

Annual Report for Tenants

April 2022 – March 2023



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Unless otherwise stated, the figures and statistics we quote in this report are from between April 2022 and March 2023, and accurate across all Flagship Group rather than Newtide Homes only.

Hello

A message from our Chair



Welcome to our 2022-23 annual report.

As we reflect on the past year, it's clear that we have faced challenging circumstances, from the economic and operating environment to the evolving landscape of the housing sector. At Newtide, we have grounded ourselves by going back to basics and focusing on our fundamental role. Every day, of every year, we continue to provide safe, sustainable, and affordable homes for people that need a new start.

We recognise the cost of living continues to present challenges, as does damp and mould. It's essential that you feel safe in your home, and we're here to work alongside you to make sure your home is happy, healthy and comfortable. Our focus continues to be prioritising damp and mould and ensuring our homes are maintained to the standard we want for you. Our Housing and Neighbourhood teams have completed over 970 additional home visits, focussing on those of you who have not received a visit in past 12 months.

Our goal is to make it as easy as possible for you to manage your money and household budget, so you don't find yourself short during the month. Through initiatives such as the Warmer Homes Fund, our Affordability Fund and through partnerships with local organisations we've made a positive impact in the community, easing the burden that we've all faced.

Feeling safe and secure in your home and neighbourhood is an essential part of feeling welcome in your community. In April 2023 we introduced a new Neighbourhood Standard, which ensures that the area you live in and share with your neighbours is kept clean, safe, and well-maintained. We have completed a comprehensive review of our anti-social behaviour (ASB) policy, invested in an additional Safe Communities Officer and Domestic Abuse Officer and our entire team is now qualified at either BTEC Level 3 or Level 5 in Community Management, which is a great achievement.

We believe it's paramount to have tenant's voices directly contributing to our decisions and last summer we welcomed Newtide tenant, Santana, to our board.

The Government launched the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Standard in April 2023. Your honest feedback allows us to better understand your needs and continuously improve our services. If you've already taken part, **thank you!** If you haven't been contacted yet but would like to share your views, head to the Get Involved page on our website to get started.

As we look ahead, we recognise that the challenges and opportunities in the housing sector are ever-evolving. Nevertheless, we are committed to adapting, innovating, and continually improving our services. This annual report serves as a testament to the dedication and hard work of our entire Newtide team; they work tirelessly to support our tenants, and I'd like to thank each and every one of them.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated teams, partners and charities, and every single person who has supported, contributed to and engaged with Newtide Homes or Flagship Group in the past year. Together, we are building a more inclusive future for everyone. After all, the whole reason we exist is to provide a home and a community that you, our tenants, love and thrive in.



Cy Edmondson
Chair of Flagship Homes

Helping you feel at home

We exist to give our tenants an affordable home and often a new beginning. It's what we're all about! It's what keeps us going, day in, day out. And it's no small task – lots of people across several departments all work together everyday to make our vision a reality.

Moving in

When a tenant leaves their home, it now takes **47.3** days on average for us to carry out any repairs and get the home ready for new tenants to move in. That's down from 64.6 days the year before! And when it comes to **mutual exchange**, we helped 452 households make the move.

Through our development company, **Flagship Homes**, we welcomed 110 households into affordable new-build Newtide homes. And, in addition to that, Flagship Homes built or acquired 29 **shared ownership** homes for households who are ready to take the next step on the property ladder.

We're members of House Exchange, a platform for tenants looking to exchange

We welcomed
2,043
new households
last year

Doing everything we can to help

We're committed to supporting you in any way we can. From removing and preventing damp and mould, to the rising cost of living and escalating energy bills, we know many of our tenants have found themselves struggling to maintain their tenancies.

Having a healthy environment to come home to is essential to our wellbeing. That's why we've carried out visits to over 3,000 tenants, specifically focusing on identifying and dealing with damp and mould issues.

Through our Warmer Homes projects, we've helped 519 families with energy vouchers, totalling **£42,492**.

In the last year, our Community Skills team has begun supporting Newtide tenants. Since November 2022, they've received 39 referrals, and these numbers are on the rise!

These referrals have resulted in a wide range of support, including:

- **Advocacy with external agencies like DWP**
- **Career guidance**
- **Digital skills training**
- **Employment support**
- **Education and training**

Click here to get started with Community Skills, or give us a call on the usual number!

newtide-homes.co.uk/support-and-wellbeing/community-skills

Tackling damp and mould together

Nobody should be living with damp and mould. It's not uncommon for any home to have small areas of damp, especially in the colder months. Most of the time, this is down to an increase in condensation – moisture can build up in the air around your windows as the weather gets chilly. But if it reaches a point where it keeps coming back or gets worse, that's where we can help.

We've installed new door and window seals, insulation and ventilation to minimise damp

Useful advice and practical help

Over winter 2022, we updated our information on damp and mould. We've created a new webpage where we host our latest guidance:

- [A video on how to reduce condensation](#)
- [Links to raise a repair](#)
- [A form to request financial support](#)
- [Our damp and mould self-assessment and commitment to our tenants.](#)

Plus, we sent out **5,000 postcards** and **748 texts** to a selection of Newtide tenants to remind them how to report damp and mould in their home. We also had our online content reviewed by involved tenants in spring 2023, and we'll refresh our resources by autumn to make sure you have all the information and support you need if you're struggling. Our staff have been trained on how to spot different types of mould, and we've introduced new internal processes to make sure it's easier than ever for any member of staff to report it on your behalf.

Find out more about how to beat damp and mould here
newtide-homes.co.uk/damp-and-mould

Let us know if you need help with damp and mould

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you're struggling to keep on top of damp or mould. There are some simple changes to your daily routine that could have a big impact, but we know there'll be some instances where you really need additional support from Flagship Services – whether that's because you need help with the physical side of getting rid of mould, or if you think something more serious is going on (like a leak or broken roof tiles). **We're here to help**, so let us know if you need us.



What's on your mind?

We've always wanted to know what you think about our service. And now, it's easier than ever for you to get involved in a way that suits you.

Influencer Network

After speaking with our existing involved tenants we launched the INfluencer Network, merging existing groups like the Digital Experience Group and the Complaint Appeal Panel. This inclusive network covers a range of topics, giving you a platform to influence our latest ideas, changes and priorities.

In February, we held the first Group INfluencer get-together at our Norwich office, shining a spotlight on the repairs service and gathering feedback on our strategy. Looking ahead, we have a digital platform which will launch in summer 2023, which will give you the chance to take part in surveys, polls and much more, all from the comfort of your home!

IN TENANT INFLUENCER NETWORK

Learn more and register your interest here: newtide-homes.co.uk/your-feedback/get-involved/

Personal Influencer

Just by being a Newtide Homes tenant, speaking to our staff and filling out the occasional feedback request, you're already influencing the way we shape our service.

Local INfluencer

You make your involvement local and want to have your say on behalf of your neighbourhood. Look out for local Newtide Homes events when they pop up and take part in our surveys and feedback requests on local and community topics.

Group INfluencer

If you'd like to join us and your fellow INfluencers at exclusive Group INfluencer events, we'd love to hear from you! By joining this Group role, you'll be invited to take part in lots of opportunities like our quarterly INfluencer days, scrutiny groups, review panels and co-creation sessions.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

In 2020 the government published the social housing white paper. It set out a series of improvements for people living in social housing, including a new Charter.

Following this paper, from April 2023 we'll start reporting on some Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), so the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) can understand how well we're doing at providing good quality homes and services to you, our tenants.

TSMs run all year round, but not everyone will be contacted – only enough to make sure our data is reliable. If you are contacted, it'll be by a company called IFF Research who are carrying out calls and emails on our behalf.

P.S. If you haven't been contacted but would like to tell us what you think, we'd love to hear from you! Email us at info@newtide-homes.co.uk.

Our affordability survey from June 2022 collected

1080

responses and provided us with a better understanding of how the cost-of-living crisis was impacting you

Find out more about TSMs online at newtide-homes.co.uk/TSM

Complaints

This year, we've received **1,396** complaints. This is an increase of 356 on last year, but reflects the integration of complaints made to Gasway. Plus, we've seen a reduction in the number of complaints escalated to level two, with the total for last year sitting at **119** (down 31).

Flagship Group has self-assessed against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. We learned that resolutions to complaints took too long and we worked with our involved tenants to shape a new policy with just two stages, making it much quicker and easier to resolve your concerns. You can read Flagship's Groups full self-assessment, and find more detail about the code itself, at newtide-homes.co.uk/make-a-complaint

We're committed to learning and improving by understanding the causes of complaints, our focus has been repairs where a number of changes including a new operating system and better tenant communication from 2023.

It's important to us that you let us know if we're not getting things right for you, so please don't hesitate to get in touch if our service hasn't been good enough.

If you're unhappy with how we've handled a complaint, you have the right to refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman. Of the Ombudsman's findings in the last year, we were found to be at fault in just four cases. Of course, we'd prefer this to be zero, but this is a maladministration rate of only **23%**, where the national rate for landlords is currently 55%. This means the Ombudsman thinks we've 'performed very well' when compared to similar landlords.

Where the heart is

One of the most vital parts of our job is to help you maintain the home you live in. Whether that's through kitchen and bathroom upgrades, responsive repairs or installing modern heating and hot water systems, keeping your home warm and well-maintained is hugely important to us.

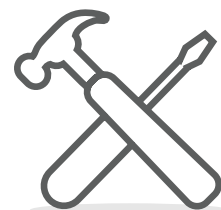
We've installed

2105

Switchee devices
between April 2022
and March 2023



We use data from Switchee devices (smart thermostats) to identify homes at risk of condensation, damp or mould. Switchees can also bring our attention to tenants who are finding it difficult to keep their house warm, allowing us to proactively reach out and offer financial support where needed.



Repairs

Flagship Services are hard at work all year-round to help keep your home in good condition. And, while we know there's still a way to go, the time it takes for your repairs to be completed is reducing. The wildfires in summer 2022 and the spiralling cost of energy that followed resulted in a surge in demand, but Flagship Services continue to do their very best to make sure your home is safe and well-maintained. In fact, they completed over **64,014 repairs** last year!

Plus, we've made some changes to how you report a repair online. It's now much easier for you to tell us which room is impacted, exactly what the problem is and the chance to upload a photo. And now you can even let us know the best time for us to visit you, right down to the day of the week and time of day!

Report a repair online at
newtide-homes.co.uk/repairs

We installed:

886
bathrooms

1,134
kitchens



Improving how you report repairs

Our Digital team has worked closely with engaged tenants throughout the year to help improve the Repairs flow.

We've made it easier to understand what's covered as a tenant responsibility vs a landlord responsibility, and broken down the repairs categories so that the right tradesperson is assigned.

Plus, our engaged tenants are also helping us identify areas of the website which need improving for accessibility reasons.

Community spirit

The shared spaces outside your home, and the neighbours you share them with, all come together to create your community. Feeling welcome, safe and happy in your neighbourhood helps to create a real sense of community spirit, and that's something we feel passionate about.

Anti-social behaviour

Everyone should be free to express themselves and live their lives in a way that makes them happy, and sometimes this might be different to those around them. We ask all our tenants to be tolerant and kind to each other.

We want you to be able to enjoy your home and community free from anti-social behaviour (ASB) or crime. We aim to provide and uphold communities which feel safe and where people enjoy living. However, from time to time the actions of others can have a negative impact on those who live around them and we are here to help should this happen. Our recently renamed Safe Communities team has handled **1,436** cases of anti-social behaviour across our communities.

Confidentially report ASB in your neighbourhood at
newtide-homes.co.uk/tenant-hub/your-community/safe-communities/report-anti-social-behaviour

Domestic abuse

As part of Flagship Group, we're actively working towards an accreditation with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA). To help us achieve this, we've introduced specialist Domestic Abuse Officers within Newtide Homes to help you access the support and services you need, should you ever find yourself in a position where you need them.

We've refreshed our website content to help you discreetly access the information in your own time too. There, you'll find lists of useful contacts, a safety planning guide and our contact details in case there's anything you'd like to talk to us about.

Reach out to us confidentially and learn more about how we can help if you need us online at:
newtide-homes.co.uk/domesticabuse

We've developed a partnership agreement with Lofty Heights to support any tenants who are struggling with hoarding.



Loving where you live

Our living environment has an impact on how we view, and interact with, the world around us. Our dedicated Neighbourhoods team is full of people who understand this and, alongside the Grounds Maintenance, Cleaning, and Arborist teams from Flagship Services, put their all into keeping your neighbourhood looking like somewhere you're proud to come home to.

Have you seen our Neighbourhood Officers in your community?

They provide a key presence in our communities, completing regular neighbourhood and playground inspections, bulk rubbish clearances, graffiti removal, dealing with abandoned vehicles, and fly-tipping.

Community focus for generations to come

Our project at **Saxon Road in Saxmundham** will transform 16 garages into five new affordable homes. Similar projects are taking place in **Grundisburgh and Woodbridge** introducing nine new homes to the local area. Where we can, we'll build these using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and use the opportunity to trial smart new technologies.

Keep clear and safe

Don't forget – if you live in a home with communal spaces, it's important to do your part to keep yourself and your neighbours safe in case of an emergency. Making sure all communal areas are clear of personal belongings helps to keep your family and those around you safe.



Click here to report an issue in your neighbourhood
newtide-homes.co.uk/tenant-hub/your-community/report-a-neighbourhood-issue

Enjoy the great outdoors right on your doorstep!

As part of Flagship Group, we take our commitment to the local environment very seriously. That's why we've appointed a Biodiversity and Land Manager to review how we manage our green spaces to tackle climate change and encourage nature to thrive!

Our new meadows contain double the number of flowers, bees and butterflies than areas of shorter grass

What is biodiversity?

It's all the different species living together in one area, like the variety of animals, plants and fungi that make up the world around us.



We've created enough meadow to fill three football fields!

We've installed benches and loggeries, planted shrubs and created wildflower areas

With the help of our Grounds Maintenance team, we're making changes to how we manage our communal green spaces. This involves leaving some areas of grass to grow up into meadows over spring and summer, as well as planting more bulbs, shrubs and trees. All of this provides food and shelter to animals, bugs and plants, and brings nature into our communities.

The **Urban Wilding** research project at **St Andrews Place in Melton** that we kicked off last year is now in full bloom. The goal is to find different ways of managing green spaces, both for nature and people alike. Consultants and local businesses have already been involved, alongside volunteers from Newtide and across Flagship Group. We'll measure how the different spaces increase **biodiversity** and influence people's perceptions of nature and greenspace.

HOPESTEAD

Hopestead is Flagship Group's charity, and we aim to prevent people from becoming homeless.

HOPE AT CHRISTMAS

Running from November 2022 to early January 2023, we asked for donations to help us spread a little hope this Christmas and support those at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness across East Anglia during the festive period.

With the help of volunteers, we held eight street cash collections on the streets of Cambridge, Norwich, and Bury St Edmunds, as well as collections at the Norwich Riverside branch of Morrisons. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we raised almost £2,000 and received almost 50 parcels so we could provide home essentials like kitchen appliances, crockery and cutlery, bedding and more to our service users.

Hopestead supported over
13,000
people in the last year



Hopestead can provide the household essentials needed to make a house a home

HOPE
STEAD

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Hope Funds is, at its heart, all about making a difference and a greater impact together. We partner with organisations that share our vision, providing hands-on support and celebrating their results.

Here's just a handful of the organisations we've supported in the last year:

Access Community Trust – We contributed £6,950 towards the 'Renting Ready' tenancy sustainment training, upskilling four staff members to reach a predicted 100 service users annually

St Martins Housing – We donated £9,785 for a tenancy training programme to give 25 attendees accreditations in basic life skills to sustain their tenancy

New Meaning foundation – We donated £10,000 to pilot a six-month refurbishment, repair, decorating & small works project to provide training & employment to those experiencing homelessness

King's Lynn Night Shelter – We contributed £10,000 to provide ongoing emergency accommodation and sleeping bags, phone access, advice, and food to over 200 people in need

You can learn more about what we do on our website hopestead.org

Click here to learn more about Hopestead: hopestead.org

Value for money



Value for money is an important part of our culture. It sets the tone for doing the best for our tenants and is one of our fundamental values – spending money wisely.

We use a colour coding system to highlight our VFM performance:

● Good ● OK ● Requires improvement

Absolute and Comparative Costs	2023 Actual	2022 Actual	2022 Peer Group	2023-2022 Actual	2023 Actual v Peer Group	2022 Actual v Peer Group
Staff engagement score	8.1	7.9	N/A	●		
New affordable homes delivered	633	564	501	●	●	●
Void loss (£m)	1.9	1.9	2.3	●	●	●
Current tenant arrears %	3.7%	3.8%	4.6%	●	●	●
Total operating surplus (£m)	79.6	83.3	54.9	●	●	●
Surplus for the year (£m)	49.2	59.2	43.3	●	●	●
Surplus per Home (£)	1,515	1,864	1,455	●	●	●
% of homes at EPC-C	58.9%	56.6%	N/A	●		
Reinvestment percentage	8.6%	7.1%	6.7%	●	●	●
New supply delivered (Social housing units)	2.0%	1.8%	1.7%	●	●	●
New supply delivered (Non-social housing units)	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	●	●	●
Gearing	44.7%	45.7%	45.3%	●	●	●
EBITDA MRI (interest cover)	132%	180%	143%	●	●	●
Headline social housing cost per unit (£)	4,207	3,637	4,123	●	●	●
Operating margin (overall)	24.7%	28.4%	20.1%	●	●	●
Operating margin (social housing lettings only)	28.4%	33.3%	25.6%	●	●	●
Return on capital employed (ROCE)	3.7%	4.0%	3.0%	●	●	●

Part of



Newtide Homes
31 King Street
Norwich
Norfolk
NR1 1PD

newtide-homes.co.uk

Get in touch

Our Customer Services team received 89,321 calls last year!

You can get in touch with them on weekdays 7am – 7pm, excluding bank holidays.

 **0808 168 4555**

 **info@newtide-homes.co.uk**

 **newtide-homes.co.uk**

 **[@MyNewtideHome](https://twitter.com/MyNewtideHome)**