

# Leasehold *news*

## Inside this issue:

- Energy saving tips
- Annual Report 2010/11
- Service satisfaction

*and more...*

News that matters to you



Your Homes  
Newcastle

Autumn 2011

This information is about Your Homes Newcastle, who are responsible for managing council homes on behalf of Newcastle City Council, and how we are doing. If you need this in your language or a different language phone 0191 278 8633. This information is also available in large print, Braille and audio tape. We can also arrange for you to see a British Sign Language interpreter.

বাংলায়  
Bengali

এই তথ্য হল ইউর হোমস নিউক্যাসল সমন্ধে। এবং আমরা কিভাবে দায়িত্ব পালন করছি সে সমন্ধে। ইউর হোমস নিউক্যাসল, নিউক্যাসল সিটি কাউন্সিলের পক্ষে কাউন্সিলের ঘর বাড়ী ব্যবস্থাপনার দায়িত্বপ্রাপ্ত। এই তথ্য যদি <বাংলায়> অথবা অন্য কোন ভাষায় প্রয়োজন হয় তাহলে এই নাম্বারে ফোন করুন- ০১৯১ ২৭৮ ৮৬৩৩

普通话 / 国语  
Chinese  
Simplified

这是有关代表纽卡斯尔市政府（Newcastle City Council）负责管理市政房屋的 Your Homes Newcastle（您的纽卡斯尔住房）组织的信息，内容解释了我们是如何运作。如果您需要此信息的普通话版本或其它语言版本，请致电 0191 278 8633 索取。

廣東話 / 粵語  
Chinese  
Traditional

這是關於 Your Homes Newcastle（您的紐卡素住房）機構的信息，內容解釋了我們代表紐卡素市政府（Newcastle City Council）負責管理市政房屋以及如何運作。如果您需要此信息的廣東話版本或其它語言版本，請致電 0191 278 8633 索取。

فارسی  
Farsi

این اطلاعات درباره سازمان «خانه‌های شما در نیوکاسل» و عملکرد آن است. این سازمان از سوی شهرداری نیوکاسل، مسئولیت اداره خانه‌های دولتی را به عهده دارد. در صورت نیاز به این اطلاعات به زبان فارسی یا زبان‌های دیگر با شماره تلفن ۰۱۹۱۲۷۸۸۶۳۳ تماس بگیرید.

Français  
French

Ces informations concernent Your Homes Newcastle : qui est chargé de gérer les logements sociaux au nom de la municipalité de Newcastle et comment nous procédons. Si vous avez besoin de ces informations en français ou dans une autre langue, téléphonez au : 0191 278 8633.

کوردی سۆرانی  
Kurdish

ئەم زانیاریانە سەبارەت بە Your Homes Newcastle و چۆنەتی کارکردنەکیە که له لایەن شوێرای شاری نیوکاسیلەوه ئەرکی ئەوەی پێدراوه که خانووەکانی شوێرای شار بەرپۆهەبرایەتی بکات. ئەگەر حەزتان له وەرگرتنی ئەم زانیاریانە بە زمانی کوردی یا هەر زمانیکی دیکە هەیه بە ژمارە تیلیفۆنی 0191 278 8633 پێوەندی بکرن.

Português  
Portuguese

Esta informação refere-se à *Your Homes Newcastle*, a organização responsável pela gestão da habitação social em nome do Município de Newcastle, e a nossa situação actual. Se precisar desta informação em <português> ou noutra língua, queira ligar para o 0191 278 8633.

русском  
Russian

Информация о Your Homes Newcastle, которая отвечает за управление делами муниципального жилья от имени Муниципалитета г. Ньюкасла и об общем состоянии дел. 0191 278 8633.

Español  
Spanish

Ésta es información sobre Your Homes de Newcastle, que es la responsable de gestionar las viviendas municipales en nombre del Ayuntamiento de Newcastle, y sobre nuestra manera de hacerlo. Si necesita esta información en español o en otro idioma, llame al 0191 278 8633.

# Welcome

to the autumn edition of Leasehold News.

Enclosed are the results of our annual satisfaction survey and lots of other useful information.

Remember this is your newsletter so if you have any ideas of articles you would like to see included please don't hesitate to get in touch!

Kind regards



Jeanette Johnson -  
Manager, Leasehold Team

## Gardens

Lots of our flats have communal gardens and YHN on behalf of your landlord is responsible for maintaining them.

However, if you have a garden included as part of the property that is leased to you then you are responsible for maintaining it.

It is a condition of your lease that you keep the garden in a tidy condition. Whilst we don't expect you to be a budding Alan Titchmarsh we do expect you to abide by your lease terms and keep the garden tidy. You should do this by keeping it free of rubbish, mowing the grass, trimming hedges and carrying out weed treatments on a regular basis.

If you do not keep your garden tidy, we will ask you to tidy it up. If you don't tidy it properly or finish the work by the date we have set, we may do the work and charge you for it. If you continually fail to maintain your garden we may take legal action against you.



## Drains

Some of you might not be aware that on 1 October 2011 there was a change of ownership of many sewers and drains across the country. Ownership of many drains and sewers that are connected to the public sewerage system, which Your Homes Newcastle were previously responsible for, are now looked after by Northumbrian Water.

This means that where Your Homes Newcastle might have been responsible for clearing a blockage in the past it is now the responsibility of Northumbrian Water to carry out this work.

If you have any problems with drains or sewers you need to contact Northumbrian Water direct for advice on 0845 717 1100 in the first instance. They will be able to advise you if it is something that they are now responsible for.

If Northumbrian Water are not responsible for resolving the problem then you will need to contact our Repairs Centre on 0191 277 8888 so our staff can investigate the problem.



# Annual Report 2010/11

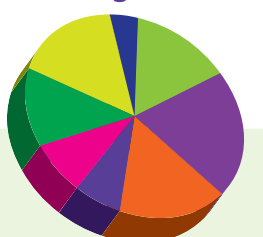
## Facts and figures

### Right to Buy Sales

Year	Freehold	Leasehold
2008/09	33	17
2009/10	27	17
2010/11	33	13

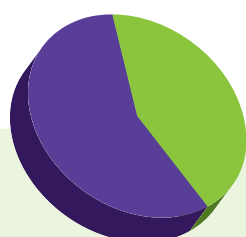
## Demographics

### Age



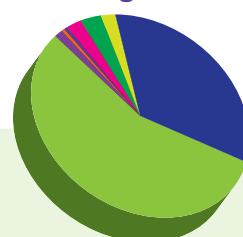
16-24:	4.4%
25-34:	14%
35-44:	21.1%
45-54:	17.1%
55-59:	6.6%
60-64:	7.9%
65-74:	12.7%
75+:	17.1%

### Gender



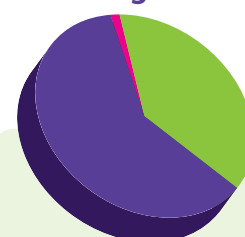
Male:	42.5%
Female:	57.5%

### Religion



No religion:	32.5%
Christian (all denominations):	57.1%
Buddhist:	1.5%
Hindu:	0.5%
Jewish:	0.5%
Muslim:	2.5%
Prefer not to say:	3.4%
Any other religion or faith:	2.0%

### Disability or long standing illness



Yes:	37.7%
No:	61%
Don't know:	1.3%

## Satisfaction Levels

Our annual survey was sent out to all leaseholders in summer 2011. 256 surveys were returned this year, compared to 218 last year, and they show that...

### You contacted us by

- Phoning us - **84.3%** (161 Respondents)
- Visiting our office - **3.1%** (6 Respondents)
- Writing to us - **5.2%** (10 Respondents)
- Email or over the internet - **6.3%** (12 Respondents)
- Another means - **0.5%** (1 Respondent)
- Can't remember - **0.5%** (1 Respondent)

### You contacted us about

- Repairs - **39.6%** (76 respondents)
- Leasehold Service Charge - **21.4%** (41 respondents)
- Major works (Modern Homes) - **10.4%** (20 respondents)
- Payment of invoice - **8.9%** (17 respondents)
- Neighbours/Neighbourhood issues - **6.3%** (12 respondents)
- Garden/communal issues - **3.1%** (6 respondents)
- Lease terms - **3.1%** (6 respondents)
- Insurance - **3.1%** (6 respondents)
- Other - **2.6%** (5 respondents)
- Sale of property - **1.0%** (2 respondents)
- Alterations - **0.5%** (1 respondent)

## How satisfied were you with how we keep leaseholders informed:

Satisfaction with being kept informed	2010	2011
Very good	24.3% (50 respondents)	19.4% (48 respondents)
Fairly good	39.3% (81 respondents)	44.4% (110 respondents)
Neither	14.6% (30 respondents)	18.5% (46 respondents)
Fairly poor	8.7% (18 respondents)	5.2% (13 respondents)
Very poor	8.7% (18 respondents)	6.0% (15 respondents)
No opinion	4.4% (9 respondents)	6.5% (16 respondents)

## How satisfied were you with our Repairs and Maintenance service:

How satisfied were you with our Repairs and Maintenance service?	2010	2011
Very satisfied	11.7% (24 respondents)	6.6% (16 respondents)
Fairly satisfied	29.6% (61 respondents)	29.1% (71 respondents)
Neither	16.5% (34 respondents)	19.3% (47 respondents)
Fairly dissatisfied	11.2% (23 respondents)	14.8% (36 respondents)
Very dissatisfied	22.8% (47 respondents)	24.6% (60 respondents)
No opinion	8.3% (17 respondents)	5.7% (14 respondents)

This shows that overall satisfaction with our Repairs and Maintenance service has dropped from 41.3% in 2010 to 35.7% in 2011.

## How satisfied were you with the Leasehold service:

How satisfied were you with the leasehold service?	2010	2011
Very satisfied	11.4% (23 respondents)	11.6% (28 respondents)
Fairly satisfied	35.6% (72 respondents)	42.3% (102 respondents)
Neither	20.3% (41 respondents)	20.7% (50 respondents)
Fairly dissatisfied	12.4% (25 respondents)	15.4% (37 respondents)
Very dissatisfied	12.4% (25 respondents)	10.0% (24 respondents)

This shows that overall satisfaction with the leasehold service has increased from 47.0% in 2010 to 53.9% in 2011.

We would like to thank all of you who took the time to reply to our survey. Your responses are very important to us and we will be looking at these in more detail in the coming months to help improve the leasehold service as part of the Leasehold Service Review.

This year we gave you the option of completing the survey online which 2 respondents did. We also ran a prize draw which all respondents were entered into for the chance to win a £25 shopping voucher for Eldon Square.

The winner of this prize is Sally Walton of Leazes Court.

# You said, we did...

We always listen to your views and where possible we will make changes so that the service runs the way you want it to.

## Repairs and Maintenance

You said that you were not happy with the Repairs and Maintenance service provided to leaseholders.

We have had a Senior Technical Surveyor working in the team for a 6 month period to look at ways of improving the service that is provided to leaseholders when repairs are needed to the building and communal areas where your property is situated.

## Account Balance

You said that you would like your Actual Service Charge invoice to include the overall balance of your account on the same page.

We have amended your invoice to include the overall balance of your service charge account and advise if your account is in credit or debit.

## Paying Your Invoice

You said that you didn't like ringing to pay your invoice and the phone being answered by the Debt Recovery Team.

We advised you on your Actual Service Charge invoice that if you wish to pay your balance in full you can now ring NCC Payments, instead of ringing the Debt Recovery Team like you have had to in the past. The Debt Recovery Team now only need to be contacted if you are unable to pay an invoice in full and need to discuss setting up an arrangement.

## Leasehold Valuation Tribunal Update

During the course of the last year we have been challenged several times at the LVT which we can now update you on after receiving the determinations.

The first case related to 'Decent Homes' external work and the leaseholders liability to pay a share of the cost of the work. We were challenged by a group of leaseholders who asked the tribunal to look at the charges that they had been asked to pay towards the work and whether they were reasonable.

The tribunal ruled that the work had been carried out to a reasonable standard and that the majority of the charges had been reasonably incurred, including the cost of the replacement windows. They made only a small reduction to the charges for Contractors overheads and profits.

The second case was about Annual Service Charges. The charges that were disputed were for concierge, communal lighting, lift maintenance and door entry maintenance. The property was a ground floor

property with no access to the communal areas and the leaseholder felt he should not have to pay for the services as he didn't directly benefit from them.

The LVT ruled that the majority of the charges were reasonable and chargeable under the terms of the lease which does not make provision for us to charge a lower amount to people living on the ground floor without access to the communal areas.

The third case related to a Major Works external scheme. Extensive work was undertaken to remove the old cladding which was at the end of its useful life and in need of replacement. We were challenged over the way the costs had been calculated and whether the cladding was classed as forming part of the structure of the block.

The tribunal ruled that the calculation of the costs, which we had split equally by the number of properties in the block, was correct and in accordance with the lease terms. The tribunal also agreed that cladding does form part of the structure of the building and therefore something that leaseholders do have to pay towards. No changes were made to the amount that we had invoiced for.

If you wish require more information about the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal you may find the Leasehold Advisory Service website useful:

- [www.lease-advice.org](http://www.lease-advice.org)

If you wish to contact the Leasehold Advisory Service their telephone number is:

- **020 7383 9800**

Lines are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm

# Energy saving tips

With winter just around the corner it's a good time to think about how you use energy. As the temperature falls and the days get shorter we use more electricity and gas on heating, lighting and powering our homes and appliances. Saving energy and money isn't difficult; lots can be done with a bit of planning and creative thinking. Here are some helpful tips:

## Be sensible

It might sound obvious, but the best way to save energy and money is to make sure your heating is off when there's nobody at home. Think about your daily routine and plan your heating use around that, for example, if you're at work between 8:30am and 5:30pm you shouldn't have the heating on at this time; instead set a timer so that the heating comes on half an hour before you get home.

Another simple tip is to make sure your windows are closed when your heating is on - open windows let heat out. Likewise, closing all internal doors so that heat doesn't transfer into rooms that you aren't using is also good practice.

There are also a few things you can do with lighting, like switching off lights when you're not using a room. On top of this you could install energy efficient light bulbs. Electrical appliances like computers and TV's should also be turned off at the socket when not in use.

## Be savvy

The kitchen is a great place to save energy. By planning your meals ahead you'll not only save money on the food you buy, but on the amount of energy you use to cook it. Reusing leftovers or making enough food for a couple of nights will mean you use significantly less energy to prepare your meals - it'll also save you time so really is a win-win-win!! Another great idea is to only boil the amount of water you're going to use - overfilling the kettle for a week uses enough energy to power a TV for a full day!!

You may also wish to think about when you use electrical appliances. Depending on your energy tariffs, it could be a lot cheaper to use your washing machine or tumble dryer at night.

## For further tips and advice visit:

[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Easy-ways-to-stop-wasting-energy](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Easy-ways-to-stop-wasting-energy)

# Money Advice

If you're looking for free, clear, unbiased money advice you may be interested to know that there is a new website called the Money Advice Service to help people get the right money advice.

The Money Advice Service is independent. It was set up by Government and is funded by a levy on the financial services industry.

Getting the right money advice can make a real difference to your life.

On the website you will find an online tool called the 'personal money health check'. The health check is free and confidential and only takes 5-10 minutes to complete and doesn't involve any paperwork. The health check will help you get a clear picture of your finances and help you to make the most of your money and give you clear unbiased advice.

By completing the health check you will get an action plan, tailored to you, ideas of simple steps that you can take now and clear goals that you can work towards.

You can find out more by logging onto <http://moneyadvice.service.org.uk>

If you don't have access to the internet you may contact the Money Advice Service by phone. The telephone number is:

- Tel: 0300 500 5000
- Typetalk: 18001 0300 500 5000
- Lines are open Monday to Friday - 8am to 6pm (excluding bank holidays)

# How to contact the Leasehold Team

**Leasehold Team** - YHN House, Benton Park Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7LX

## There are a number of ways to contact your leasehold team:

- in person, we are based at YHN House. Please phone for an appointment
- in writing, we are based at YHN House (see address above)
- by phone on FREEPHONE 0800 091 0082
- by email [leasehold@yhn.org.uk](mailto:leasehold@yhn.org.uk)
- by completing a compliment, complaints and comments form online via our website [www.yhn.org.uk](http://www.yhn.org.uk)

## Useful contacts

**Concierge** - Tel: 0800 073 1389

**HASBET** (Housing Anti Social Behaviour) -  
Tel: 0191 278 8740  
Tel: 0191 274 4000 (24hr incident reporting line)  
E-mail: [newcastleasbunit@yhn.org.uk](mailto:newcastleasbunit@yhn.org.uk)

**Repaircall** - Tel: 0191 277 8888  
E-mail: [repairs@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:repairs@newcastle.gov.uk)

**Envirocall** - Tel: 0191 274 4000

**Gallagher Bassett UK** (Buildings Insurance Claims Handler) - Tel: 0131 331 9000

**Transco (Gas Emergencies)** - Tel: 0800 111 999

**Shelter** - Tel: 0808 800 4444

**Age UK** - Tel: 0800 169 6565

**Residential Property Tribunal Service** -  
1st Floor, 5 New York Street, Piccadilly,  
Manchester, M1 4JB  
Tel: 0845 100 2614

**Newcastle City Council** -  
Civic Centre, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne,  
NE99 1RD  
Tel: 0191 232 8520



Your Homes  
Newcastle

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