



RESIDENT

NEWSLETTER

2024



Dolphin Living



**Thank to you all for
listening and making the
place safe for us to live.**

Mount Close Resident



WELCOME

TO OUR 2024 NEWSLETTER

Dolphin Living is delighted to welcome you to our annual resident newsletter.

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Olivia Harris
CEO Dolphin Living

YOUR FEEDBACK IS VITAL TO US

Dear Resident,

We are delighted to bring you our annual newsletter which I hope you find useful and informative.

The last year has been a difficult one for many people with living costs increasing faster than earnings, and the uncertainty of future inflation. At Dolphin, we too have worked hard to maintain the services we offer you whilst managing our costs to ensure our rents can remain affordable. In this letter we share with you some resources and advice on managing living costs, so please do contact us if you are struggling to afford your rent.

The need for rental reform has been widely reported and it is hugely disappointing that the long awaited Renters Reform Act did not pass through parliament. Dolphin will continue to follow the evolving legislation to understand the impact on Dolphin and our residents and will be in touch as soon as we know to let you know how the reforms will impact your tenancies and what we do.

Welcome to our new residents who have moved into a Dolphin property this year, including 25 new households at Moxon Street in Marylebone. Purchasing and developing more properties is a key part of our strategy, so we can provide more homes to working Londoners.

The focus of our board strategy day last year was customer engagement. Thank you to those residents who gave up their time to meet with a board member or director. Feedback from the meetings provided the backbone for meaningful discussions about what is important to our residents, and what actions we should take to respond. We share more detail of this in our Resident Engagement section. We would like to engage with more residents in this way and if you can spare an hour of your time to invite a member of the Dolphin team to meet with you in your home, please let us know.

Olivia Harris

WHO WE ARE

AND WHAT WE DO

Dolphin Living is an affordable housing charity formed in 2005 and initially funded through gifts from the Dolphin Square Trust from the sale of Dolphin Square in Pimlico.

Our primary charitable objective is to support London's workers on modest incomes who cannot afford to rent or by near their place of work. This is fulfilled by Dolphin Living providing homes to rent at below market levels.

We also provide a number of social and affordable rented properties which are offered to those who are statutorily homeless. This meets our second charitable objective which is to support people in acute need of housing. We also offer a number of market rent properties which helps us fund more homes and maintain our properties.

Since 2021 we have increased our number of homes by 57.

As a charity we will continue to deliver on our long-term purpose. As a non-profit organisation any surplus income we generate is reinvested to meet our charitable objectives.

We believe that our work in home improvements, affordability, increased levels of customer services and our recognition of the value our residents bring to Dolphin Living, reflects our commitment to meet our objectives. We hope this newsletter clarifies our role as your landlord and how we provide our services.



Dolphin Living



RESIDENT FOCUS

We are proud that Dolphin Living have such a diverse group of residents. From single people to couples to families and sharers – either working or living in London, our residents play an important role in making Dolphin Living what it is.



WORKING WITH YOU TO IMPROVE OUR SERVICES



Jacqueline England

Customer Services Director,
Dolphin Living

I joined Dolphin Living in January 2023, having previously worked in the retail and tourism sectors. It's been a fantastic 18 months getting to know the charity, its properties and, most importantly, you the residents. Thank you to all of those who have taken the time to speak with me and share your experience of being a Dolphin Living resident. It's been great getting to know you.

I will continue to drive improvements to our services that matter most to you and ensure that your experience is at the heart of all decision-making. It's really important we continue to hear your feedback so we can act upon your views. So please do fill in our customer surveys and attend resident engagement events if you are able. We are also very happy to visit you in your home so please reach out to the team if you would like to arrange this.

I'm excited that this year will see the launch of our new 'in the moment' customer survey, giving you the opportunity to instantly tell us how you feel about any of your interactions with Dolphin Living or our property managers Touchstone. This feedback will provide us with even more insight, allowing us to continuously make changes for the better.

We will also involve you more with the running of your buildings and will be inviting residents to join us on specific projects such as improving communal gardens and security measures. We want to work with you to make Dolphin Living homes even better places to live.

Finally, we are here to help. If you are struggling with any aspect of living in your home, such as the ability to afford your rent, please do reach out to us. We will listen and offer practical solutions to help.

If you have any further comments or feedback, please get in touch and I look forward to meeting more of you this year.

As always, thank you for being a Dolphin Living resident.

J. England

CUSTOMER SURVEY

What you think of us

Last year we relaunched our Customer Survey including more questions, and asking residents to give us feedback throughout the year. We received 299 responses, which meant we heard from 37% of our households. Thank you to all residents who took the time to complete the survey. We will be sending out the 24/25 survey shortly and would love to hear from even more of you this year.

In 2023, the Government legislated that all regulated housing providers must receive feedback on the quality of their homes and services by asking their residents new "Tenant Satisfaction Measure" (TSM) questions.

Dolphin Living is a regulated provider for 18.3% of our residents. Whilst we are only required to ask the TSMs to these residents, we have included the TSM questions in our survey for all residents. We believe it is important to ensure we are in line with these standards across our portfolio.

The results of the survey ensure we are measuring our performance so we can continually improve our services focusing on areas that matter most to residents.

The 2023/2024 Customer Survey results and the Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Net Promoter Score is a market research metric used to gauge customer loyalty and satisfaction as well as enthusiasm towards a company. We use this as one of our key indicators to measure our performance and see how we compare across the housing sector and with other service led industries. Our aim is to improve this score every year.

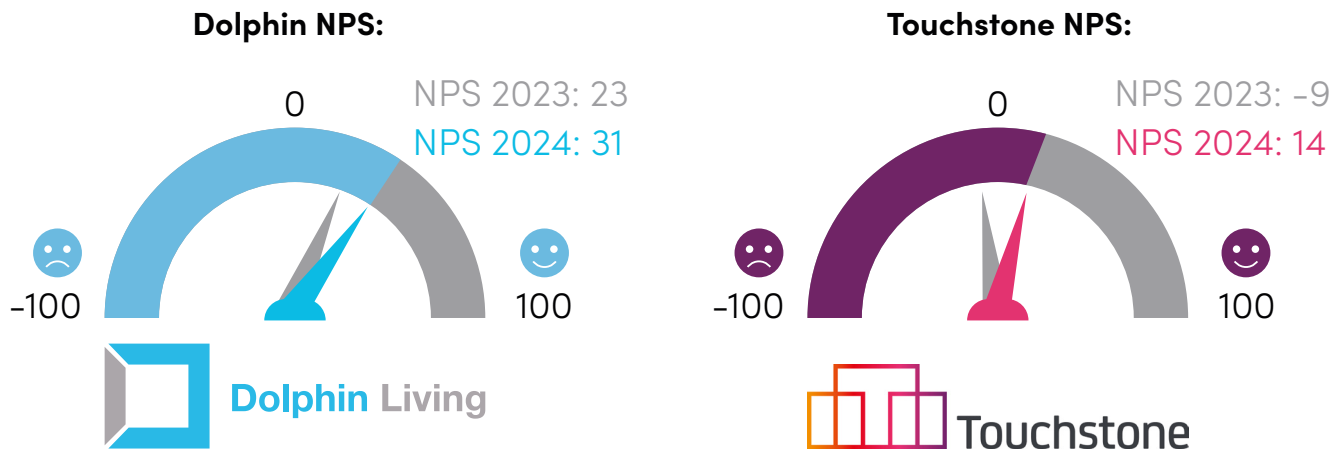
The NPS questions are:

- *How likely are you to recommend Touchstone to a friend or colleague?*
- *How likely are you to recommend Dolphin Living to a friend or colleague?*

NPS works on a scale from 1 to 10 and subtracts customers who are not satisfied (1-6) from those who are satisfied (9-10). This score is then converted into a scale from -100 to +100. A score over zero can therefore be seen as good performance, anything above 20 is great and above 50 is amazing.

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) for Dolphin Living has improved by eight points from 2023 to 31 points by the end of 2024.

Our managing agents Touchstone also made a great improvement by increasing their NPS score from minus nine in 2023 to 14 by the end of 2024.



We are hopeful that with your feedback and our response in delivering improvements to our service, these scores will continue to increase.

Complaints and how we handle them. We want to do better.

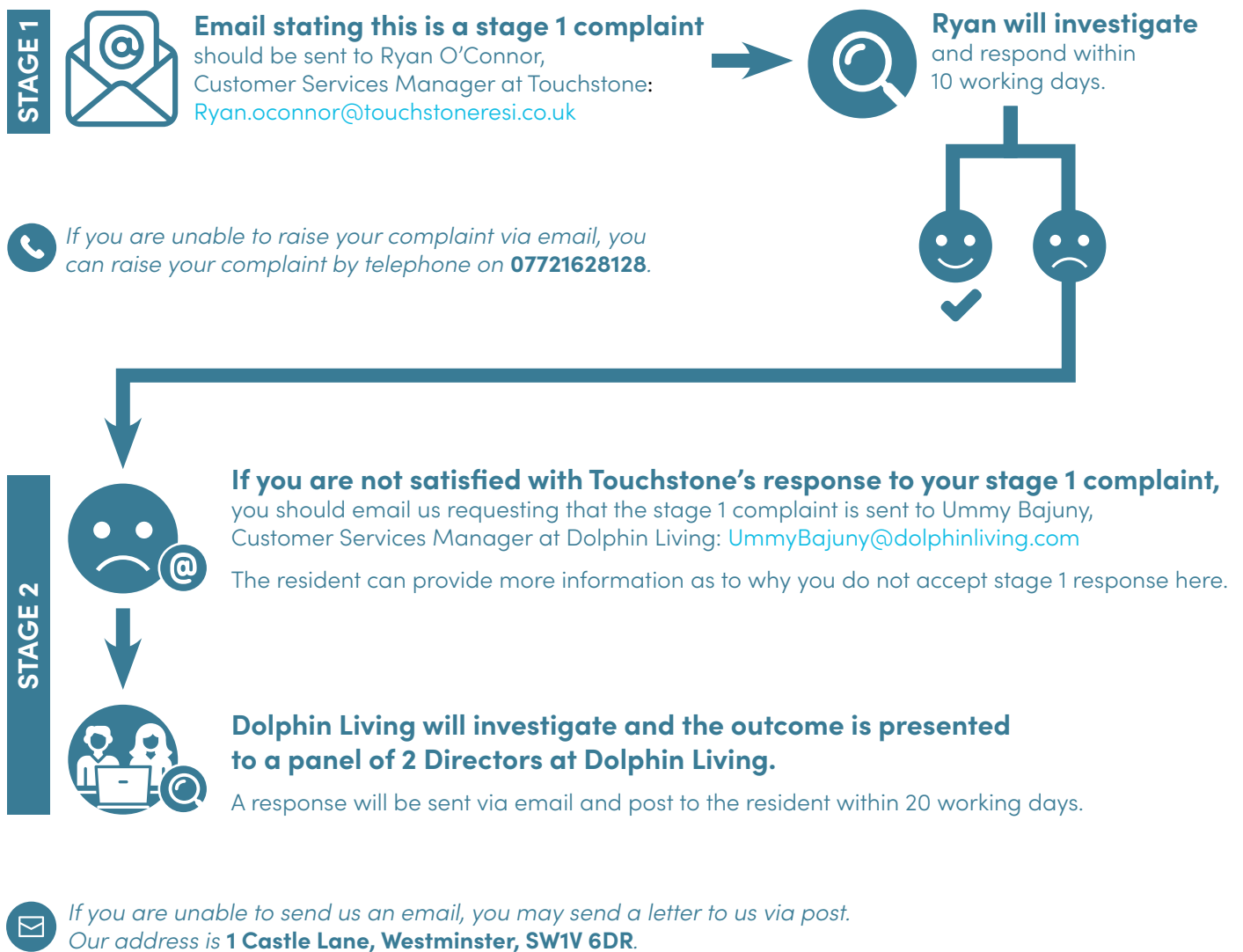
Whilst we do not receive many complaints from residents we do receive a small number. The message we’ve received from those is that we must improve our handling of complaints. The average satisfaction score of our survey question “How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with how your complaint was handled?” was 39% for this year. Clearly, we need to do better.

How we handle your complaints is really important to us as a fundamental part of our service to you. It is an opportunity for us to learn, reflect and to make improvements for the future.

We understand that the way we handle complaints is equally important to you as it ensures your concerns are heard, acted on and the issue is resolved to your satisfaction using our best efforts. It also affects how likely you are to inform us of any changes to your circumstances (which we might be able to help with), any issues arising with your building, or other concerns you may have. We want you to feel confident raising issues with us and in the way that we handle them.

Complaint handling will be one of the main focuses of the Customer Service team in 2024/25 to ensure we see improvements in this important area.

As a reminder our formal complaints process is as follows:



We will be looking to speak directly with residents who have raised complaints in the last year to discuss what went well and how we can offer a better service. If you raised a complaint this year and would like to give feedback, please contact UmmyBajuny@dolphinliving.com.

RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

Improving how we engage with you

In order to continue to improve our residents' experience, it's vital we hear directly from you. Last year, we implemented our revised Resident Engagement plan to increase the level of engagement with all residents, providing us with more opportunities to speak to you.

We need a clear understanding of how you feel about your home, and we recognise this cannot always be communicated effectively via email or over the phone. We will continue to offer all our resident engagement meetings face-to-face where possible and ensure they are accessible to all residents. We encourage you to attend even if you have no issues to raise with us particularly if you would like to meet your neighbours and the Dolphin and Touchstone team.

We have also introduced 'Meet the Property Manager' sessions where residents are able to book appointments with their Property Manager at their home and explain their concerns and any issues they may have. The Dolphin Living Customer Service team are also available to visit you at home whenever you need us.

In addition, the number of estate walkarounds have increased throughout the year to ensure we have up-to-date information on the condition of each building, its communal areas and grounds.

During 2024/25, we will be looking to offer more and varied resident engagement opportunities. If you have any suggestions on how we do this and what might encourage you to attend, please let us know.



OUR 'IN THE MOMENT' SURVEY

To further improve our engagement with residents, in addition to our Annual Customer Survey, we will also be launching our **'In The Moment'** Survey in Summer 2024. This will allow residents to complete a quick survey after they have had an interaction with a member of staff or if they would like to offer feedback at any time. Whether it's a face-to-face visit, repair service, interaction with a contractor or a tenancy renewal; instant feedback is a great way to know how we are performing.



Improving our service to you

We are aiming to make a significant improvement to our Customer Experience over the next few years. We understand the importance of giving you a great experience while living in a Dolphin property.

We have increased the number of staff working in the Customer Services team. In addition to our Customer Services Manager Ummy Bajuny, last year we hired a Resident Experience Manager, Louisa Nightingale.

Together, alongside Touchstone, Ummy and Louisa manage day-to-day customer enquiries, specialist high level cases, compensation management and tenancy sustainment. This increase in resources means we can have more direct contact with residents including in-person visits or virtually, at your request.

You can see messages on this page from each Dolphin Living and Touchstone team member who make up the Customer Service team. These are the team who will visit residents at your request.



Hi, I'm **Ryan O'Connor**. I am the Customer Services Manager for Touchstone. I am delighted to be part of the managing agent's team for such a fantastic portfolio of properties. I'm passionate about improving Customer Services and ensuring that residents needs and expectations are met. Also, it's exciting to be boosting engagement with residents this year.

Hey, my name is **Ummy Bajuny**, Customer Services Manager for Dolphin Living. I've had the pleasure of meeting and speaking to many of you over the last year. With the Customer Services Team focusing on more engagement this year, I am looking forward to interacting with you and hearing your feedback on how we can improve our services. All our residents come from different walks of life which I think makes Dolphin quite unique. I am excited to be part of a team that aims delivers a positive experience for you as a Dolphin Living resident.





Hello, I'm **Louisa Nightingale**, the new Resident Experience Manager at Dolphin Living. I've been visiting as many residents as possible since I joined in May 2023, and I look forward to meeting more of you at upcoming meetings. I manage the Westminster Homeownership Accelerator Scheme, and work alongside my Customer Services colleagues to improve the overall experience of residents living in Dolphin homes.

Hello, I'm **Shinique Smart-Brooks**, Assistant Portfolio Manager at Touchstone. I take pride in being a key player in managing this exceptional portfolio. My passion lies in enhancing the maintenance experience for customers, ensuring swift and effective resolution of all issues to meet residents' needs. As we continue this journey, I am excited about the prospects for improving the maintenance process for both Dolphin and its residents.



Hiya, my name is **Eleasha Nedrick** and I am the Lettings Manager for Dolphin Livings intermediate and affordable properties. I have met many residents at the start of their Dolphin Living experience and I strive to ensure that their first encounter is a good one. I enjoy meeting new people and showing them around various properties in our portfolio but the best part of my job is hearing how excited and delighted new residents are when they are given the good news that they have a new home.



In 2023/24, we have carried out 17 face-to-face Resident Engagement meetings. These meetings have given us the opportunity to meet you and discuss any concerns that residents may have had. We appreciate that these meetings have not happened regularly in past years, however we will ensure we hold at least one annual meeting per property.

You said, we did

From the Resident Engagement meetings, we have been able to identify a number of improvements the services we are providing. Here are some of the things you asked for and the actions we've taken.



“The cleaning in our building is not to a good standard. Can you change the cleaners?”

We have made changes to our cleaning contractors and have tailored their specification for each property. It's great that we have received positive feedback from residents as a result of these changes.



“I am struggling to pay my rent. Can you help?”

We have been offering affordability assessments, personalised arrears management plans and assisting residents with obtaining financial support from local authorities. Please see more information in our 'Affordability' section.



“We have a problem with our property and would like more updates. Can you send out more information of works that are being carried out and/or more updates?”

Properties which have experienced issues now receive fortnightly updates from us and we have been offering in person visits to discuss any works at your property.



“We do not see enough staff around the estate. Touchstone and Dolphin Living need to see the property.”

This year, we implemented the 'Meet the Property Manager' days. This not only gave the Property Managers another opportunity to enhance their knowledge of the property, but also to meet you. In addition to this, Touchstone will carry out four quarterly property walkabouts and one annual more detailed inspection.



“I feel unsafe walking home at night due to the dark areas on the estate. Can you do something about this?”

We have installed additional lighting and CCTV at a number of our properties and enhanced the security of our building entrances. Your safety is of the utmost importance to us and we will continue to look for ways to make our homes and the surrounding area safer.

We asked residents in our Customer Survey, ‘How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your views are listened to and acted upon where necessary?’. You gave us an average satisfaction score of 71%.

This area is really important to us and it’s imperative residents feel heard and that their landlord takes action. This demonstrates our commitment to you and is fundamental to your experience as a Dolphin Living resident.



“This is feedback on the new cleaning company, HRS. Tuhel, the on-site cleaning guy I see regularly, is doing a fantastic job here. Very nice chap.”

One Church Square Resident

In conversation with our residents

Dolphin Living's Executive Team and Board Members met with 10 residents in the Autumn of 2023, in a 'Conversation with our residents session'. The event was organised by an independent customer experience consultancy 'The Foundation' with a view to ensuring that residents' experience at Dolphin Living, is a 'customer-led' experience.



The Foundation pushed us to look at Dolphin Living from the outside-in; starting from the residents perspective and working our way back to the organisation's core objective. We understand decisions that are purely business led, do not always give the best outcome for our residents. To allow us to continue to grow our organisation and provide quality affordable homes, our decision making must start with the resident. Our residents' experiences and their feedback must be a vital driver of our growth.

Christopher, who took part in the customer immersion session provided the following feedback:

“Thank you to Dolphin Living and the Executive Board for investing in this important initiative. Taking the time to engage with residents and understand our needs is helping to build better communities for us all.”

RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

These sessions gave our staff and board members, the opportunity to understand what it's like to be a Dolphin Living resident, what improvements can be made and what a quality affordable home looks and feels like to our residents. The main areas that mattered most to our resident were:

- A safe, secure and well-maintained home
- A landlord who cares, listens, and communicates well
- Professional, prompt repairs and improvements
- Easy and effective issue resolution

We will take our findings and input these into our new 2024-2027 strategy.

We will continue to carry out this exercise again in the Summer of 2024 and will look to make these sessions a quarterly project. If this is something you would like to take part in, please contact UmmyBajuny@dolphinliving.com for more information and to register your interest.



PHOTOGRAPHY AND MARKETING

As Dolphin Living continue to grow our portfolio, we are always looking to residents to take part in our photography and marketing projects. This year we had a number of residents take part as shown in this newsletter. Thank you to all the residents who were involved!

We will be looking to expand on our ways of marketing the charity to help working Londoners find affordable homes. We are keen to involve more residents in our marketing and communications, to illustrate your diverse backgrounds and the range of individual journeys within the Dolphin Living community.

If you would like to register your interest, please contact UmmyBajuny@dolphinliving.com

Affordability: how can we help you?

According to Crisis UK, “The UK has been experiencing a cost-of-living crisis since late 2021”. They define a cost-of-living crisis as a period during which the cost of everyday essentials (food and bills) increases quicker than the average household income.

We are aware people on lower incomes have been hit harder by inflation and as an affordable housing provider, where possible we will give our residents the support they need. We also understand since moving into your Dolphin Living home, your circumstances may have changed. We will continue to offer Affordability Assessments to residents struggling to pay their rent.

Please see information below in the ‘helping you with your rent payments’ section for more information around Affordability Assessments.

Helping you with your rent payments

We are also working with residents on a new initiative called Personalised Arrears Management. This scheme is for residents who are in rent arrears and who may need additional support, such as guidance to apply for universal credit, or arranging a payment plan.

We have also carried out Affordability Assessments for residents who have had a change in their financial circumstances which has made them currently unable to afford their full rent amount in the short term. We have asked residents who have made requests for Affordability Assessments to provide a breakdown of their incomings and outgoings. From this, if residents are eligible, we will provide them with assistance in accessing financial support or offer them a Personalised Rent Credit until the end of their tenancy.

We have put these initiatives in place to encourage residents to reach out if they are struggling financially. It also allows us to support our residents in sustaining their tenancies wherever possible.

If you are in struggling with any debt related issues, in addition to speaking with us, we recommend that you seek advice regarding debt management from external service providers.

Please see links below for service providers offering debt advice:

www.stepchange.org

www.westminstercab.org.uk

If you would like to discuss this further, please contact UmmyBajuny@dolphinliving.com or Ryan.oconnor@touchstoneresi.co.uk.

Resident wellbeing

Our residents' well-being is one of our main priorities. We continue to provide relevant training to our team including communication training, customer experience and relations management.

In addition the Customer Services team and members of our Property Management team at Touchstone, have recently completed training provided by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance to enable us to support residents who experience domestic abuse.

As you are aware, our staff may visit your home to carry out inspections or to discuss an issue with you at your request. The training course explored the types of abuse victims may experience and how to spot them as there may not always be visible signs.

Some of the topics covered included:

- Gendered nature of abuse
- Recognising stereotypes and key indicators of abuse
- Impacts of abuse
- How difficult it can be for victims to leave the perpetrator
- How to be professionally curious – i.e. asking the right questions
- How residents can access domestic abuse services for women, men, and the LGBTQ+ community

We understand that the signs of abuse are not always visible to someone who isn't part of your household make up. In addition to this training, we have created a new domestic abuse policy to assist our staff in being able to support residents in need. This policy is shared with Touchstone so that they are more aware of how to identify and respond to suspected or actual cases of domestic abuse for when providing services to residents.

If you are currently at risk of domestic violence or have any concerns, please contact us via email at LouisaNightingale@dolphinliving.com

“Massive thank you to Ryan and Ummy for organising this meeting. It was great to be able to speak to someone about the issues at Kennington Lane. Looking forward to the next one!”

Kennington Lane Resident

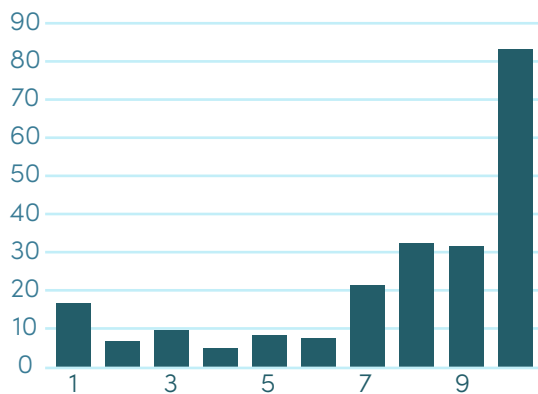
REPAIRS ROUNDUP

Repairs: good, but room for improvement

We understand how important repairs are to your experience as a Dolphin resident and therefore, how crucial our service and delivery in this area is to you. We asked residents who had had a repair carried out during the year to rate the service they received on a scale on 1-10. Residents gave our repairs service an average satisfaction score of 76%.

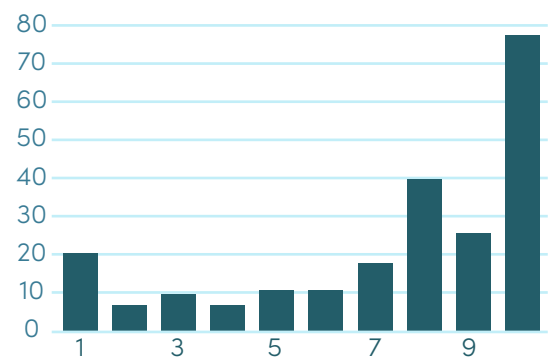
Please see the graphs below which shows the results from the following questions regarding repairs:

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the overall repairs service from Dolphin Living over the last 12 months?



This question received an average satisfaction score of 76%

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the time taken to complete your most recent repair after you reported it?



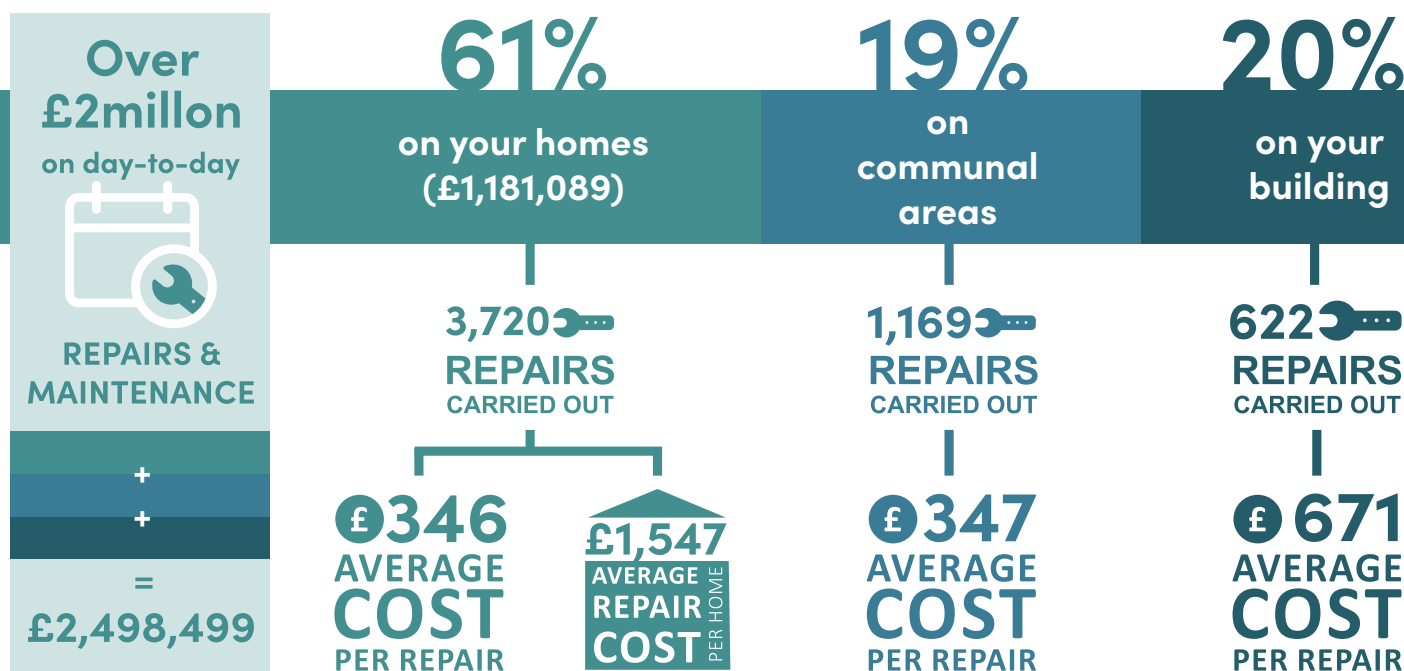
This question received an average satisfaction score of 73%

Both these scores are promising results and show that residents are generally happy with our repairs service. This is good, however, we know we can do better. Therefore, we will be continuing our focus in this area during 2024/25, looking for ways that we can continually improve our repairs service.

If you have recently had a repair and would like to give some feedback, please contact Ummy Bajuny via email at UmmyBajuny@dolphinliving.com. We'd love to hear from you.

What we've been working on:

Dolphin Living spent more than £2m on repairs and maintenance in the last financial year, with the majority of that sum – 61% – spent on home improvements.



These works included repairs, plumbing and drainage work, heating and hot water, internal decorations and cleaning.

We have been working hard with Touchstone and a third-party organisation to carry out a repairs review following the customer survey results. We are committed to improving the service to residents, from the point at which the job is raised, through to its completion. This includes inspection visits, obtaining quotes, communication updates from customer services and checking the standard of works that have been completed.

Over the next few months, we hope you will see an improvement to how repairs are carried out. In the meantime, please do fill out our 'In the moment' survey if you wish to share your feedback regarding a repair that was carried out to your home.

“I feel very blessed to live in the incredible home I now live in. With modern fixtures, and such close proximity to work, I really couldn't have asked for more. Thanks to everyone at Dolphin for not only my home but the peace of mind they have given me!”

Millbank Resident

Damp and mould

Combatting damp and mould and delivering a better response to reports of damp and mould is a priority for the housing industry across all housing providers in the UK.

The new Renters Reform Bill and Social Housing Regulations Act may also introduce Awaabs Law which will require landlords to address concerns such as damp and mould in homes. You may have heard a lot more about it on the news, on social media or directly from us. Whilst cases at Dolphin homes are few, we have been working hard over the last few months to tackle any issues within our properties that might cause damp and mould.

What is Awaabs Law?

Awaab Ishak, aged two, died in December 2020 due to exposure to mould at his home in Rochdale. Awaab's father, Faisal Abdullah, raised damp and mould issues with Rochdale Boroughwide Housing a number of times, however no action was taken to resolve the issues.

As a result of this, Awaab's Law was introduced to ensure residents with a social landlord are protected from the harmful impacts of damp and mould.

According to Shelter.org.uk, "Awaabs Law will require landlords to fix reported health hazards within specified timeframes. This will become an implied term in social housing tenancy agreements".

Whilst we only provide social housing to 18.3% of our residents, we will be implementing changes to how we respond to urgent repairs including reports of damp and mould across our portfolio.

You can find more information about Awaabs law online.

Damp and mould can be harmful to your health. It may not present obvious symptoms, however, over time mould can make you seriously ill. Through our regular home and property inspections Touchstone have identified homes that have evidence of damp and mould, however minor it may be. We have engaged a specialist surveying firm to carry out surveys in those homes where there may be a serious problem so we can establish a plan for preventative works to take place.

Dolphin Living has purchased damp and mould packs which contain essential household products to help eradicate minor symptoms of damp and mould. As soon as a report of damp and mould is received, a pack will be posted or delivered to the resident, whilst we work on the next steps to permanently remove the damp and mould.

What is damp and mould?

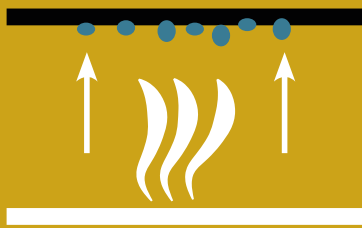
Damp is usually caused by condensation, where air particles carrying high levels of water deposit this water on walls and ceilings causing dampness and creating conditions for mould to form.

What does damp and mould look like?

Damp and mould can appear in smell before physically appearing. Signs include:

- Flaking paint
- Obvious moisture or condensation on walls and windows
- Black mould on walls, behind furniture or around windows where cooler surfaces, or away from drafts, causes moisture to gather
- Cracks in ceiling or walls – which may be letting water in causing further damp and mould
- Musty smell

Please get in touch with your property manager as soon as possible if you are experiencing, or think you may have, any signs of damp and mould in your home. We will investigate and take action.



Condensation occurs when **warm air, containing water vapour**, meets a **cool surface** which has a temperature below the dew point of the water vapour. This causes the water vapour to cool and condense, forming **tiny droplets** which we refer to as condensation.



You can help prevent damp and mould. Here's how:

We will be sending information leaflets to residents in 2024 with tips to prevent damp and mould. In the meantime, here is a list of things you can do to reduce symptoms of damp and mould in your home.

- Open a window after a shower to allow the air to dry out
- Use your heating to keep your home warm
- Keep your home clutter-free as this allows air to circulate more freely
- Open windows when cooking and keep lids on pots to prevent steam escaping
- If you are drying clothes indoors, keep a window open to allow air flow. Use an airer where possible as using radiators to dry clothes may create humidity in areas where damp and mould can grow.

Eradicating damp and mould is our number one priority. We have recently appointed a damp and mould specialist, who has been carrying out surveys for residents across our portfolio.

Please do inform us immediately of any issues of damp and mould in your home.





How to keep your home cool

Overheating your home can be harmful to you and others in your home and wastes energy. Here are some tips on how to keep your home cool in the summer months:

- Close curtains/blinds and windows during the day to keep heat out
- Keep doors closed when using a fan to efficiently lower the temperature by keeping heat out
- Turn your hot water bottle into an ice pack

If you think you have experienced overheating issues in your home, please contact your maintenance controller.

Your utilities – centralised heating systems

A number of our properties have a CHP (Combined Heat & Power) plant room. Dolphin Living purchases the gas from suppliers, which has been sourced via our Utility Broker, who secures the most competitive tariffs and value for money. The plant room supplies heating and hot water to all homes and communal areas. Residents pay for the heat usage within their homes. With the volatility of the utility market, a rate review is carried out periodically to ensure residents are paying the correct tariffs, every time. The tariff charge is made up of usage and a standing charge.

Dolphin Living do not make any profit from the supply of energy to residents. We aim to achieve cost neutrality for gas we have already purchased from our suppliers.

We ask that all residents pay their energy bills on time so that we do not waste resources in chasing on late payments. This will also enable us to keep the charges as low as possible.

If you are having difficulties paying your utility bills, please do reach out to your billing company.

Energy efficiency and sustainability

Dolphin Living were able to achieve an accredited SILVER rating with SHIFT (Sustainable Homes Index For Tomorrow). SHIFT is a sustainability standard for housing providers to report and benchmark themselves against other housing providers on their journey towards NetZero. We have been ranked 13th out of the 40 SHIFT assessments which had taken place in 2023. We remain steady in the same position as last year; however, we are aiming to achieve a higher rating in 2024.

There are four accreditation levels – Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. We are hopeful that we will receive Gold this year.

Please see the link below for more information:

<https://shiftenvironment.co.uk/what-is-shift/shift-sustainability-standard/>

We will continue to make improvements to the energy efficiency of your homes. You will hear more about this during resident engagement meetings and details will be included in communications from our Customer Services team.

How are we able to continue making our homes more energy efficient?

We aim to ensure all our new build properties achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of B. Also, many of our new build properties do not have car parking spaces, to encourage less car use and fewer carbon emissions.

We provide secure cycle parking spaces which encourages residents to own bicycles and we also continue to find ways to improve the way you are able to dispose of household waste.

Westminster City Council has recently rolled out their Food Waste Recycling initiative which has been introduced to some of our properties. We will continue our best efforts to keep your homes energy efficient and take recommendations from official sources.



Capital works

We have created a 30-year plan of works that we will be carrying out to all of our properties. We are now in our third year of this programme. The work included in these planned works range from installing new kitchen and bathrooms, to replacing roofs, to landscaping.

This year we continue to complete work to some of our older homes to improve their energy efficiency. Improvements include increasing the insulation to homes to help keep them warm for longer with the aim to reduce utility bills. We want to hear your views on how we can make your home more sustainable and environmentally friendly.



“I just wanted to say a big thank you to you and the team at Dolphin for all the recent works at my flat. I appreciated how I was allowed to be involved in decisions on the refurbishment works.”
Mount Close resident

Building safety

We carry out these necessary checks to your properties to ensure they are safety compliant. We continue to:

- Carry out gas safety checks on all boilers annually
- We complete electrical testing on all properties every five years
- We carry out annual front door checks to ensure they are fire safe as well as internal inspections to your home

Health and Safety checks are also carried out to the building. These include annual fire risk assessments as well as general fire risk assessments every two years.

GREAT NEWS NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES!



Marylebone Square



We are delighted to have acquired 25 exemplar homes in the heart of Marylebone. The property offers 1-3 bed apartments, housing families, couples and singles, all of whom work in Westminster. Residents moved in early 2024 and we have received positive feedback on these new homes. We are confident residents will love living in this new development!

These homes are part of our Intermediate rent scheme.



**The
Guardian**

THE GUARDIAN INTERVIEW

In May 2023, Dolphin Living had been approached to take part in an interview exploring the benefits of providing affordable housing in Central London. The interview was a great opportunity for us to show the benefits we are providing to our residents and that Section 106's can be favourable.

Read here:

<https://tinyurl.com/387khju5>

OUR HOME-OWNERSHIP ACCELERATOR SCHEME

Owning a home is an ambition for a number of working people. We understand it has become increasingly challenging to achieve this, particularly in the London housing market. Dolphin Living offers an exciting and innovative scheme to allow you to reach the next step into homeownership.

What is the Accelerator Scheme?

The Westminster Home-ownership Accelerator Scheme was launched in 2015 by Dolphin Living and Westminster Council, to support London's workers to fulfil their dreams of owning a home in London. Participants live in one of our properties for up to three years paying 65% of market rent, and during this time they accumulate grant money on top of their own savings, to help them secure enough for a deposit on a home in London.

“Your kindness has meant so much to us during our time at Dibdin House. Thanks for all the help given, we appreciate everything you’ve done for us. Thanks to you and the wonderful team at Dolphin Living, we’ve been able to become owners of our home.” Former Accelerator Scheme participant



How do we make this possible?

The Accelerator scheme offers homes at 65% of the market value. In addition to your savings of £22,000 when joining the scheme, we offer a lower rate of rent to encourage saving during the three years of your tenancy to help you save for a deposit on a new home. At the end of the scheme you will also receive a financial grant.

Purchasing a home can be quite daunting. We work closely with independent financial adviser Martin Fairchild who has been supporting our residents during the purchasing process for over 4 years.

We have supported 43 households to purchase a home within Greater London since 2015. Homes have ranged from 1–5-bedroom flats or houses, purchased on the Open Market or through Share to Buy schemes. Our participants have received grants ranging from £8,000 to £35,000 towards their deposit.

Izzy and Mark moved into an Accelerator property in June, and have shared their experience so far:

“The accelerator scheme has changed our lives and brightened our prospects for the future. Since joining the scheme earlier this year, we’ve moved into a beautiful flat which is more spacious and modern than anything we could have afforded on the private rental market. The team at Touchstone have been brilliant and supported us each step of the way. We’re finally able to put some money away each month, and we hope our dream of buying in London will soon be a reality.”

If you live and work in Westminster and have household earnings of less than **£90,000** and savings of at least **£22,500** then the Accelerator Scheme may be for you. We are always looking for participants, so please tell your friends, families and colleagues!

If you would like to find out more about the Scheme, please register your interest via www.dolphinliving.com/accelerator

Reporting repairs

You can access our online repairs portal at any time for all your repair concerns. You can log into the portal directly through our new website to diagnose and report a fault quickly and efficiently.

The portal also allows you to track progress and updates relating to your repair and to provide feedback. Any repairs reported by phone or email to Touchstone will be entered onto the portal; the quickest way to report repairs is to access the portal directly.



Please be reminded of the following information regarding your tenancy agreement:

- Tenancy renewals – You will receive a letter up to 12 weeks before you are due for renewal. You will be required to complete a new application with your Customer Advisor at Touchstone. This application will include referencing checks such as affordability and eligibility for your tenancy type.
 - > Once they have completed the necessary checks, you will receive a confirmation email to sign a new tenancy agreement. Please note, referencing checks can take up to 14 working days.
 - > If you would like to discuss any aspect of your tenancy renewal, please contact your customer adviser.
- Subletting – Dolphin Living have a zero-tolerance policy on subletting. Please do not sublet your property as this will result in a breach your tenancy agreement and you will be required to vacate your property.
- Pets – Your tenancy agreement states that you are not allowed pets in your home. If you would like to get a pet, please contact Ummy Bajuny, Customer Services Manager, to request this. Please note, it is at our discretion to grant you permission for this.
- Home swapping – Unless eligible, you cannot sign up for the Home Swapper programme. If you have any issue with your tenancy agreement and you would like to move or transfer, please get in touch with your Customer Advisor.

In the event of an emergency

In the event of an emergency in or close to your home, we want to ensure to that all residents are safe and those who require additional assistance are given help quickly.

For us to do this we need to ensure our records include details of any of your household who may be vulnerable and need additional assistance. Please let us know by contacting your Customer Advisor, describing your support needs and how we may assist you.

For example:

- An incident occurs which means the emergency services ask all residents to evacuate your building by walking down the stairs. This may be difficult for residents who require the use of walking aids.
- Some residents may have medical equipment that uses electricity. An emergency that impacts power supplies will affect the functioning of that medical equipment.



CONTACT INFORMATION

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If you feel that you have exhausted all contact with your Property Manager or Maintenance Controller and your issue has not yet been resolved, you should escalate your issues.

Our escalation process is as follows:

- 1. Ryan O'Connor – Customer Services Manager - Touchstone**
- 2. Ummy Bajuny – Customer Services Manager – Dolphin Living
Louisa Nightingale – Resident Experience Manager – Dolphin Living**
- 3. Jacqueline England – Customer Services Director – Dolphin Living**

If you have any queries please
contact us at LT@touchstoneresi.co.uk
or call 01225 838 490

www.touchstoneresi.co.uk

www.dolphinliving.com



Dolphin Living