



Dolphin Living



RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

2022



“

I'm very happy and pleased in the new home. I wanted to thank you for your help and support through the process, you have been absolutely amazing.

Thorney Street resident

”

THORNEY STREET SW1
CITY OF WESTMINSTER

WELCOME

TO OUR 2022 NEWSLETTER

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

We wish you all a safe and healthy 2022.

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Supporting London's essential workers



Welcome to Dolphin Living's annual newsletter, keeping you up-to-date with our latest activities and our plans for the future.

2021 was a year of change. One constant is the reappointment of Touchstone to manage our homes for a further three years. The scope of Touchstone's work has expanded and we hope you will experience the benefits of this now and in the years to come. Almost four thousand repairs were carried out at our properties during 2021. In addition, a full refurbishment of our homes at Grove Court started and was (almost) completed. We also agreed to purchase a further 20 homes for intermediate rent in Westminster, meaning that we will deliver 30 new homes in Westminster during 2023.

In the latter half of the year resident events took place at several of our properties and virtually. A key purpose of these meetings is for us to listen to you, understand what is most important and so improve the services we provide. As a result of these meetings we have made some changes including providing furniture for roof terraces, improving entrance hall safety, making changes to heating billing at some properties, providing access aids, and introducing residents who want to buy a home to a financial advisor.

Sustainability is a crucial topic at the moment and Dolphin Living is playing its part. We have started surveying our older homes to understand what can be done to improve them, particularly in relation to energy efficiency. Thank you to all of those who have allowed access to their homes to enable us to undertake this work. Improving the sustainability of our homes is something we will be focussing on in 2022 and beyond. We'd be interested to hear your views on how together we might make your home more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

We continue to champion the work of key and critical workers, and the need for housing at a discount to market rent so that workers, such as yourselves, can live near to their place of work. We are selective about homes we purchase in particular considering design and location, so that we can grow as an organisation and continue to provide homes to more of London's workers on modest incomes.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and I wish you a happy, healthy and safe 2022.

Olivia Harris
CEO Dolphin Living



Update from Andrew Giblin, Chair of Dolphin

Despite the impact of Covid during 2021, I am proud of what Dolphin achieved in providing affordable housing for rent in London; one of the most expensive cities in the world.

I am honoured that my fellow Board members nominated me as Chair of Dolphin last year. In 2021 we set a new strategy for the charity for the coming years which focuses on our customers, our homes and our growth. I'm excited about the opportunities this will bring to existing and future residents of our homes.

Thank you for being a Dolphin resident and for taking the time to read this newsletter.

Andrew Giblin
Chair of Dolphin

Touchstone: your first point of contact

Dolphin Living is your landlord and owns the building you live in. Touchstone is the first point of contact for our residents, and acts on Dolphin Living's behalf as your property managers.



Touchstone has welcomed a number of new team members in recent months who bring with them considerable experience of managing homes in London. The team will be focusing on resident engagement and finding new opportunities to further develop relationships with you, our residents.

Innovation and Technology

Touchstone has implemented some of the most advanced industry technology in the past two years. The current digital strategy has delivered the following:

- Customer services – providing you with the ability to self-serve online using Fixflo+ and the resident portal.
- Internal transformation – hybrid working facilities and a focus on providing all colleagues with the tools they need to deliver the best service.

Touchstone is also exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and chatbots. This will enable you to self-serve in areas such as requesting maintenance work, changing personal details, and paying rent (which account for over 60% of customer service calls) and they have the additional benefits of being available 24/7 and being multilingual. This will make Touchstone's communication with you more effective, efficient and timely.



Touchstone will be inviting all residents who haven't yet signed up to the portal to do so as part of the programme to switch to Direct Debit payments for rent collection (see below).

The portal will allow you to access and view all updates and news when it is most convenient for you.

Collecting rent by Direct Debit payments

We are ready to go live with automatic set up of Direct Debits, and at the end of January Touchstone emailed everyone who is not already set up with a link, to switch to Direct Debit.

If you have any queries about Direct Debit payments please contact rentdolphin@touchstoneresi.co.uk

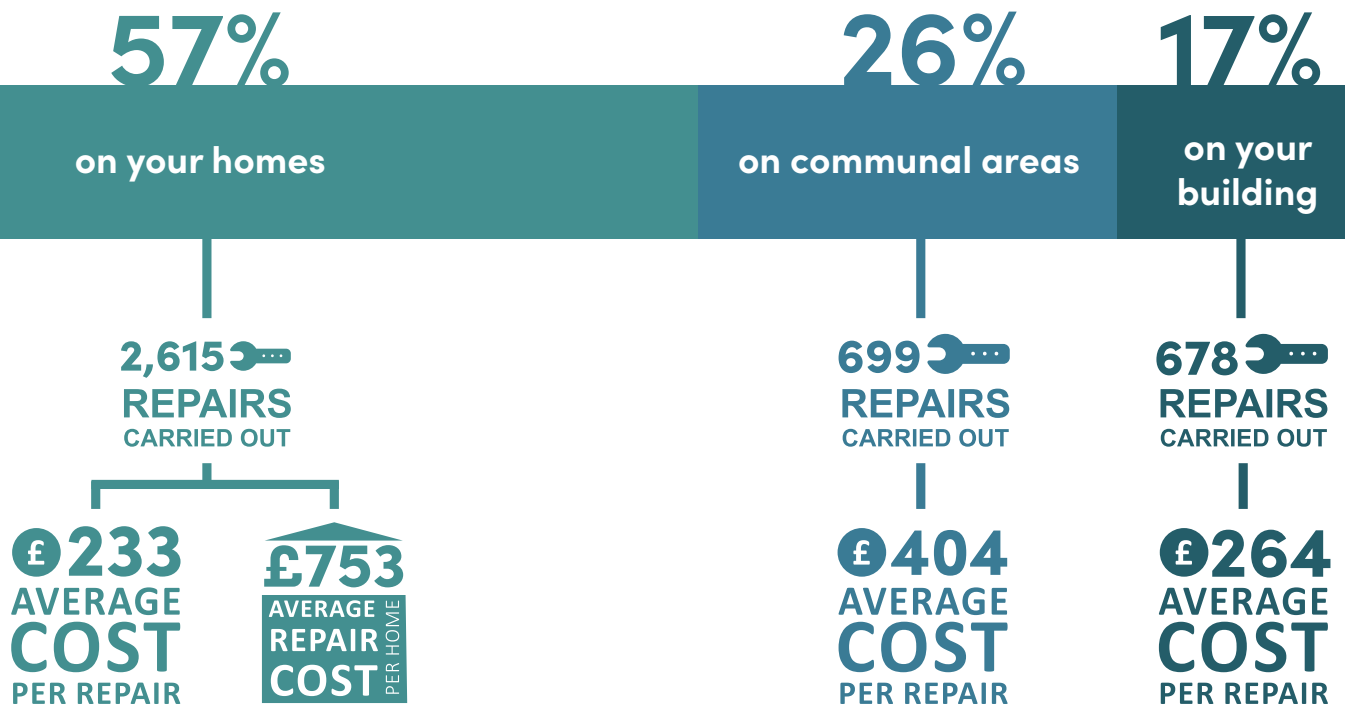


Our performance

We strive to continuously improve and upgrade your homes; in 2021 we spent over £1million on day-to-day repairs and maintenance to ensure your homes are safe and well-maintained.

In response to the risk of Covid-19 and to protect the safety of our residents, we doubled the cleaning rota for all main communal areas. Emergency and most routine repairs continued throughout the lockdowns. Despite the pandemic, we maintained a strong record on compliance for statutory health and safety checks. The team continued the lettings process throughout the year, housing 113 new residents in our properties.

Breakdown of spend across the whole portfolio:



Five highest spends across the whole portfolio:



In-flat repairs



Plumbing and drainage



Health & safety



Cleaning
(Covid-19 cleans)



Fire safety

Estate improvement works

In 2021, we undertook improvement works on some of the older properties within our portfolio. At Grove Court, Ealing, a full refurbishment was carried out. This included replacement of kitchens, bathrooms and new electricals in residents' homes. We also took the opportunity to carry out energy efficiency improvements such as internal wall insulation, increased loft insulation and installation of new boilers will lead to reduced heating and hot water bills. The communal areas were also refurbished, and we increased security across the estate with the installation of CCTV and additional external lighting.

Fire safety improvement works saw the installation of new front doors for properties in Ealing, Walthamstow and Forest Hill. These improvements ensured all doors met the latest fire standards and strengthened existing fire safety measures. We will continue to carry out improvement works throughout 2022, such as communal redecorations and energy specific improvements, and will share our plans in advance of works taking place.



New Regulation - Building and Fire Safety

The New Building Safety Bill will strengthen the whole regulatory system for building safety by establishing a comprehensive new building safety regime governing the design, construction and occupation of higher-risk buildings. The Bill will affect developers, owners, managers and occupiers of higher-risk buildings (at least 18 metres in height). It also establishes an opportunity for residents to have a stronger voice in the overall safety of the building. The Bill will become law from the beginning of the summer and we are closely monitoring progress and preparing to ensure homes are managed in compliance with the Bill.

FAQs

We receive many questions from our residents, here are some of the most frequently asked.

I'm having problems paying my rent. What should I do?

We know that things can change and that sometimes this means residents may struggle to make their rent payments. If you are having problems paying your rent please contact Touchstone: rentdolphins@touchstoneresi.co.uk. Our aim is to enable our residents to sustain their tenancy wherever possible.

Can I move into a different property or change the number of people living in my home?

We know that households change during a tenancy and therefore you may need to move into a smaller or larger property. If your household circumstances do change, please contact your Property Manager to see how we can help. We aim to work with you to accommodate these changes wherever possible. Residents are reminded they must give three months' notice of their intention to leave a property.

Should I have home contents insurance?

Yes. All residents should have home contents insurance to cover personal belongings in case an incident occurs.

If you own a bike, stored outside or within the secure cycle storage, we encourage you to include this in your home contents insurance package or explore bike specific insurance.

Dolphin Living is not responsible for incidents outside of its control which may damage your personal belongings. We have comprehensive building insurance to cover the full repair of a property only.



Can I have a pet in my Dolphin home?

Dolphin Living has a clear policy on residents keeping pets in their homes, this can be found in the **Resident Portal**. If you are looking to keep a pet, please contact your Property Manager to seek approval. Dolphin Living reserve the right to refuse permission based on the type of property you live in and any freehold restrictions.

I have issues with parcel deliveries

Deliveries to the property are the responsibility of the resident – if you are not going to be home to receive your parcel please organise for delivery to a local click and collect service. Dolphin Living cannot be held responsible for any parcels left in communal areas. Parcels left in communal areas constitute a fire risk and these areas should be kept free of such items.

If you live in a property where you need to meet visitors at the main entrance, often referred to as a 'meet and greet' entrance, please meet the delivery driver at the main entrance to collect your parcel.

Can I sub-let my flat or a spare bedroom in my flat?

No. Subletting is not permitted in any Dolphin Living property. A zero-tolerance approach is taken towards any resident found sub-letting all or part of their home and legal action will be taken to gain possession of the property. Dolphin Living will also take action to claim any profit the sub-letting has made.

All household members must be named on the tenancy agreement. Consent of Dolphin Living is required to add to those listed on the agreement.



“

I enjoyed living in the flat a lot. It is large, much better quality than a lot of London flats I've lived in, and your service overall was excellent.

Kennington Lane resident

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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.

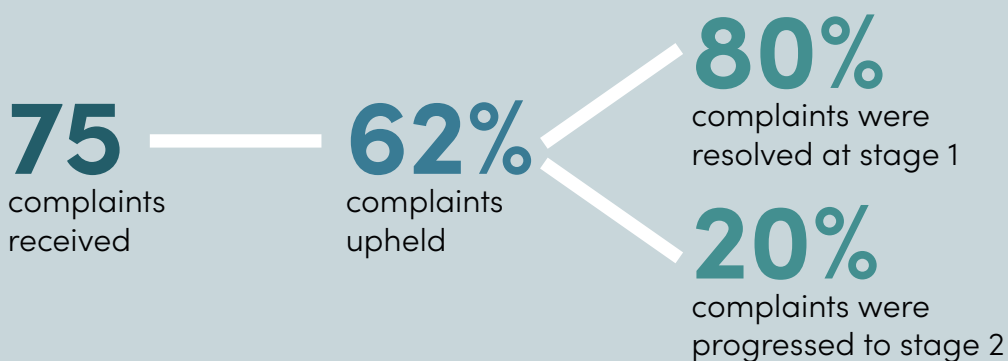
The portal also allows you to track progress and updates relating to your repair and to provide feedback. Any repairs reported by phone or email to Touchstone will be entered onto the portal; the quickest way to report repairs is to access the portal directly.



Need to report a repair now? [Click here.](#)

Your feedback

We cannot always get it right and we welcome feedback from you. What you tell us enables us to improve our service to you: from how we communicate, to repair times and communal area improvements – and whatever else you want to tell us about. So please get in touch with your Property Manager to share your compliments, complaints, or suggestions.



Details of our Complaints Policy can be found on the [Resident Portal](#).

Damp and condensation in your home

Condensation can lead to mould growth, and mould can be harmful to your health. Damp conditions often encourage mould to grow, and there are three main factors that contribute to damp and condensation in your home:

Too much moisture in your home

Moisture is produced by everyday activities such as cooking, drying clothes and showering. If this moisture is allowed to build up it can cause excessive condensation, which can lead to damp.

Not enough ventilation

If your home is not properly ventilated, moisture cannot escape. Make sure you open trickle vents and windows and use your extractor fan when cooking.

The temperature of your home

Heating one room to a high level and leaving other rooms cold can worsen condensation; setting your thermostat to a low temperature all day in cold weather will help reduce both condensation and energy usage. We recommend setting your thermostat between 18 and 20 degrees.



Tips to reduce condensation and mould in your home:

- Use saucepan lids when cooking
- Use the extractor fans fitted in your kitchen and bathroom while cooking and washing
- Keep the kitchen and bathroom doors closed when cooking or washing to stop moisture moving around your home
- Avoid drying clothes on a radiator
- Keep all trickle vents on your windows open to help moisture in the air escape your home
- Open your windows
- Do not block vents
- Do not over fill wardrobes and cupboards as this restricts air circulation
- Keep a gap of at least 50mm between large pieces of furniture and the walls
- Clean the mould by spraying it with a mixture of 1 part bleach to 4 parts water.

If you are experiencing any mould issues, please contact your Property Manager to discuss what further action can be taken.



Resident Forums & Events

Would you like to set up a Resident Forum in your building?

Many residents have expressed an interest in establishing Resident Forums. These forums give you the opportunity to discuss common issues, like repairs and maintenance, organise social activities and represent resident views to Dolphin Living and Touchstone.

We believe these provide a great opportunity to promote and support community spirit and cooperation amongst residents. To form a Resident Forum, 51% of homes within a building will need to agree to join, and Dolphin Living would be very happy to help you set up and get going.

Please do get in touch if you are interested in creating or taking part in a Resident Forum, and we can provide information and guidance:

ValentineOhagwa@dolphinliving.com

Resident Events

In 2021 we held several virtual resident events, and even had the opportunity to hold an in-person meeting at our One Church Square development in Pimlico.

We will be arranging a number of resident events in 2022 and have already started our 'estate walkarounds' – where Dolphin and Touchstone team members visit your development as an opportunity to check on communal areas. Residents are welcome to join these walkarounds – in February the team will be visiting One Church Square, Hopkins Street and Lanark Road. In March they'll be at Mount Close and Grove Court. Please get in touch with your Property Manager to receive more information about these visits.

Residents of our Accelerator scheme were invited to a session with an independent Financial Advisor, who helped give advice on financial and mortgage related questions. The residents who were able to attend found the session very informative, and we are looking to hold another one in 2022.

We are grateful for your help and support with finding a new home. You have been communicative, and efficient and the whole experience has been positive.

Hopkins Street resident

An aerial photograph of London, England, showing the Tower Bridge on the left with the Union Jack flag flying from its top. In the center, the London Eye is visible. The background features a dense cityscape with various skyscrapers under a clear blue sky. In the foreground, a modern multi-story apartment building with a grid of windows is visible, along with a street and some pedestrians.

Helping you
buy a home:

Westminster
Homeownership
Accelerator Scheme



Our Accelerator Scheme helps working Londoners become home-owners. Residents in the scheme have household earnings of less than £90,000 per year and savings of at least £22,500. They live in one of our homes for a period of up to three years and earn money on their savings to help them secure enough for a deposit on a new home in London.

Since the scheme's inception in 2016 we have helped 27 households move into homeownership. Participants have purchased a mixture of one bedroom to five-bedroom homes on the open market, via Shared Ownership, Share to Buy or Discount Market sale, and have received between £6,000 and £25,000 worth of grant from Dolphin Living.

**Click on the link to find out more about
our Accelerator scheme:**

www.dolphinliving.com/accelerator

New schemes launching in 2022

We are excited to announce three new schemes will be launched in March, June and August 2022. The new schemes are based in central Westminster, building upon our existing portfolio of affordable properties within the borough. More information on each of the three properties, located in Pimlico, Victoria, and Soho, can be found on our website.

www.dolphinliving.com

If you know of someone looking to find affordable accommodation in Westminster, please recommend our website to see how they can apply.



I wanted to thank you, if I wasn't selected for intermediate rent, I probably wouldn't have bought my first home... thank you so much – forever grateful.

Gorleston Street resident



If you have any queries please
contact us at info@touchstonecps.com
or call 01225 838 490.

www.dolphinliving.com



Dolphin Living