

**more**  
than you think



On Wednesday 19 May, we successfully hosted our first ever virtual residents' event. The event brought together some of our most knowledgeable staff and Board members from across Clarion, including David Orr, Chair of the Housing Association Board, and Clare Miller, Chief Executive of Clarion Housing Group. It was a fantastic opportunity for residents to put a face to some of our most senior names and find out more about the diverse range of services we provide.

We had more than **3,000 registrations**, with **799 residents** watching live on the night.

To enable as many residents to watch the event, we hosted a dedicated portal, which offered those who had registered a chance to watch the event back until the 15 June at a time convenient to them.

For our residents who don't have a digital presence, we offered a dial in and listen along telephone option and a playback recording of the entire event.

On the night, we presented plans for our new resident involvement strategy, which has been informed by the feedback you have shared and the current environment we are continuing to deliver our services in, including more flexible ways you can get involved at Clarion. We continue to provide a variety of face-to-face options and our resident involvement team offers digital inclusion training if you feel like this would benefit you in accessing our online services.

Visit [myclarionhousing.com/request-for-guidance](https://myclarionhousing.com/request-for-guidance) or call 0300 500 8000 and ask for Guideline.



With Covid-19 changing the way we live, communicate and work, the event also provided an insight into the work we have delivered to support you and your communities during the pandemic, our long-term vision for your homes, and the services and support available whenever you need them. We created some fantastic videos, many homemade by residents and staff members. You can watch our highlights video of the event on our website.

As part of the registration process and prior to the event, residents were invited to submit a question as part of our commitment to maintaining transparent and consistent engagement with you.

We received **1,205 questions** from residents across the UK, covering a wide range of themes, including:

- Customer Service
- Repairs
- Planned Investment
- Service Charges
- Sustainability

We hope this newsletter will be able to offer you some advice and follow up information surrounding these themes.

# Customer Service

Clarion is committed to providing an excellent service to all of our customers. This means keeping customers informed, taking responsibility and working to achieve the best outcome.

We aim to deal with a high percentage of your calls at first contact, which is why when residents call us on 0300 500 8000 via our customer contact centre there are a number of options to choose from so that the call can be routed to the most relevant team such as our customer support team.

Last year Clarion received **1,042,770 calls** and **answered 989,183** of these. The average speed of answering those calls was **83 seconds**. Whilst many calls will have been answered quickly, some customers will wait longer which we know can be frustrating. We continue to focus on the quality of our call handling and our customer strategy will concentrate on resolving your questions at the first point of contact. We also regularly review our options and messaging to make sure it is up to date for our customers.

Our housing teams spend most of their time out on our estates and will visit you at home if needed, or when your issues or problems are more complex to be handled over the phone.

It isn't always necessary for you to see your Neighbourhood Officer, so if you have access to the internet, there are other efficient ways to contact us through our newly launched Clarion Housing website and other digital services such as live chat and we're currently trialling chat bot service. Over the last 12 months, both have shown to be successful and popular with residents.

Our Customer Solutions team respond to initial complaints and help resolve those that have escalated or may need different team's involvement to help find a resolution. They also respond to member and councillors' enquires on behalf of our residents, and work closely with the Housing Ombudsman service should you need them.



# Responsive Repairs

Your repairs services are provided by Clarion Response and EQUANS, part of the ENGIE Group, depending on where your home is. On average we complete **1,200 repairs** daily and try to ensure that all repairs are completed first time. Sometimes repairs are more complicated and take longer than we would like if the work's more extensive or materials are needed.

All emergency repairs should be completed within 24 hours, regardless of which contractor or service is delivering it.

There are various teams involved in the scheduling and delivery of repairs through our contact centre. Call wait times vary daily, (high on a Monday and or following bad weather) our staffing levels are increased for known peak periods, but it may help to call or email in less, busy times.

Our new online repairs reporting tool will be launched this summer which will allow residents to book their own appointments and amend/cancel themselves, as we realise our current reporting site is not effective enough for residents. This will be phased in to cover repairs with Clarion Response first and improve waiting times to book appointments in.

If you are dissatisfied with the progress of a repair or service we log and monitor all complaints to identify what has gone wrong, how to resolve it and whether there is a pattern with issues that residents are having. We listen to all feedback to identify where and how we need to improve through customer satisfaction surveys, text surveys or by phone.

Our contractors have to complete Key Performance Indicators every month, which means all jobs are supported by data from the systems that book the job. We can see who logged the repair, booked the appointment, when it was changed or amended, who attended and when.

This data is audited to make sure we are reporting accurately and the reporting is shared at every tier of the organisation up to Board level.



**CLARION**  
RESPONSE

For further information on responsive repairs and emergency repairs please visit [myclarionhousing.com/repairs-and-maintenance](https://myclarionhousing.com/repairs-and-maintenance)

# Planned Investment

Planned investment works (also known as major works) are renewals and refurbishments within or outside of residents' homes, such as kitchens, bathrooms, upgrading heating, windows, external doors, and roofs. We usually do this when an item has reached its natural lifespan and is no longer easy or economical to repair or maintain.

We also carry out cyclical redecorations, and other larger projects such as energy efficiency works or communal area improvements, such as lift replacements.

To carry out this work we use three main partnership contractors: Engie, United Living and Wates.

We regularly review the condition of properties. As part of our asset strategy, we continually consider the appropriate investment need in line with the decent homes standard, using survey data and existing component remaining life information.

To get the best value for money, each year we usually carry out work in a number of specific geographical locations, before moving onto other areas the following year.

Works vary from home to home, so residents may have different work carried out to that of their neighbour, and some properties may not require work at all if the condition is adequate. If you have any immediate repairs, please contact Clarion's repairs service. They will arrange an inspection, and take the appropriate action.

Generally, all work that is scheduled to be carried out by the planned investment team is subject to review (based on legislation changes, budget availability or funding, stock condition surveys, formal consultation where required, or other external factors such as planning approval), so there may be changes to our planned programmes of work from time to time.

We carry out full Section 20 consultations where required, and we write to all residents who are having work done prior to any work starting.

In 2020/21, despite a year hit by Covid-19, we spent **£75.5m** on planned improvement works across approximately **15,500 homes**, while maintaining high levels of health and safety.

For more information on resident safety and details of approximate component lifespans, visit [myclarionhousing.com/repairs-and-maintenance/planned-improvement-schemes](https://myclarionhousing.com/repairs-and-maintenance/planned-improvement-schemes)

# Service charges

A service charge is an additional payment made by you, separate from rent charges, which goes towards the cost of providing and maintaining additional services in and around your home. Charges vary depending on the type of home you live in, as well as whether you're a social resident, private resident, shared owner or leaseholder.

If you do not receive any type of communal services provided at either a block or estate level, or personal services; you will not pay a service charge to us.

Our teams provide a range of communal services either at a block or estate level for the benefit of residents such as lift maintenance, fire safety equipment, caretakers and cleaners. Many of our services are provided by specialist, external contractors and third party managing agents, particularly those in our newer built properties. We employ our own staff at Clarion to deliver some cleaning and caretaking services.

The costs associated with providing such services are coded by various teams to individual blocks and estates. We use blocks and estates to identify and group types of properties together based on factors like services

received, the floor area of your home and number of homes in the block/estate, to work out how the costs should be apportioned to residents.

Your service charge will depend on the type of tenancy or lease agreement you hold with us. For homeowners we provide an estimate of the charges at the beginning of the year and within six months of the year, provide a statement of the actual costs incurred. This means that homeowners will not pay more than the actual cost of services provided.

For residents on a variable service charge, the difference between your estimate and actual costs is included within the following year's estimates and forms the basis of this estimate.

For residents on a fixed service charge, we provide an estimate of charges each year.

It is important for residents to understand what type of agreement they enter in to.



To find out more about your service charge, visit [myclarionhousing.com/my-home/payments-rents-and-charges/understanding-your-service-charges](https://myclarionhousing.com/my-home/payments-rents-and-charges/understanding-your-service-charges)

# Sustainability

Sustainability is part of our wider commitment to behave ethically and with integrity.

We work hard to deliver quality and affordable homes and neighbourhoods to those failed by the private market.

We maximise social value, our environmental responsibility and maintain good governance.

- We've **reduced direct carbon emissions by 1/4** through procurement of certificated zero carbon electricity
- We've **more than halved** our properties that fall below Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating D since 2018.



Reducing carbon emissions is just one of the ways we are being more sustainable. We are also:

- Ensuring new build properties are ready for the net zero carbon future
- Investing, alongside government, in zero carbon ready retrofit models and pilot schemes
- Growing the number of electric vehicles used in our van fleet
- Encouraging our suppliers to reduce their carbon footprint and work towards 'net zero', particularly for new construction and repairs & maintenance.

We focus on fuel poverty, which includes prioritising energy efficiency changes in our least efficient properties to help residents with fuel bills and we provide support for the most vulnerable through the Clarion Futures Money programme.

To find out more about our sustainability framework or Clarion Futures money programme visit [clarionhg.com/about/our-principles/sustainability](https://clarionhg.com/about/our-principles/sustainability)

We want to offer you plenty of opportunities to have your say and shape our services - it really makes a significant impact. Please visit [myclarionhousing.com](https://myclarionhousing.com) for further help and information, or to find out ways you can get involved, email [getinvolved@myclarionhousing.com](mailto:getinvolved@myclarionhousing.com).

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