

C *ommunity*

C *are*

A *larm*

S *ervice*

Welcome to the latest Newsletter...



...especially
for customers
of the
Community
Care Alarm
Service.

This edition will tell
you how well the
service is working
and what we are
doing to improve.

This is also an
opportunity for you
to give us your
views on what you
think about the
service and how we
can make it better.

This newsletter will
also give you
information on how
we spent our money
last year and details
of our work with
other partners.



This issue includes articles on

	Pages
Local interest stories	2, 3 and 7
Changing technology	3, 7 and 10
Review of our service standards	4
Changes in our service over the last year	5
Supporting people	6
Our performance	8 and 9

What you told us last year

Last year 575 of you filled in the form in the newsletter giving us your views on the questions we asked

We asked	You said	We did
Do you want us to keep visiting you to check the information we hold about you?	No – only 18% wanted a specific visit but 89% of you said you thought the check was useful	From August this year we started to write to clients to check the information. We will still visit people if they need it.
How satisfied are you with the service you get from your Council resident warden?	96% said they were very or fairly satisfied. Eleven people said they were dissatisfied.	We looked at the reasons people gave for being dissatisfied and where possible put it right.
How important is it to you that your Council warden lives in the scheme?	92% thought it was important that wardens live in the schemes.	We have decided to continue with resident wardens in our Council sheltered schemes

Competition Winner

Last year we ran a competition to 'nominate a friend' to our service and have the chance of winning a £50 shopping voucher. The winner, drawn out of the hat, was Mrs Shirley Millar. She is pictured receiving her prize from Alyson Dugdale, our Community Alarm Services co-ordinator.



Andrea Collins the warden for Belvedere House and John Wallace, one of our mobile wardens.

A new look for our staff!

Our staff uniform has changed this year. We have traditionally worn white and navy blue uniforms and this year we have tried to make them more distinctive by replacing the white shirts and blouses with lilac ones. All of our staff will wear their name badges and carry photo identity cards. Remember that if you have any doubts about visitors to your home – don't let them in!



Congratulations!

We'd like to add our congratulations to Mr and Mrs McCormack who celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary earlier this year. They have been clients of the service since May 2002 and told us that they have peace of mind knowing help is at hand if it is needed.

Never too old to learn...

Residents from Margaret Collins House, one of our sheltered housing schemes, have been finding out about the wonders of the Internet with the help of 'Everybody online', a national project which aims to raise awareness of local computer facilities and increase their use.

The project was launched in the east of the city in March and the residents enjoyed it so much

they are trying to raise money for a computer in their scheme. Everyone agrees that learning how to use the Internet has not been as difficult as they feared.

Anyone interested in finding where their nearest public Internet facilities are and how to access them can telephone Claire Cook at 'Everybody online' on 2638080.



Edith Graham, (centre), a resident from Margaret Collins House, enjoying surfing the net at the project launch. She is being helped by Peter Beardsley and Andrew Pinder who is a government representative.

What we will do

We have been reviewing the standards of service that we aim to provide to our clients. We would like your views on them so that we can make sure our service fits your needs. We will publish the new standards in our service charter leaflets which are given to all new clients.

The proposed standards are listed below. Please comment on them by filling in the form in this newsletter.

Mobile Warden Service

- We will collect information about you as soon as you join the service. We will not give this information to anyone else without your permission.
- We will check with you that the information we have about you is up to date. We will do this once a year. We will update our records on the same day that you tell us about any changes in the information we hold about you.
- We will answer 96.5% of all calls in one minute.
- If you need the emergency services, we will phone them immediately.
- If you have made an emergency call, and you need a mobile warden, they will reach you within 30 minutes.
- If you have had a visit from a mobile warden in an emergency we will visit you again within 24 hours to check that everything is alright.
- If there is a fault on your community care alarm phone, we will replace the phone within 24 hours.
- If there is a fault on your intercom system, we will check it within 24 hours. You can still contact our service by phoning 285 1234.
- If there is a major fault in your area, for example, because of power failure, we will let you know within 24 hours. You can still contact our service by phoning 285 1234.
- If you have a complaint that we cannot sort out informally, we will investigate it and write to you within 15 working days.

Resident Warden Service

- Your warden will contact you each day to find out how you are. If you need help, we will contact the appropriate person for you such as your doctor, a relative or friend.
- Your warden will check the alarm equipment in your home four times a year to make sure it is working properly and you know how to use the alarm.
- Your warden will check with you that the information we have about you is up to date. We will do this twice a year. We will update our records on the same day that you tell us about any changes in the information we hold about you.
- Your warden will have personal contact with you at least once a week when on duty. If you need help your warden will contact the appropriate person for you.
- Your warden will promote and help organise social activities in your scheme.
- Your warden will collect information about you as soon as we can after you decide to become a tenant of a sheltered scheme. We will not give this information to anyone else without your permission.
- Your warden will hold at least four meetings a year in your scheme. The meetings give you a chance to give us your views or ask questions and get information about changes in our services. You will get a copy of the notes taken during each meeting.
- Your warden will give you information on the fire safety procedures in the scheme twice a year.
- We will answer 96.5% of your intercom calls within one minute and contact the people or services you need to help you.
- If there is a fault on the intercom system, we will check it within 24 hours. You will still be able to get in touch with a mobile warden by phoning 285 1234. The mobile warden will answer your call or contact your warden for you.
- We will report any faults on the alarm system or fire safety equipment in the building on the same day we become aware of them. We will also report any repairs that are needed to the shared areas and keep a record of this.
- We will check the fire safety panel each day to make sure it is working properly.
- If you have a complaint that we cannot sort out informally, we will investigate it and write to you within 15 working days.

New to you

service developments

Over the last year we have made a number of improvements to our service that we hope will help you.

Direct Debit - is now available to clients who pay for the service by invoice. It is replacing standing orders and is much easier for clients who have to change the standing order every time the charges changed. If you would like to pay by Direct Debit please get in touch with us.

Silver and Gold – In April we introduced a new level of service for people who do not want a mobile warden response to their alarm calls. We have called it our 'Silver Service' and the mobile warden response is called 'Gold Service'. The charges for our services start from £2.62 a week. If you want more information about our range of services and the amount we charge please get in touch with us.

Community Safety – In July 2002 we started taking calls from people in the city who want to report racist incidents that have taken place. We were asked to take on this role because we operate 24 hours a day and we have a great deal of experience helping people over the telephone, often in difficult circumstances. The service is operated by ARCH – Agencies Against Racist Crime and Harassment, which includes the City Council, the Police and Victim Support.

To report an incident ring the free phone number 0800 032 3288.

The Minorities - In May this year we began to provide the warden service to The Minorities in Jesmond. Leonard Cheshire had previously employed the wardens and the Council employed one of them, Alan Carr, as a non-resident warden. We have already improved the entrance to the building, created new office space and will be spending some money on new furniture later this year. We hope that we can provide the same high level of service to the tenants as others living in council sheltered schemes.

Did you know?

We welcome your complaints. In 2002/03 we did not get any formal complaints and eight informal complaints that we were able to resolve quickly. All of the complaints came as a result of misunderstanding about the level of service we provide. To try and reduce any confusion we will be reviewing the information we give to clients when they join the service.

Supporting People

In April 2003 the government introduced a new system for funding services like ours, called 'Supporting People'.

This means that those people who had their charge for the service covered by housing benefit now receive a supporting people grant.

The government also introduced rules that say that the costs of running the service must be met from charges paid by clients of the service. As a result we have had to raise the charges for our service from April this year.

New clients of the service on low incomes may still be able to have their charges covered by a supporting people grant. Please contact us for more information on Supporting People and our range of charges.

Did you know...?

In the last year we have attended a number of events to help raise awareness of our service. These have included an Older and Safer Day in March and the Newcastle Mela in August. If you would like us to come and explain our service to a group that you are part of or think would benefit please let us know.

Working With Others

In July we attended an event at the Centre for Life, held as part of the Alzheimer's Society national awareness week. We were able to tell people about our service and how it could help people with dementia and their carers. Our stand generated a lot of interest and helped dispel some of the mystery around technology.

Now that people are beginning to be diagnosed at an earlier stage in dementia, often when living alone, services like ours could play a role in helping to support them at home in safety and independence. It also gives carers peace of mind and encourages them to have a few hours off.



We look forward to keeping up our contact with the Alzheimer's Society to share information about any further developments in technology.

Did you know?... we updated our website in September this year. It includes information on our service, our performance standards as well as copies of our earlier newsletters. If you have any comments or suggestions about the website, please let us know. You can access it at www.newcastle.gov.uk and go to Community Care Alarm Service. You can also apply for our service, make a complaint or give us your comments online.

What's in your fridge?

Well, Mr Ness of Theresa Russell House in Heaton, keeps something that could help save his life in his.

Mr Ness is one of thousands of council sheltered housing tenants who have a "bottle in a fridge". Our service and the Independence Project, based in Cruddas Park have worked closely together to provide council sheltered housing tenants with a way to alert the emergency services to important medical information and details of next of kin in the event of sudden illness or accident.

Mr Ness, pictured right, agrees that the scheme is a very good idea and like most good ideas is very simple. Mr. Ness says "the bottle in the fridge gives me extra peace of mind should I become ill or have an accident. I know that any emergency service can go to my fridge and get information that could help them to help me."

He goes on to say, "The bottle with my information is kept in the fridge. I have a small sticker on the door of the fridge and one on the inside of the front door. This, along with posters in the scheme alerts any emergency service to look out for the bottle"

If you want any further information about the scheme contact your warden, our service or the Independence Project.

The Independence Project :
Telephone 0191 298 3080



How we have performed

The following information shows how we performed from April 2002 to March 2003. Our Service Charter leaflets describe the standards that we aim to achieve.

Standard	Acheived
Update the information we hold about people living in council sheltered housing schemes twice a year	We carried out 1670 visits. This relates to a 85% success rate
Check the alarm equipment in council sheltered scheme properties four times a year	4124 checks were last year. This is 91% of the target set
Contact sheltered scheme residents each day to make sure that they are well	We carried out 99.9% of the daily calls target
Allocate 80% of properties in council sheltered schemes following a viewing of empty flats by prospective tenants and a warden.	80.5% of flats allocated in our sheltered schemes were made after an accompanied viewing with a warden
Answer 96.5% of calls in one minute	We answered 97.2% of calls within one minute
Convert 85% of community alarm demonstrations to installations	81.7% of people who had a demonstration became a client of the service

One area where we did not do very well last year was our commitment to visit clients once a year to update the information we hold about them. We only achieved 31% of our target.

This is because in last year's newsletter we asked you if you wanted us to continue with the visit and only 18% said yes. As a consequence we suspended the visits.

We have now introduced a new way of checking the information and will be writing to people with a copy of the information we hold asking for it to be checked and returned in a freepost envelope. We will still do a visit for clients who ask for one or to help if anyone has difficulties. Over the next 6 months we will be checking all of the information we hold.

Please help us to help you by replying to our letter!

How we spent our budget

Each year we are given an amount of money to spend on running our service. We also get an amount to spend on the furnishings and furniture in the 29 sheltered schemes across the city. In 2002/03 our budget for running the whole service was £2,071,740. We actually spent £2,038,347, which is just over £33,000 less than our budget.

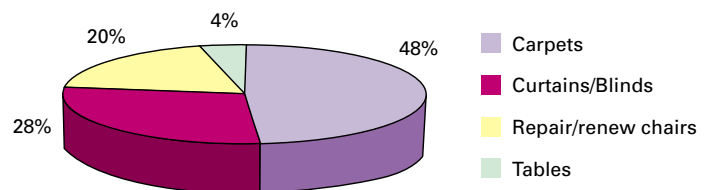
The first table below shows what we spent the money on.

Item	Amount (£'s)
Staffing Costs	1,062,643
Premises	410,792
Supplies and Services	332,437
Transport	32,594
Central Recharges (personnel,finance, administration)	199,881
Total	2,038,347

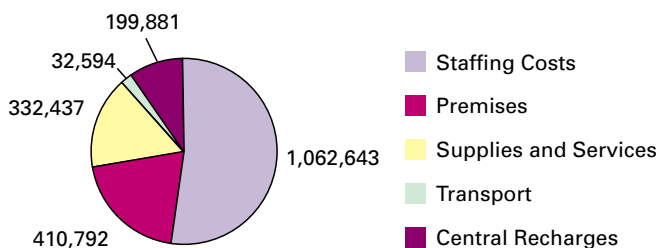
The amount of money given to us for furniture and furnishings last year was £46,583.78

Item	Amount Spent (£'s)
Carpets	22,817.04
Curtains and blinds	12,876.74
Repair and replacement of chairs	9,233.00
Tables	1,657.00
Total	46,583.78

Sheltered Scheme furnishings budget 2002/03



Community Care Alarm Service Budget Expenditure 2002-2003 (£'s)



A number of residents contacted their warden to pass on their ideas and wishes for their scheme.

If you have any suggestions for improving the furnishings in your scheme please contact your Resident Warden

Quite a clever flat!

Over recent years the technology our service uses has advanced and there are more and more devices that people can use to help them stay in their own home for as long as they would like.

Across the UK there are many examples of how new technology has helped people maintain independence. Our service, in association with Tynetec Ltd, is to establish a facility where the usefulness of a range of devices can be demonstrated. A property in one of our sheltered schemes has been fitted with a number of sensors which when activated send a signal via an alarm unit to our control centre in Gosforth – its not so much a smart house, more a quite clever flat. All that's needed for the alarm unit to work is a telephone socket with an electrical socket nearby. The advantage of

using this system over some of the others that are being tried elsewhere is that almost all of the sensors can be easily installed and removed – there's no need for wiring.

The sensors can detect falls, flood, heat, smoke, carbon monoxide and inactivity. They will raise an alarm without the client knowing if the conditions in their home changes. The response by our control centre can vary from contacting a neighbour or family member to calling the emergency services.

If you or someone you know would be interested in visiting the flat or trying any of the new range of sensors please contact us.

If you would like this newsletter in another language, large print, Braille or on audio tape please call



0191 211 5869

Arabic

إذا كنت تحتاج المعلومات الواردة في هذه النشرة بلغتك الأم، برجاء الإتصال هاتفياً بهذا الرقم

Bengali

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় চান তাহলে আমরা আপনাকে সহায়তা করতে একজন দোভাষীর ব্যবস্থা করতে পারি।

Chinese

如果您需要该信息被翻译成您使用的语言的版本，我们能够提供一名翻译来帮助您。

Hindi

अगर आपको इस बारे में अपनी भाषा में जानकारी चाहिये तो हम आपकी सहायता के लिये एक दुभाषिये का प्रबन्ध कर सकते हैं।

Punjabi

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹਦੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਦੁਬਾਸ਼ੀਦੇ ਦਾ ਟਿੱਕਰਬਾਜ਼ ਬਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

Urdu

اگر آپ کو اپنی زبان میں یہ معلومات درکار ہیں تو ہم آپ کے لئے ترجمان کا انتظام کر سکتے ہیں۔

This edition of the Community Care Alarm Service was printed in September 2003.

For more information on the service or any of the features in this newsletter, please contact:-

Neil Scott, Community and Housing Directorate, Telephone: 0191 285 1234

E-mail: commcarealarmservice@newcastle.gov.uk **Website:** www.newcastle.gov.uk

We want to hear from you...

We want to give you the best service we can. To do that we need to listen to you. Tell us what you think about how well we do our job and your views will help us to plan ahead and to continue to give you a high quality service.

You can also tell us what you think of this newsletter, so that we can be sure that you're getting all the news from us you need.

Just fill in this form, including your name and address and put it in the post using the pre-paid envelope provided. You don't need a stamp.

1 Service Standards

We have standards that we aim to meet to help us provide the service that you need. We are reviewing those standards for both parts of our service. Please look at page 4 and answer these questions

How relevant to your needs are the standards for the service you get?

Very relevant Quite relevant Not very relevant Not relevant at all

If you have answered 'not very relevant' or 'not relevant at all' please tell us why.

How challenging do you think the service standards are for us to meet?

Very challenging Challenging Not very challenging Not challenging at all

If you have answered 'not very challenging' or 'not challenging at all' please tell us why.

Do you think any of the the standards should be changed?

Yes No

If you have answered 'yes' please tell us how they should be changed.



If you have any suggestions for new standards please fill in the box below.

2 Please answer these questions about how we communicate with you

Would you be interested in future opportunities to participate in discussions on the service we give?

Yes No

If you have ticked 'yes' how would you like us to contact you? Letter Telephone

How useful have you found this newsletter?

Very useful Quite useful Not very useful Not useful at all

If you have answered 'not very useful' or 'not useful at all' please tell us why.

3 Tell us about yourself

Who owns the property you live in?

Yourself Council Housing Association Other

Do you have an onsite warden where you live? Yes No

Your name

Your address

Postcode **Telephone Number**

Please use this space to tell us anything you would like to say about the services we provide, or any ideas about how we can improve.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this form