



AUTUMN 2024

Welcome to the autumn edition of our Local Space newsletter

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Investing in your homes

Your satisfaction with our services

The Regulator of Social Housing has introduced new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) for housing associations and local authorities to report their overall performance.

In 2023-24, 73% of customers said they are satisfied overall with the services we provide. We'd like to thank all our customers who have taken time to complete surveys so far. Your feedback helps us to shape our services and improve your experience with us.

According to Housemark's (housemark.co.uk) analysis, a leading data and insight company for the UK housing sector, Local Space is performing 12.6% above other housing associations in London for overall customer satisfaction. Nationally, we fall slightly below

the median benchmark by 2.65%, with 72.60% of our customers expressing satisfaction with our overall service.

Some of our scores are lower than we would like and we're looking to implement improvements to enhance these areas. Once we have scoped out these improvements, we'll let you know what we have planned.

Find out more about our performance on our website at localspace.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback



Is your stock condition inspection due?

We have identified approximately 531 homes that are due for a stock condition inspection which is to be completed this year.

If your home is due for an inspection, our contractors MLCS3 will contact you by letter to arrange an appointment.

The inspection includes examining the condition of your home to ensure it's a safe and comfortable living environment. It also helps us to plan for future maintenance costs and prioritise any necessary repairs. If you have any concerns, then please raise it with the inspector present at the time.

You can find out more information about MLCS3 on their website at mlcsc.com



New homes in Newham

Since our last newsletter, Newham Council purchased and refurbished 24 homes with white goods and leased them to Local Space. That's an additional 24 homeless families that we're able to help.

We've been working hard to arrange viewings and move customers in as quickly as possible. These are a collection of two-bedroom, three-bedroom, and four-bedroom homes in Newham and Barking & Dagenham.



Service improvements

You said, we did!

In this section, we'll update you on how we've listened to your feedback and used it to improve our services.

Complaints performance and service improvement

Your feedback highlighted that our responses to complaints were not being provided in a timely manner and were not personalised. We have now:

- Changed our approach to complaint handling.
- Made our letter templates more personalised.
- Implemented measures to make sure complaint responses are handled on time and in compliance with the new Housing Ombudsman's Complaint handling code.

You can read our complaints performance report on our website at localspace.co.uk/complaints-and-feedback

Money matters

Ways to pay your rent

Did you know you can pay your rent using AllPay's automated payment line?

You can use the secure phone line to pay your rent when you want, 24 hours a day. You no longer need to worry about call centres or waiting to speak to someone.

All you'll need is your 19-digit AllPay payment reference number which you can find on your payment card. Your reference number should start with either 98 or 63. Call **020 8221 4000** and press option 3.

Find out more at AllPay's website at allpayments.net

Have peace of mind with home contents insurance

Contents insurance is designed to protect your possessions. No matter how careful you are, there's always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged or stolen, so home contents insurance can provide you with peace of mind.

Local Space is a member of the National Housing Federation, which has teamed up with Thistle Tenant Risks who provide contents insurance specifically for residents in social housing.

My Home Contents Insurance insures the contents of your home including cover for items such as furniture, carpets, curtains, clothes, bedding, electrical items, jewellery, pictures and ornaments.

Read the benefits of having contents insurance on thistlemyhome.co.uk



Health & safety

Are your windows safe?

Whether you live in a building or a house, you should always be aware about the safety of your windows, especially if you have children or vulnerable adults in your home.

If you notice that your windows are damaged or not working properly, please report them to us immediately on **020 8221 4000**, so we can arrange for them to be repaired before an accident takes place. Please make sure that the windows remain closed until they have been inspected.

We've put together a few recommendations below to help stay safe:

- Explain to family members the dangers of being next to an open window.
- Don't leave any children, pets or vulnerable adults alone with the window wide open.
- Inspect your windows once a week to check if there are any problems.
- Try to avoid keeping any furniture near a window that opens, so that children, pets or vulnerable adults are unable to climb up.
- Clean your windows regularly to make sure they work correctly and reduce the risks of malfunctions.

If you're unsure about the safety of your windows, please get in touch with us today. Taking action now could help prevent an incident tomorrow.

To report a repair, visit our website at localspace.co.uk/report-repair



E-scooters safety

E-bikes and e-scooters are becoming increasingly popular, but they can be a fire risk if they're not handled correctly.

Did you know on average there was a fire every two days caused by an e-scooter or e-bike in 2023?

Most are powered by lithium-ion batteries which can be charged at home. It's important when charging your e-bikes and e-scooters, you do so safely to avoid a fire risk.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to customers leaving e-scooters and e-bikes in the communal areas of all blocks and buildings. This is to avoid blocking your fire escape route.

Read the London Fire Brigade's tips on e-scooters and e-bikes at london-fire.gov.uk

How we can help you deal with damp and mould

When you report a damp and mould issue to us, there are certain steps that we follow to ensure a thorough investigation is carried out.

We can:

- Conduct an inspection to assess the extent of the damp and mould and identify the underlying causes.
- Address immediate concerns if the damp and mould pose health risks or safety concerns, which could include temporarily moving you and your family if necessary.
- Keep you informed about the inspection findings, proposed actions, and timelines for addressing the damp and mould.
- Resolve underlying causes such as leaks, poor ventilation, or structural issues. This may involve carrying out repairs, improving ventilation, or implementing damp-proofing measures.
- Monitor the situation to ensure that the damp and mould are effectively remediated, which could include follow-up inspections.
- Provide advice on preventative measures such as proper ventilation, heating, and regular maintenance of your home.
- Offer support and assist you throughout the process, addressing any concerns or questions you may have.

What you can do

There are some things that you can do to help reduce moisture in your home to help prevent damp and mould:

- Check the extractor fans in your bathroom and kitchen are working. Let us know if they need to be repaired. When bathing, showering, and cooking, please switch the fan on and keep the door closed to prevent moist air travelling to other areas of your home.
- Try to keep your home properly heated. It usually helps to have a low background temperature of at least 15 degrees in all rooms. (21 degrees is what people typically find to be a comfortable temperature). However, we know that some of our customers struggle to cover their energy bills. Price comparison websites such as [uswitch.com](https://www.uswitch.com) and Money Supermarket ([moneysupermarket.com](https://www.moneysupermarket.com)) can help you switch tariffs and reduce bills.
- If you have outside space, please dry your washing outside and check the rules for drying clothes on balconies beforehand.
- Make sure any vents on your windows, walls or ceilings are not blocked.
- A few mornings each week, as a temporary measure, wipe away any moisture from areas which are prone to condensation such as windows and corners of rooms (particularly near the floor) to help reduce the likelihood of mould growth.

You can find out more about how we can help with damp and mould on our website at localspace.co.uk/helpwithdamp



Get involved

Welcome Lesley, our Customer Engagement Officer

We'd like to introduce our new Customer Engagement Officer, Lesley Wake.

Lesley joined Local Space in July 2022 as a Property Services Administrator and has consistently demonstrated exceptional dedication to delivering outstanding services to our customers.

Many of you are already familiar with Lesley's commitment and professionalism, and we are thrilled to have her advocating on behalf of our customers in this role.



This year's Inside Housing Tenant and Resident Engagement conference

In May, Inside Housing's Tenant and Resident Engagement conference took place to help landlords and residents achieve meaningful engagement that improves services, lives and communities.

The primary themes highlighted were the importance of placing residents at the core of social housing strategies and repairing broken relationships caused by communication gaps and existing stigmas.

Our resident Joanna Szablewska attended the conference and shared:



"The event focused on empowering us residents in service design and decision-making. Various speakers emphasised the necessity of involving and prioritising tenants in the design and decision-making processes. Empowering tenants in engagement ensures that their needs and perspectives shape the services they receive, leading to more tailored and effective outcomes, communication and collaboration. Strategies to rebuild trust and improve communication channels were explored, aiming to create a more positive and respectful dynamic between landlords and residents."

"As a resident, I'm proud to see my landlord, Local Space, thinking outside the box, having a dedicated engagement team, and adopting a forward-thinking approach by participating in such events and already exploring different communication channels with us. Being personally invited to the conference made me feel valued and appreciated. It is reassuring to witness Local Space's commitment to promoting a collaborative and respectful relationship with residents, which ultimately leads to better service and a stronger community."

News

Can I apply for a mutual exchange?

We understand families change over time and the home you originally moved into may no longer meet your needs. For example, you may need more space as your family has grown or now have spare rooms as your children have grown up and left home.

What is a mutual exchange?

A mutual exchange is also known as a home swap where you can swap homes with other social housing residents and assign your tenancy to one another. You can swap homes with any other council or housing association resident that lives anywhere in the UK.

How does it work?

You'll need your landlord's permission, so if you're interested in a mutual exchange, please get in touch with us on **020 8221 4000** or by emailing us at info@localspace.co.uk

Following permission, we recommend using HomeSwapper to take you through the mutual exchange process. Most mutual

exchanges are between people who have a tenancy that lasts a lifetime, as the person moving would inherit the terms of tenancy. You have an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (known as an AST) but this doesn't stop you from registering for an account. It means that the person who wants to swap with you would need to be happy accepting an AST.

If you register on HomeSwapper, there is an annual fee of £24. We're happy to pay this fee on your behalf. You can either call us and we'll pay them directly or you can send us the receipt and we'll transfer the money to you.

Once you've found a suitable swapper, please get back in touch with us. We'll need to check that you qualify for your new home and that it's suitable and affordable for you and your family. For the mutual exchange to be approved, you would also need to have a clear rent account.

Find out more information on HomeSwapper's website at homeswapper.co.uk

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

October was first declared as National Domestic Abuse Awareness Month in 1989. It's a month dedicated to raising awareness, acknowledging and giving a voice to domestic abuse survivors.

We want you to live safely in our homes and this means we take all reports of domestic abuse seriously. We'll support you and your family in any way we can to help safeguard you from the situation.

What support is available?

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, you should contact the police in the first instance on **999**. You can also contact the National Domestic Violence (nationaldahelpline.org.uk) helpline 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **0808 200 0247**.

If you feel that you can't call the National Domestic Violence helpline, please let us know on **020 8221 4000**. We'll help you access specialist services.

The Women's Aid directory (womensaid.org.uk/womens-aid-directory) contains details of local and regional services with up to date information, so you'll be able to find the right local support for you.

We've also updated our domestic violence and abuse policy to reflect our stance on domestic abuse, how we will support our residents and how our staff will be trained to deal with issues reported. Read our policy on our website at localspace.co.uk/your-tenancy





Did you miss our Residents' Report 2023-24?

We recently published our Residents' Report to share how we've invested in your homes and improved our services by listening to your feedback.

We've produced a short animation which provides a quick overview of our performance.

Take a look at our Residents' Report animation and read our report on our website at localspace.co.uk/residents-report-2023-24

Update your details

We're sending you this newsletter because our digital newsletter hasn't reached you. Please email info@localspace.co.uk with your name, address and email address so that we can make sure we have the most up-to-date contact details for you. Thank you.

At home with

LOCAL SPACE



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