview! However, another candidate had really done their homework, had researched the organisation and delved into relevant government policy; they had gone above and beyond. The panel came away enriched with facts about forthcoming government policy changes and background information. Such a candidate is passionate about the role and would obviously be an asset. Not all positions require such in depth knowledge but some background research on the role and organisation helps candidates stand out and look like they actually want to join the team.

Sometimes you lose a great candidate as they are interviewing for other organisations and good candidates get many offers. It is a competitive process on many levels.

Newlon goes out of its way to employ residents within the organisation. I believe this is exceptional and adds a great deal of background experience to the Trust. Personally, I have found that participating in resident involvement activities has enriched and deepened my appreciation of the challenges and spirit of Newlon Housing Trust.

## Are you interested in attending the Tpas National Tenant Conference 2023?

If you would like to be a more involved resident, please click here to find out how [www.newlon.org.uk/residents/getting-involved/](http://www.newlon.org.uk/residents/getting-involved/).

Involved residents will be offered the opportunity to attend the Tpas National Tenant Conference 2023 and other conferences. Conferences provide you with the opportunity to share your views and network with others. You will receive guidance around social housing, regulations and practical resources about how to get your voice better heard.

Newlon will cover all residents' expenses such as hotel, food and travel.





# Newlon residents represented at July's Tpas (Tenants Participation Advisory Service) National Tenant Conference

During July, we were able to provide support so that five involved residents could attend the Tpas National Tenant Conference. This two day event took place at Voco St John's in Solihull.



The key speakers at the conference were Kate Dodsworth, Director of Consumer Regulation at the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and Richard Blakeway, the Housing Ombudsman.

Kate Dodsworth emphasised that better regulation was needed and so we are now moving towards proactive consumer regulation to support a culture change that puts tenants at the centre of social housing. The RSH asked that tenants are listened to and treated with respect and that issues are dealt with in timely matter.

Richard Blakeway spoke about the Housing Ombudsman's increased visibility and new guidance for the sector. The main message was about the importance of listening to tenants and having robust records. Richard discussed how landlords will be held accountable and that they will not be able to blame their contractors, when things go wrong. He also pointed out how a small maladministration can have real human consequences.

In a nutshell, both key speakers pushed the message about putting tenants first.

## Resident Peter Eleta shares his experience of the Tpas National Tenant Conference

"As an involved Newlon resident, I felt privileged to attend the National Tenant Conference.

I found that it provided helpful information about tenant engagement, professional and national networking, digital training as well as helping us to understand the roles and responsibilities of tenants within the housing sector.

The event was well structured with planned breakout sessions that provided a more in-depth knowledge of the tenant to landlord or contractor relationship. The slogan for the programme was 'eat, sleep, learn and repeat'.

I found that the whole experience of attending the conference has really rejuvenated my interest in tenant engagement and has given me the confidence going forwards to be a more proactive Newlon resident. I would definitely recommend it to others."

## Resident Anna Morkowska shares her experience

"This was my first experience of attending a conference and I have to say that I found it extremely useful. I really enjoyed meeting residents from a variety of different regions, backgrounds and circumstances. The workshops were informative and gave me a lot of useful information. The speakers were engaging, and clearly had long standing experience within the housing sector.

Ideally, I would have liked there to be a greater focus for leaseholders with regards to cladding issues and selling a Shared Ownership property as I currently have personal experience of this situation. Overall though, I found the conference very positive. Newlon certainly looked after us with the accommodation they provided, and the venue and food were exceptionally good. I would highly recommend it to other residents."



# Making a difference everyday

During the current cost of living crisis one way that Newlon can potentially help residents is with support in finding employment.



## 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 involved 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.

Our Step Forward programme has supported several hundred residents in recent years from different housing tenures to find new jobs, to be able to move from being on benefits into being in paid employment or with preparing to be employment ready.

Here is one resident's story which shows how we may be able to help you.

We are also very proud that between 15 and 20% of Newlon staff are also residents and we actively support residents to apply for roles and opportunities with us.

## Introducing Trust Newlon - our new plan to improve residents' satisfaction

Residents' satisfaction which initially rose at the start of the pandemic has declined during the past year. Although this is happening across the social housing sector and for many public services we are determined to fix this by regaining your trust in us to provide reliable services.

To begin this work we have introduced our Trust Newlon plan.

Trust Newlon is a programme that focuses on improving in 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, our new team working to deal with repeat or complicated repairs issues which cannot easily be resolved first time.

Watch out for a regular update on progress with Trust Newlon in future newsletters.





# The secret history of our streets

## Weavers Fields, Bethnal Green

Newlon Housing Trust provides over 8,300 homes across north and east London, ranging from new build high rise homes to 18th century street properties.

Many of our properties, or the areas where they are built, have fascinating histories. This time we take a trip to Weavers Fields in Bethnal Green, where we find nearby Newlon homes in Derbyshire Street, Buckfast Street and Albert Cottages.

Weavers Fields lies in the heart of Bethnal Green. Derbyshire Street runs alongside it and close by are Buckfast Street and Albert Cottages. It's one of the largest parks in Bethnal Green covering 15.6 acres of land.

The name Weavers Fields comes from the fact that the park area used to be occupied by the weavers' cottages. The cottages had been built throughout the 1700s and 1800s to house the home-based weavers of Bethnal Green, which was at the time, central to the silk weaving industry in the East End of London. The cottages had distinctive large upper floor windows designed to allow as much light into a Weaver's workshop as possible. Silk-weavers were mostly women, employed by commercial firms such as Warner, who produced silk items, cravats, ties and handkerchiefs, for the wealthier classes in London.

Typical of the time the streets were cramped and narrow, with conditions sounding fairly dire according to "The Builder" (January 28th 1871): "Off Bethnal Green Road proper we found many streets and lanes in a similarly neglected condition. In the back and low places are choked drains, inundation, and heaps of unremoved refuse. In White Street and its offsets, and Derbyshire Street, there was no end of sludge, and not a scavenger or sweeper to be seen anywhere."

By the early 1900s the silk-weaving industry in the East End was practically extinct, with only a handful of isolated weavers still operating by the 1920s. Attention was shifting to the poor housing conditions of the Bethnal Green as a whole. The Weavers Fields area continued to be occupied even though it was clear that much of the housing was of a poor standard.

After World War II, the weavers' cottages were demolished to create the park and gardens. The story of those now vanished streets mirror that of Bethnal Green as a whole. The area grew increasingly populated from the 1500s up until the late 1900s when the local authority started its slum clearance programme and demolition began. By 1967 most of the streets had gone and the park was opened.

Weavers Fields is now a popular place to visit. It has three full-size football pitches, a woodland walk and plenty of open flat spaces, as well as a large kids' playground and a café. There are several large park sculptures that pay homage to its industrial past, featuring motifs such as silk moths, ribbons, weaving shuttles, spinning wheels, and mulberry leaves. The entrance sign to the fields also features a "woven" theme,

with interlaced red and black iron bars supporting the signpost.

Newlon's homes in Derbyshire Street that surround Weavers Fields, were built during the 1800s, are a good insight into how the streets would have looked before the clearance.

Within Derbyshire Street, you will also find Oxford House. This large Grade II listed building opened in 1892 as a "settlement house" where students and graduates from Keble College, Oxford undertook residential volunteering to tackle the challenges of urban poverty first-hand. These volunteers worked locally and lived upstairs in Oxford House which was like a mini Oxford college in the heart of Bethnal Green.

Volunteers provided practical support to alleviate the impact of poverty to the local community by creating projects such as youth clubs, poor man's lawyer, labour exchanges, and adult education classes.

Today, Oxford House is now home to a 120-seat theatre, gallery, dance studio, Victorian chapel, café and rooftop terrace with spectacular views across East London. It offers local people the chance to create, learn and volunteer in the community.





# What is **personal fraud** and how can you prevent it?

Fraud is when a person lies to you, or 'scams' you, to gain an advantage, such as taking your money or learning private information about you. This could be via email, text, phone or in person, either on the street or on your doorstep.

We understand that when times are hard and you are offered a 'get-rich-quick' deal, it might seem like a tempting idea to take it. However, if something seems 'too good to be true' it's most likely to be a scam and you could end up being a victim of personal fraud.

Remember these ten golden rules to help you prevent fraud and beat the scammers.

- 1.** Be suspicious of all 'too good to be true' offers and deals. There are no guaranteed get-rich-quick schemes.
- 2.** Don't agree to offers or deals immediately. Insist on time to get independent or legal advice before making a decision.
- 3.** Don't hand over money or sign anything until you've checked someone's credentials and their company's.
- 4.** Never send money to anyone you don't know or trust, whether in the UK or abroad, or use methods of payment you're not comfortable with.
- 5.** Never give banking or personal details to anyone you don't know or trust. This information is valuable so make sure you protect it.
- 6.** Always log on to a website directly rather than clicking on links in an email.
- 7.** Don't just rely on glowing testimonials. Find solid, independent evidence of a company's success.
- 8.** Always get independent or legal advice if an offer involves money, time or commitment.
- 9.** If you spot a scam or have been scammed, report it and get help.
- 10.** Don't be embarrassed about reporting a scam. Because the scammers are cunning and clever there's no shame in being deceived. By reporting it, you'll make it more difficult for them to deceive others.

## Get help or report a scam

If you think you've uncovered a scam, been targeted by a scam or fallen victim to fraudsters, contact Action Fraud at **[www.actionfraud.police.uk/reporting-fraud-and-cyber-crime](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/reporting-fraud-and-cyber-crime)** or call them on **0300 123 2040**.

Call the police on 101 if you know the suspect or they're still in the area.

Reporting crime, including fraud, is important. If you don't tell the authorities, how do they know it's happened and how can they do anything about it?

Remember that if you're a victim of a scam or an attempted scam, however minor, there may be hundreds or thousands of others in a similar position. Your information may form part of one big jigsaw and be vital to completing the picture.



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